



Higher Education Hardship Fund Policy and Guidance for Students

A. Introduction

1. The Arts Educational Schools (ArtsEd) understands that students may have short-term, unforeseen difficulties during their studies. In these circumstances, ArtsEd students are able to apply for assistance through the hardship fund.
2. The hardship fund is a small, means-tested fund which is able to provide one-off payments to students to assist them to continue with their studies and complete their degree. The amounts awarded will normally not exceed £250. Each application will be considered on an individual basis by the Hardship Panel.
3. Decisions made by the Hardship Panel are final. Students are not able to appeal the decisions made by the Panel or the amount they are awarded through the Hardship fund.
4. All students enrolled on foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at ArtsEd are eligible to apply for assistance.
5. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:
 - i. [Interruption of Studies Policy](#)
 - ii. [Fitness to Study Policy](#)
 - iii. [Personal Tutoring Policy](#)
 - iv. [Student Complaints Procedure](#)

B. Definition and Principles

6. The Hardship fund is for students who have made adequate provision to support their studies but have experienced a significant short-term situation outside of their control which requires financial assistance. Examples include:
 - emergency housing and homelessness costs;
 - unexpected medical costs;
 - unexpected childcare costs.
7. The Hardship Fund is not able to award funds for:
 - any payment that would extend beyond the last day of the student's registration at ArtsEd;

- any support towards the charge of tuition fees;
 - any payment to cover debt repayment costs, such as credit card debts.
8. The Hardship Fund is intended to be a safety net for students in financial difficulty. It is not intended as a source of income and it cannot support a student for the duration of their studies.
 9. Each application will be considered on an individual basis by the Hardship Panel. Priority is given to students with a disability or dependent children, for those with caring responsibilities, for care leavers and those who are estranged.
 10. The decision of the Hardship Panel will only be sent to a student's ArtsEd email address.
 11. Students can only apply once for assistance from the Hardship Fund during each academic year. Students must be up-to-date with their tuition fee payments in order to be eligible to apply for assistance through the Hardship Fund.
 12. Students must provide evidence that they have made adequate provision to cover their living expenses and tuition fees under normal circumstances. A financial assessment based on the student's income and expenditures will be conducted, taking into account personal circumstances.

C. Application Process

13. To apply for assistance through the Hardship Fund, students must complete an application and submit evidence using the Hardship Fund application form [here](#).
14. Applications can only be considered once the online application and all supporting evidence has been submitted. Students should allow up to four weeks for the assessment to be completed once all information has been submitted but we will endeavour to shorten this time to two weeks wherever possible. Applications are considered in the order received.
15. Students applying for assistance through the Hardship Fund will need to provide evidence of income and will need to submit all the following which may apply to them:
 - Student Finance entitlement statement or letter for the relevant year;
 - ArtsEd Bursary entitlement letter for the relevant year;
 - DaDA allocation letter for the relevant year;
 - External Bursary or scholarship letter for the relevant year;
 - Three months' payslips (part-time students only);
 - Three months' bank statements for all your bank accounts (online statements are acceptable but not excel spreadsheets). Please explain all transactions (credits and debits) over £100;
 - Partner/spouse income for three months e.g. payslips or bank statements.
16. Students applying for assistance through the Hardship Fund will need to provide evidence of outgoings and will need to submit all the following which may apply to them:

- Rent/tenancy contract, mortgage statement, parental confirmation of contribution to rent/mortgage;
 - Council tax bill for the relevant year;
 - Priority bills e.g. rent arrears, council tax arrears, overdue utility bills;
 - Childcare invoices;
 - If your term-time address is outside London please highlight your weekly/monthly travel expenses on your bank statements;
 - Additional course related costs e.g. equipment, books;
 - Health related costs e.g. optical, dental, prescription.
17. Any awards from the Hardship Fund will be paid by bank transfer. Students applying for assistance through the Hardship Fund must ensure they carefully check the bank details they submit – incorrect details will cause payment loss or delay.
18. If a student applying for assistance through the Hardship Fund has any queries regarding the application process, they should write to the Student Support Services at studentsupport@artsed.co.uk.

D. Confidentiality and Data Protection

19. All information obtained as part of a Hardship Fund process will be held in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Data Protection legislation and our [Privacy Notice](#). ArtsEd will ensure information obtained as part of a Hardship Fund application is held with the appropriate level of confidentiality unless doing so could put the student or others at risk.
20. Please note that information shared as part of the Hardship Fund process will be regarded as confidential unless the relevant staff member has particular concerns over a student's welfare. In such instances, the relevant staff member may need to inform the appropriate authority at ArtsEd such as the student's Personal Tutor or the relevant Safeguarding and Welfare Officer.

E. Support Available for Students

21. ArtsEd has a duty of care to ensure that the necessary guidance and support is available for students.
- i. **Student Support:** Students should be directed to the Student Support Services where there is a concern. The student can contact the Student Support Team by sending an email to studentsupport@artsed.co.uk.
 - ii. **Student Counselling:** Students can self-refer to ArtsEd's Counselling Service. Students can book a session with the Counselling Team by sending an email to Counselling@artsed.co.uk. The Student Counselling Service offers confidential space for students to seek advice about, and discuss matters impacting, their psychological wellbeing. Students are offered:
 - a. short term 1-2-1 counselling which can help students work on immediate problems (maximum of 6 sessions);
 - b. assistance with developing healthy coping techniques;

- c. support with gaining understanding of underlying issues; and
- d. assistance with developing a longer-term treatment plan, if necessary.

iii. **Togetherall:** Togetherall is a clinically-managed, online community designed to improve mental health. Students can access the 24/7 online support via our Student Services Online Platform or by visiting www.togetherall.com.

iv. **Fitness to Study:** The Fitness to Study Procedure may be commenced in line with the requirements of the [Fitness to Study Policy](#). The aim is to respond to and manage any concerns regarding a student's health or behaviour where it is thought that it is seriously impacting their ability to study. It may also be used where a student's health or behaviour is having an impact on other people, such as other students at ArtsEd and staff members. The procedure is intended to be supportive and is in place to enable students to successfully complete their studies, where possible.

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