

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CARE-EXPERIENCED AND ESTRANGED STUDENT BURSARIES

Please read the following guidance notes carefully before completing an application.

Overview of the Fund

The purpose of this fund is to provide targeted bursary support to first-degree UK-resident undergraduates or UK-resident Graduate Entry Medicine students who are from a care background or who are estranged and therefore studying without the emotional or financial support of their family. The bursary is intended to provide assistance towards financial shortfalls relating to students' circumstances where the level of funding required may not be available through family contributions or other sources. The University's Student Fees and Funding team is responsible for processing and reviewing applications to the Fund.

Bursaries

A non-repayable bursary of up to £1,500 is available to students who started their course in or before 2019/20 and up to £3,000 is available to students who started their course in or after 2020/21.

Eligibility criteria

All first degree UK-resident undergraduate or Graduate Entry Medicine students who have either been in care for at least 3 months or are estranged from their family and studying without their emotional or financial support are eligible to apply for a bursary. This includes both those students who have been assessed as estranged from their parents by their regional funding agency, and those who consider themselves to be estranged in accordance with the above description. Please note that students who are currently suspended from their studies are also eligible to apply. New applications must be from those who were under 25 on the first day of their course. For more advice on being assessed as an estranged student by regional funding agencies please visit the Stand Alone Student Guide:

<https://www.standalone.org.uk/guides/student-guide/> .

Students can apply for support from the fund for assistance with meeting a range of costs, such as accommodation and living costs, this may include but is not limited to:

- Costs associated with moving to and establishing residence in Oxford.
- Costs during vacation periods if the student does not have a permanent residence to return to outside of Oxford.
- Other unexpected costs that you may incur as a result of your living arrangements or any other additional needs you may have.

Please note that Home undergraduates are also eligible to apply for Oxford Hardship Fund support, where this funding may be required in addition.

How do I apply?

Applications for the 2021/22 academic year will be accepted by the Student Fees and Funding team on a rolling basis from **11 October 2021** (Week 1 Michaelmas Term) until **Friday 22 July 2022**.

You can obtain a bursary application form through your College Welfare Officer or from Student Fees and Funding (bursaries@admin.ox.ac.uk). The Welfare Officer varies across colleges but could be the Dean, Welfare Dean, Senior Tutor, Academic Registrar, Academic Administrator or Bursar.

The form comprises Part A for you to complete and Part B for a College Officer to complete, for example the Dean, a Subject Tutor or the Academic Administrator. If you have not previously been awarded a Care-Experienced and Estranged Student bursary you are required to provide a supporting statement and to submit additional documentation in support of your application (see *Supporting documentation required* below). This only needs to be brief information about your status as we appreciate it may be distressing for students to share details of their personal circumstances. If you have previously received a Care-Experienced or Estranged Student bursary and your situation remains as described in your initial application you are **not** required to provide a supporting statement or submit additional documentation in support of your application

Complete applications (Parts A and B) and supporting documentation should be submitted by your college and will only be processed when all components have been received. You will receive an acknowledgement email from Student Fees and Funding (bursaries@admin.ox.ac.uk), copied to the College Officer/Tutor supporting your application, which will confirm receipt of the application.

We may ask for clarification relating to the supporting documentation or for further information. If this is the case you will receive an email from Student Fees and Funding. If no response is received within 21 days we will consider the application withdrawn.

Once a complete application is received, we aim to complete our assessment and communicate the outcome within four weeks. Outside of term-time this process may take longer.

How will my application be assessed?

Applications are reviewed by Student Fees and Funding who will take into account your current situation, the funds available to you, the amount you have requested and why you require additional funding. When assessing the funds available to you, a disregard of up to £3,000 will be applied where a funding surplus is identified as a result of savings or other sources. This is intended to allow a basic level of funding to remain in place and provide further financial security over the longer term. If you are a final year student applying for assistance and will be facing upfront costs following completion of our course, please ensure that you tell us about these in your statement so that your situation can be fully assessed.

The statement from the college will also be taken into consideration when assessing eligibility and the bursary amount requested.

The assessment of finances for final year students will usually be based on the period from 1st September to 30th June. However, applicants requiring support with college accommodation or other related living costs immediately after completion should include a request for their circumstances to be taken into consideration and will be treated on a case-by-case basis.

Suspended students should ensure that they include information about any sources of income and expected expenditure or contributions towards living costs

Applications will be treated in the strictest confidence subject to the University's GDPR Policy as detailed in the application form declaration page.

What supporting documentation do I need to provide?

You will be required to provide a copy of your 2021/22 financial notification from your regional funding agency and/or the NHS (medicine students only), confirming the level of student support you are receiving. In addition to this you will be required to provide evidence of your care-experienced or estranged status (see below).

For care-experienced students if applying for the bursary for the first time: this should be a letter from your Local Authority key worker confirming your status.

For students who have been formally assessed as estranged if applying for the bursary for the first time: this should be a letter from your regional funding agency confirming your estrangement; you will need to contact them by telephone to request a letter confirming your status.

For self-declared estranged students if applying for the bursary for the first time: this should be a letter from an independent person of good standing in your community who knows your circumstances and can verify your status, such as a doctor or teacher. If you have any difficulty in obtaining this letter or you have recently become estranged please contact Student Fees and Funding at bursaries@admin.ox.ac.uk for further guidance. Please note they are only required to briefly outline your circumstances.

A checklist outlining what students are required to provide is included at the end of Part A of the application form.

How will I be notified of the outcome of my application and how will the funds be disbursed?

The outcome of your application will be sent to you via email, with your College Officer/Tutor copied in. Payment of any bursary will be made directly to you by the Student Loans Company (SLC) on behalf of the University to the bank account you have registered with them. Payment of the bursary will usually be made in one instalment.

Can I submit a repeat or new application?

You can submit an application for each of year of your course provided you continue to meet the eligibility criteria. If you have previously received a Care-Experienced and Estranged Student bursary and your situation remains as described in your initial application you are **not** required to provide a supporting statement or submit additional documentation in support of your application. It is possible to reapply within the same academic year if your financial circumstances have changed, provided you have not already received the maximum award. You should note that each subsequent application and request for funding will be reviewed based on your current circumstances and using the latest available information.

Can I submit a retrospective application for a previous academic year?

It is not possible to apply retrospectively for a previous academic year. It is the student's responsibility to ensure their application is submitted by the deadline of 22nd July 2022.

How can I appeal the decision or award?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your application you may appeal in writing to Student Fees and Funding at bursaries@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Any appeal must be made within four weeks of the date marked on the letter sent by Student Fees and Funding containing the outcome of your application. Decisions made regarding appeals are final.

An appeal must either:

- (i) Contain new or more detailed information relating to your situation which was not available to you at the time of your original application; or
- (ii) Dispute the application decision by demonstrating that the decision was not conducted in accordance with the stated procedure.

Contact details

Please contact us if you have any queries or require further clarification before submitting your application form.

Email: bursaries@admin.ox.ac.uk