

Higher Education Hardship Fund Policy and Guidance for Students

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A. Introduction

1. ArtsEd understands that Higher Education students may have short-term, unforeseen difficulties during their studies. In these circumstances, students are able to apply for assistance from 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. All students enrolled on CertHE, BA and MA courses at ArtsEd are eligible to apply for assistance.
4. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents, which can be found on the [Policies page of our website](#):
 - Interruption of Studies Policy
 - Support for Study Policy
 - Personal Tutoring Policy

B. Definition and Principles

5. 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.
6. 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 cost of tuition fees;
 - Any payment to cover debt repayment costs such as credit card debts.
 7. 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.
 8. Each application will be considered on an individual basis by the Hardship Panel including any specific information regarding the safeguarding of the student and/or dependants.
 9. The decision of the Hardship Panel will only be sent to a student's ArtsEd email address.
 10. 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 to be eligible to apply for assistance through the Hardship Fund.
 11. 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

12. To apply for assistance through the Hardship Fund, students must complete an application and submit evidence using the [Hardship Fund application form](#).
13. Applications can only be considered once the online application and all supporting evidence have been submitted. Students should allow up to four weeks for a response but we will aim to consider applications within two weeks wherever possible. Applications are considered in the order received.
14. 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;
 - DaDA allocation letter for the relevant year;
 - Three months' bank statements for all your bank accounts (online statements are acceptable but not Excel spreadsheets).
15. Students applying for assistance from the Hardship Fund will need to provide evidence of outgoings and will need to submit any of the following that may apply to them:
 - Rent/tenancy contract, mortgage statement, parental confirmation of contribution to rent/mortgage;
 - 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.

16. Queries regarding the application process should be directed to Student Services at studentsupport@artsed.co.uk.

D. Decision Making Process

17. The Hardship Panel is chaired by the Head of Student Services or nominee.
18. The Hardship Panel will consider all aspects of the application including the applicant's supporting statement, financial documents, and any other evidence provided.
19. 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.

E. Appeal

20. Students may appeal the outcome of their Hardship Fund application but only on procedural grounds, and not based on the judgement of the Hardship Panel. That is, an appeal can only be made if you consider that procedures were not properly followed, and you were therefore treated less favourably than other applicants.
21. In the first instance the appeal should be addressed to the Registrar via studentsupport@artsed.co.uk.
22. The appeal should contain an outline of the alleged procedural inadequacies, with appropriate evidence.
23. Students must submit the appeal within 10 working days of the date that the decision was communicated.
24. The appeal will be acknowledged, and the student will receive a response within 10 working days.
25. The facts as outlined in the appeal will be investigated by the Registrar (or nominee), and will inform their written response.
26. If a student is dissatisfied with the response, they may then appeal to the Principal of ArtsEd.
27. The student must submit their appeal to the Principal within ten working days of the receiving the Registrar's decision.
28. The Principal will respond to the appeal within ten working days of receiving it.
29. The Principal, in considering the appeal, will call for all the relevant information, and will consider the applicant's case within the context of that information. They will respond in writing giving the reasons for their decision.
30. The decision of the Principal is final.

F. Confidentiality and Data Protection

31. All information obtained as part of a Hardship Fund application will be held in accordance with our data protection principles (available on the [Policies page of our website](#)) and relevant legislation. We 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.
32. 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 a relevant member of staff at ArtsEd such as the student's Personal Tutor or the relevant Safeguarding and Welfare Officer.

G. Support Available for Students

33. We have a variety of support services available for students.
- i. **Student Support:** Students should be directed to the Student Support team where there is a concern. Students can contact the team by sending an email to studentsupport@artsed.co.uk. Details of the support services available can be found on the [Student Services page of our website](#) and include a foodbank of cupboard items and toiletries for anyone in need, 1:1 financial support sessions and an Oyster card available for loan in emergencies.
 - ii. **Student Counselling:** Students can self-refer to ArtsEd's Counselling Service by completing the form on [Student Services page of our website](#). The ArtsEd Counselling Service offers a confidential space for students to seek advice about, and discuss matters impacting their psychological wellbeing. Students are offered:
 - Short term 1-2-1 counselling which can help students work on immediate problems (maximum of six sessions)
 - Assistance with developing healthy coping techniques
 - Support with gaining understanding of underlying issues
 - Assistance with developing a longer-term treatment plan, if necessary
 - iii. **Support for Study:** The Support for Study Procedure may be used as set out in the Support for Study Policy, available on the [Policies page of our website](#). 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.

Version Control	
Document Title	Higher Education Hardship Fund Policy and Guidance for Students
Maintained By	Head of Student Services
Owned By	Registrar
Approving Committee / Ratifying Body	HE Committee
Last Reviewed	March 2026 • Minor clarifications and editorial changes • Addition of appeals procedure
To be Reviewed	Academic year 2030-31 (or prior if required)
Current Version	Version 1.3
Location of master document	Organisational File Shares > Policies > HE
Web location	artsed.co.uk/about-us/policies