

HE Support Fund (HESF)

Guidance for applicants Academic Year 2019/20

Please read these notes carefully before completing your application form.

IMPORTANT NOTE

All applications must be completed in full and full evidence provided before they can be considered. You are expected to read the guidance notes and complete the form as well as you can before trying to hand in your application. If you need help completing the form please contact a member of the Learner Services finance team for assistance.

Your application will be returned to you if you have not completed all relevant sections and signed the form or you have not included all the necessary photocopied documentation.

What is HESF?

Each year the TEC Partnership is given money by the government to help undergraduate or postgraduate students who are studying on Higher Education courses at the Grimsby Institute or Scarborough TEC, who need extra financial support because their costs are higher than they have anticipated. The fund is designed to help alleviate unexpected financial hardship and applications from students who may be considering leaving higher education due to the financial difficulties are particularly encouraged.

Eligibility

The HE Support Fund is for **home** students registered and studying on a Higher Education course at the Grimsby Institute or Scarborough TEC.

All students must:

- Be studying on a qualifying full time or part time undergraduate/postgraduate or PGCE course at the Grimsby Institute or Scarborough TEC¹
- Have EU or 'Home' residency status²
- NOT be studying on a franchised course unless this is run by the Grimsby Institute.

Full time undergraduate and PGCE Students must:

- Have applied and taken out all government funding available to you and have received the first payment of your loan. Government funding includes the Social Work Bursary and any bursaries available to PGCE students.

Part time undergraduate and PGCE students must:

- Have applied and taken out all Government funding available to you OR
- Have a letter from your employer stating that your tuition fees will be paid OR
- Be able to show that you have made provision to pay your tuition fees
- Have an income lower than the income thresholds set by the DBIS (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills)

¹ For HESF purposes a Full time course is 120 credit points in an academic year or equivalent. Part time students must normally be studying a course equivalent to at least 60 credit points or 50% of a full time course. This means that the course should take no more than twice the time to complete as a full time course, for example, if a full time degree normally takes three years to complete, you will meet the criteria if you are studying the course in 6 years or less.

Disabled students, who due to the nature of their disability are unable to study 50% of a full time course, may apply for help if they are studying at least 25% of a full time course.

² A '**home**' student is defined as a person who meets certain residency conditions (the same conditions apply to eligibility for student support, for example, the student loan). Usually this means you have an unrestricted right to enter and remain in the UK, and have been ordinarily resident in the UK for three years prior to the start of your course. None of this time must have been wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full time education. Overseas students cannot apply to the HE Support Fund.

When can I apply?

Applications are considered from the first day of term in September 2019 until the fund closes on 31st May 2020 or until funds are exhausted. (Summer Assessments will be carried out between 1st-30th June 2020 and students will be told when to apply). Students should not wait until they have run out of money. If you think you might need to apply for help from the fund, make your application as soon as you know you might be in difficulty. We encourage students to apply early as the fund only has limited resources. You may still submit your application before or after the closing date if you are facing an unexpected financial crisis.

Priorities for Assistance

The fund is there to help any eligible student who has a particular financial need but we cannot meet every application we receive and we cannot always meet all of the costs that you might apply for. The Government ask us to give priority to the following groups of students when deciding how to allocate the funding:

For Full time undergraduate students these are:

- Students with children (especially lone parents)
- Students from low income families
- Mature students, especially those with existing financial commitments, including priority debts (defined as a debt 'where non-payment would give a creditor the right to deprive the debtor of her/his home, liberty, essential goods and services or place in the community' (Debt Advice Handbook, 5th edition, Child Poverty Action Group).
- Disabled students (especially those where the DSA is unable to meet particular costs)
- Students who have entered higher education from care
- Students from Foyers or who are homeless
- Students who are in the final year loan rate, who are in financial difficulty

What can I get help with?

Funds are allocated on a first come first served basis and may run out. Please note funds cannot be used to assist payment of tuition fees. Any payment you may receive is usually non repayable unless otherwise stated.

Standard Awards – Offer help with general costs associated with being a **full-time** student such as rent, travel, food, books and field trips, where the costs cannot be met from other sources. This excludes the payment of tuition fees.

Non Standard Awards – provide assistance with meeting exceptional or unexpected costs, such as repairs to essential household equipment, emergency situations (including travel costs for family illness or bereavement) hardship due to burglary or fire, priority debts and expenditure not fully met through statutory grants.

Summer Assessments – help students who would struggle financially over the summer holiday. Priority is given to students who are unable to work because they have course work to complete, are lone parents or are unable to find employment due to a disability or ill health.

Short Term loans - If you have not received your student loan BACS payment from the start of term, you can apply for an interim loan from the HEHG. You will be expected to repay this loan when your first student loan instalment arrives. You should make clear in the supporting statement on the application, if you are applying for a short term loan.

Part time students on courses are expected to fund their own living costs. Therefore the HEHG will only offer support for costs such as books, materials and travel directly related to your course (excluding tuition fees unless you qualify for additional Tuition Fee Support). We will take the actual costs of travel to be the cheapest mode of transport available unless a supporting letter is included. Large items of equipment such as computers, cameras, scanners will not be included in any course costs.

Pre DSA (Disabled Students Allowance) tests – In some cases, students must pay for an assessment to prove they have a disability before they can apply for (and hopefully receive) a DSA. The main area where this usually happens is where a student must have an educational psychologist's report to show if they have dyslexia. In these cases student can apply to the HESF for payment of the relevant assessment. Payment will normally be made directly to the Assessment centre.

- Any eligible student who can claim DSA and has been advised to have a test by a tutor or the disability advisor may apply.
- In order to apply, students do NOT have to have taken out the full government Student Loan.

Documents needed (in addition to those listed on the application form):

- If you have paid for the test yourself, you must provide a receipt. If you had the assessment for any other purpose than to claim a DSA, the HEHG will not pay for the assessment.
- A letter from your tutor or Disability advisor confirming you need an assessment.

How will you assess my application?

When assessing your application we look at your expected income and what the government considers to be 'reasonable' expenditure on travel and course related costs (including childcare). If you are facing a financial 'emergency' or there are special circumstances attached to your application, we will look at this on an individual basis. Applications will be treated as either 'standard' or 'non-standard'.

Standard awards – The level of assistance is linked to the assessment of need, by calculating income against expenditure. It is expected that students will apply for all statutory support to which they are entitled (including tax credits and social security benefits where appropriate).

Non-standard awards assist with meeting exceptional costs, such as repairs to essential household equipment, emergency situations (including travel costs for family illness or bereavement) hardship due to burglary or fire, priority debts and expenditure not fully met through statutory grants (e.g. disabled students).

The Institute is aware that many students struggle to manage on the level of state support provided, however, the fact that you have debts is not on its own sufficient to attract a grant from the HEHG. What will be considered is how and when your debts were accumulated, plus what you are doing to support yourself with part time work and where appropriate negotiating with your creditors.

For full-time undergraduates in 2018-19 being assessed for a standard award, NASMA (the National Association of Student money Advisors) has suggested an assumed income of £1,850 per year for non-final year students and £617 per year for final year students. These figures assume income from a variety of sources including: part-time work, bank overdrafts and additional support from parents or partners.

The assumed income rates to be used for all students are:

Non-final year	£1,850
Final Year	£617
Students with dependants or unable to work due to ill health/disability	£0

Actual net income will be used in the assessment of part-time students, including earnings, grants, savings, tax credits and benefits etc.

Composite living costs

For the purposes of assessment, NASMA previously instigated set expenditure levels, known as Composite Living Costs, for all students. These were based on state benefit amounts for general living costs such as food and usual household costs such as utility bills. The actual amount applied will depend on your circumstances.

Based on 2018-19 data the following costs will be considered

Single student or lone parents	£85 per week
Student living with spouse/partner	£137 per week
Child Rate (first child)	£94 per week
Child Rate (additional children)	£73 per week
Rent/Utilities/Travel	Cap £145 per week
Course Costs	Cap £380 per annum

How much support is available?

It is not possible to give the actual amounts that are available to students because there are so many variables that can affect this. However, the following gives an indication of how the amount is calculated. The amount of funding is decreasing each year, therefore you should never “expect” to receive the amount that you received in previous years. HESF awards are capped at a maximum of £200 per learner per year.

Full time students

Standard awards – Students are given a percentage of the difference between their expected income and reasonable expenditure provided their expenditure is higher than their income.

Non-standard Awards – This will be the minimum amount that will enable the student to continue their course. Depending on the circumstances this may not be what the student feels they need – there are capped levels of payment that can be made.

Part time students

Standard award – UP to 100% of the difference between the grant available from the government Funding Package and the students actual costs.

Additional Fee Support – UP to 100% of the difference between the charges made by the Institute for Tuition Fees and the amount given in the Government Funding package.

Childcare Grant – Up to 100% of the cost of childcare whilst you are in class plus reasonable travelling time.

Will HESF affect my benefits?

Applicants are advised that payments from the HESF may have implications for their entitlement to Social Security benefits. Students who receive help from the fund should advise their local Job Centre Plus/Housing benefits office to help clarify their award from the HESF.

Providing false information

Where it is established that a student has provided false information on their application form or at any time during the process of claiming HESF, their application will be automatically cancelled and immediate action taken to ensure money is repaid/future payments stopped and the student disciplinary procedure will be followed.

Application Timeline

Provided that your application has been accurately completed and all appropriate documentary evidence supplied, an assessment and decision should be made within 4 working weeks of submission. Some students may be asked to attend an interview to discuss their application.

How will I know if my application has been successful?

If your application is successful you will be sent written confirmation of your award showing the amount you have been allocated and how payment will be made.

How will I know if my application has been unsuccessful?

We cannot guarantee funding to any student. If your application is unsuccessful you will be notified in writing. This will mean that you are responsible for all course related costs. You will then have to decide how you are to proceed with your course without financial support from the HESF. Details of the appeals procedure are detailed below.

What if I withdraw from my course of study?

If you withdraw from your course you will not receive further financial assistance. You will have to pay any outstanding course related costs and may also have to repay any financial assistance you have been awarded.

Payments

Payment of awards will normally be made by cheque or BACS. BACS is an electronic way of transferring money directly from the institute to your bank. In order that we can make a payment we will need your up to date bank account details so if your account changes you must notify us as soon as possible. Payments will typically take between 2 and 5 days to clear.

Childcare payments will be made directly to the childcare provider. Pre DSA assessment payments are normally made directly to the agency providing the assessment.

If you are over your overdraft the cheque or BACS payment would be “eaten” by the overdraft, so please talk to a member of the Learner Services Finance team. We are very happy to issue cheques to landlords or agencies that you owe money to.

How to appeal

If you believe your application has not been assessed correctly, you do not receive an award or you are not happy with the level of support allocated, you can appeal. You should make your appeal in writing to the Head of Learner Services at the Grimsby Institute, Nuns Corner, Grimsby DN34 5BQ within 4 weeks of receiving the original decision letter/award notice.

Students should state the grounds upon which they are appealing and provide additional evidence to support their appeal if applicable. Appeals will be assessed on a monthly basis and you will be notified in writing within 2 weeks of the appeal meeting. The decision of the appeals panel will be final.

How to complete the application form

It is important that supporting documentation is enclosed with your application form. Learner Services cannot return original documentation, so please provide legible photocopies. Applications that do not have supporting documents are incomplete, cannot be processed and will be returned to you.

Please ensure you complete all areas of the application form fully and ensure you read and sign the declaration.

You are advised to submit a supporting statement, succinctly explaining the reason(s) for applying.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The TEC Partnership follows GDPR regulations in matters of data protection. In order to process your application we need to record the details you have provided on your bursary application form. We may need to contact you about your application and would use the contact details you have provided in this form to do so. Your application and any payment details will be stored for a period of up to 7 years for audit purposes and would be shared with auditors and the Office for Students who fund Higher Education, if required. Personal data will be used solely in the department for statistical purposes and electronic records keeping. The data will not be passed to any other third party without your consent, except when the TEC Partnership is required to do so by law. By signing and submitted a HESF application, you agree to this.

What evidence should I provide?

The form includes a list of documents you will need to submit with your completed application form. If any evidence is missing an assessment cannot be made. In addition to this you may need to send photocopies of documents specific to your situation. If you have any questions about the documents you need to produce please contact a member of the Learner Services Finance team.

Completed application forms should be submitted with ALL supporting documentation to Learner Services **IN PERSON** or **by recorded delivery post** to HE - HESF Applications at your appropriate campus:

Learner Services
Grimsby Institute of Further & Higher Education
Nuns Corner
Grimsby
DN34 5BQ

Learner Services
Scarborough TEC
Filey Road
Scarborough
YO11 3AZ

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