



## The Student Advice Centre's guide to Sheffield Hallam's Hardship Fund 2022-23

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with advice on how to write a detailed statement for your application to the Hallam Hardship Fund which is managed by the University. It also outlines information about eligibility for the fund and some alternative grant options.

Planning ahead and budgeting is very important. For some students the situation can become unmanageable due to an emergency or change in circumstances. If you find yourself in this situation, and have exhausted other available options, the University administers a limited pot of funding designed to help students in emergency need.

The **Hardship Fund** is for students who find themselves in unexpected financial difficulty with an immediate need for funding. You will need to focus on how your circumstances were unexpected, what impact your circumstances have had on you financially and demonstrate why there is an immediate need for funding e.g., risk of homelessness. You can find more information about it here:

[Financial Difficulties | FAQ \(shu.ac.uk\)](#)

Before you make an application, it may be helpful to see if you are eligible for the University's **Student Success Scholarship** (SSS):

<https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/student-success-scholarship>.

The SSS has 3 application points and 3 payment dates throughout the year. Please see the guidelines for more information:

<https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/sheffield-hallam-university-bursary-guidelines>

You can make applications to both funds. If you are eligible for the Student Success Scholarship (SSS) and need financial support straight away, the Student Funding Team (which administers the funds) may decide to pay you some of your SSS early rather than award money from the Hardship Fund.

### Am I eligible?

You should be enrolled on a Sheffield Hallam University course and have applied for all the student finance and welfare benefits you are entitled to before making an application. If you would like a funding and/or benefits check, you can have an appointment at the Student Advice Centre. We may then be able to support your application, to demonstrate you are claiming everything you are entitled to.

### Exceptions

If you are an international student you should instead contact the International Student Experience team (IET) to discuss eligibility for the International Hardship Fund:

<https://www.shu.ac.uk/myhallam/support-at-hallam/international-experience>



If you are not paying fees / full fees for 2022-23 academic year, speak to the University's Student Funding Team (which administers the Hardship Fund) or the Student Advice Centre about your circumstances and whether you can apply to the Hardship Fund.

Postgraduate students are expected to have made adequate provision for financing their studies, but if you have experienced exceptional unforeseen circumstances your application may be considered.

## What does the fund pay for?

The fund is offered as a short-term solution and normally only covers priority debts. Priority debts include:

- Mortgage repayments and loans secured on your home
- Rent
- Gas and electricity debts
- Council tax
- Certain payments ordered by the courts

The fund is strictly limited, and awards are subject to available funds. In normal circumstances awards will not exceed £500.

There is no automatic entitlement to an award from the fund and all applications are considered on their individual merits. The Hardship Fund cannot be used to cover long-term living costs or to subsidise a substantial shortfall in income.

The fund will not cover tuition fee debt.

For further details about what situations may be considered and which are not please see the guidance document: [Financial Difficulties | FAQ \(shu.ac.uk\)](#)

## How do I apply?

You will need to apply through UniHub:  
<https://unihub.shu.ac.uk/students/login?ReturnUrl=%2f>

Once you make your application the team who administers the fund may invite you for an appointment to discuss your situation in more detail. This is normal and can be helpful to your application.

## What should I include in my statement?

It is always helpful to contact the Student Advice Centre before starting your application as they can offer advice on your current situation and give feedback on a draft statement once you have written it.



Here is the structure we would recommend using for the statement section so that your application is as strong as possible. Try to answer all the questions that are applicable to you in full sentences.

## Unexpected event(s)

- What has happened and how was it unexpected? The fund will normally not pay for debts accrued before your course began.
- When did this happen?
- Is this situation ongoing?
- What impact did this have on your finances?

## Your current financial situation

- What income do you have currently? (Student Finance/NHS bursary, credit cards, overdraft, wages, benefits, etc.)
- Outline all your weekly or monthly outgoings. Are there any outgoings that you can reduce or already have reduced? For example, do you pay for online subscriptions which you can cancel without paying a fee (Netflix, Apple Music, Spotify)?
- List all your priority debts (see above) or list the dates the bills are due if you think you will be unable to pay them on time.
- List all your other debts or financial commitments that you are unable to get out of (such as phone bills etc.)
- Do you have an overdraft? Have you obtained a student overdraft? Can you use this? If no, explain why.
- If you have been borrowing money from friends/family how much have you borrowed? Have they asked you to pay it back? The fund will not repay friends or family, but it is helpful information for the decision maker.
- Do you have a credit card or personal loan to repay? Have these creditors been contacting you?
- Are you doing anything to manage your financial situation?
- Are you working or looking for work? If not, can you explain why?
- Do you have any gambling debt?
- Do you have anyone who is financially dependent on you?

## How will the money you get from the hardship fund affect your situation?

- How much would you need from the fund?
- How would you use the money? Be clear about how the money would resolve the issues you have outlined above.
- If you are asking for essential living costs you might choose to upload a spreadsheet or another document showing your workings.



- How would you ensure that you are able to sustain yourself after the payment? The team take this part of your application very seriously. If you are unable to demonstrate you can support yourself after the payment this may affect their decision making.
- Explain the impact your financial situation is having on your wellbeing and your course.

## How long will it take?

Decisions can take around 6 weeks. During busy periods, applications can take longer. If you have an emergency, please contact both the Student Advice Centre and Hallam Help (0114 225 2222 or see: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/myhallam/help-and-support>).

## What if I get rejected?

You may have grounds to appeal, please contact the Student Advice Centre for advice on this. There is also information in the Hardship Fund guidance document regarding making an appeal.

## I am worried about my debts

If you have debts which you accrued before you started your course at Hallam please contact the Student Advice Centre for advice about your hardship fund application and your situation. It may be possible to negotiate repayment of your debts, an Adviser can discuss this with you. Please also see our self-help guides on debt, funding and benefits on the Money pages of our website:

[https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice\\_help/advicehelp/money/](https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/advicehelp/money/)

Useful support services:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/>

<https://www.nationaldebtline.org/>

<https://www.begambleaware.org/confidential-help/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-financial-worries/>

<https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

<https://www.shu.ac.uk/wellbeing>



## **I am not in debt but worried about my budgeting**

Contact the Student Advice Centre for a funding and / or benefits check, to see if there is anything else you could apply for. You can also see our website information on these topics.

The Student Funding Team at Hallam has a Money skills webpage available to use for students. It can be accessed here -

<https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/money-skills>

It covers a wide range of money management topics. The team offer appointments to help students with money management. Appointments can be booked here:

<https://www.shu.ac.uk/myhallam/support-at-hallam/student-funding>

## **Are there any other bursaries or scholarships I can apply for?**

Full details of all the University's bursaries and scholarships can be found here:

<https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/student-finance/bursaries-and-scholarships>

Healthcare students may also be able to apply for the Exceptional Support Fund, though must have exhausted all other sources of funding first including applying for the Hardship Fund. More information is available here:

<https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/additional-financial-help>

## **Emergency Vouchers**

Emergency Vouchers are available to provide temporary assistance if you have an immediate financial crisis. If you are unable to afford food, toiletries or other personal/essential items and have no other alternative options, you can submit a request for a £30 Tesco voucher.

For more information about the Emergency Vouchers please see:

<https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/financial-difficulties>

## **Food banks**

The Student Advice Centre can complete a referral to your local food bank if you live in Sheffield. If you live outside Sheffield they can help you find out how you access your local food bank.

## **Charity funded non-repayable grants**

Many charities offer non-repayable grants. Help is usually based on factors such as where you live, your age, gender, current or past jobs, any health conditions you have or your

# Money

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nationality. Some funds offer help based on the situation of your partner or former partner. For more information follow this link: <https://grants-search.turn2us.org/>

**The information in this guide and on our web pages is given in good faith and has been carefully checked. However, the Student Advice Centre cannot accept responsibility for any action that you take on the basis of the information provided.**

**If you require the information in a different format, please contact us at: [advicecentre@shu.ac.uk](mailto:advicecentre@shu.ac.uk)**

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