

SHEFFIELD HALLAM HARDSHIP FUND GUIDANCE NOTES FOR STUDENTS

What is the Hardship Fund

The Sheffield Hallam Hardship Fund is available to provide financial support for students who are experiencing unforeseen financial difficulties. The hardship is available for small, one-off payments to students for essential living costs, in order to relieve short-term financial hardship that might impact on your participation at University.

The fund is strictly limited and awards are subject to available funds. In normal circumstances the maximum available award is £1,000. In exceptional circumstances the University can consider a larger award where a significant need is evidenced but this can only be considered in cases where financial difficulties are sudden and of a severe nature.

There is no automatic entitlement to an award from the fund and all applications are considered on their individual merits.

Eligibility

All undergraduate students, who are eligible for funding as a home student, can apply for the fund.

To be eligible you must have been enrolled on a taught, credit bearing course at the University during the current academic year.

You must have also applied for all viable sources of student funding and any benefits for which you are eligible to receive (where applicable) before submitting an application to the fund.

The following groups of students would not normally qualify for an award from the Hardship Fund and should contact the Student Funding Team to discuss their circumstances before submitting an application:

- Undergraduate students who started their first year as a new student at Sheffield Hallam University before 2017/18 (an alternative fund is available for these students)
- Overseas students
- Postgraduate students
- Students who are registered with the University but who are exempt from paying Tuition Fees in the current academic year

Application

You will be asked to describe and provide evidence of your personal circumstances. Please follow this [link](#) to the application form or search for 'hardship' on MyHallam.

Think carefully about how much money you need

As part of the application process you will be asked to state how much money you need and to provide a breakdown of these costs with relevant evidence where applicable (ie: copies of receipts or invoices).

If you are asking for essential living costs you might choose to upload a spreadsheet or another document showing your workings.

Without this information we cannot assess your application, the maximum award is normally £1,000 but please do think carefully about how much you need. Funds are strictly limited and we can only make an award where we are satisfied the amount of money you are asking for is reasonable.

Personal statement

You will also be asked to provide a personal statement detailing your unforeseen personal circumstances and to tell us what else you are doing to manage your financial situation.

This is your opportunity to tell us what has happened and how we can help. The fund is designed to relieve short-term financial pressure which might be impacting on your studies, please do let us know here what impact your situation is having on your coursework.

Confidentiality and the personal statement

The university understands that you might not always feel comfortable in disclosing your circumstances, particularly when they are of a personal and sensitive nature. Anything disclosed to the University will be treated in confidence and will only be disclosed to those who need to know in order to provide support (for example an Academic Advisor or Student Support Adviser).

Assessment

Applications are reviewed every working day and you can normally expect to receive a final decision within 6 weeks of submitting your application.

Our assessors may need to discuss an application with you and/or clarify an aspect of your application during the assessment process. Failure to respond to a request from the University in a timely manner will delay the final response beyond the normal deadline.

When assessing an application the University will consider whether or not the situation was foreseeable, whether or not you have other sources of funding, whether or not you could come to harm without financial help and the impact on your studies.

There is no definitive list of situations that would guarantee a payment from the fund and the university recognises that difficulties impact on people in different ways. Whilst all circumstances will be considered we have provided an indicative list of the type of situations that might be considered in Annex 1 of this document.

Payments

Payments will normally be received into your nominated bank account within 2 weeks of notification of a successful application.

Documentary evidence and referrals

Awards are much more likely to be granted when an application is submitted with a referral from another service or other documentary evidence of your personal circumstances. Applications containing just a personal statement are unlikely to be granted.

During the application process you will also be asked to attach evidence of other funding you are receiving as well as bank statements covering the previous 90 days for all current and savings accounts. Applications will not be assessed without this information.

Appeals

If you are unsuccessful in applying for the fund you have the right to appeal if you have grounds to do so. The appeals form can be found on MyHallam.

The following are considered to be valid grounds for appeal:

- There has been an error in the assessment process
- The decision has taken insufficient account of the evidence provided

The following are not considered valid grounds for appeal:

- Disagreement with the eligibility criteria for the fund
- Appealing the amount that has been awarded

Appeals are initially reviewed by Head of Student Funding or the Student Funding Manager and can be escalated to the Student Financial Support Panel at their discretion.

Annex 1

Indicative list of circumstances which might qualify for an award from the fund:

- Immediate need to move properties for reasons beyond a student's control
- A close family bereavement leaving a student with unexpected financial responsibility
- Unexpected illness or injury, or the worsening of an existing illness or injury which has left a student unable to work
- Impact of a natural disaster
- Impact of a criminal act against a student or their property
- A sudden loss of financial support for which it was not possible to make alternative plans
- Any other unexpected financial emergency which is unavoidable