

Childcare Fund & Lone Parent Childcare Grant Procedures

The Purpose of the Childcare Fund is to provide help in meeting the costs of study-related childcare to eligible students who are unable to meet these costs independently.

The following guidance covers who can apply, what you can apply for, how to apply and how we assess the application.

Please take the time to read this guidance carefully and prepare your application.

This guidance is set out by the Scottish Government, you can find further details on the [SAAS funding webpages](#).

Students can apply for funding to assist with childcare costs. There is an expectation that you will apply for all Government or Local Authority funding to which you are entitled. If you have additional costs that aren't covered by that funding, then you can apply to us for a contribution towards your remaining study-related childcare costs each academic year.

Government Funding: The Scottish Government provides a set number of Funded Early Learning and Childcare hours. It is your responsibility to apply for this funding if applicable. To find out more visit [Government Funding Early Learning and Childcare](#). For out-of-school care (e.g. breakfast/after school clubs) there may be Local Authority discounts or funding available. Contact your child's school or Local Authority for more information.

Study-related Childcare:

University childcare funding is managed differently to what you might have had before e.g. if you received support while studying at college.

When we talk about “study-related” childcare needs, examples include:

- o Virtual attendance at lectures or seminars e.g. via Microsoft Teams calls.
- o In-person classroom-based learning.
- o Travel-time when attending in person activities.
- o Independent study and research.
- o Group work.

Who can apply:

- Applicants must be a **fully matriculated UK domiciled undergraduate or postgraduate taught student** with a **Home fee status**, attending an **undergraduate or postgraduate** course at St Andrews.

- Applicants must have taken out their full entitlement to student support available, this includes government funding available to them.
- Students from the rest of the UK (RUK) or Scottish postgraduate research students are **not** eligible to apply, if you fall into this category and require childcare support, please apply to the relevant Discretionary Fund.
- International and EU students are **not** eligible to apply. If you fall into this category and require childcare support, please apply to the International Student Discretionary Fund.
- Students must have **registered childcare** in place for their child.
- If you are a lone parent with childcare in receipt of a Lone Parent Grant from SAAS, you can apply for the additional **Lone Parents Childcare Grant (LPCG)** through this childcare application.
- **ScotGEM** students in year one and two of their studies are eligible to apply to the Childcare Fund. Those in year three and four should apply to Dundee University for financial support.
- In addition to student support, applicants must have applied for all other sources of funding available to them, i.e. Universal credits and any other relevant benefits.
- If you receive **Universal Credits**, you must declare this in your student funding so that your Universal Credit claim is calculated correctly. If you submit Universal Credit statements to us that show your student funding is not being taken into account, we may not be able to assess your Discretionary Fund application.
- Applicants must also meet any further eligibility conditions stipulated within the [SAAS guidelines](#) for the current academic year.
- Students who have previously studied at this level and are therefore not eligible for tuition fee support (or equivalent) are still eligible to apply to the Childcare fund if they are in receipt of the maximum student loan available to them and satisfy all other eligibility criteria.
- Should there be times when our budgets are limited, we may have to consider the previous studies and any support the applicant received for this.

What you can apply for:

- **How Much Childcare Do You Need?**
 - Your schedule is likely to change throughout the academic session.
 - This means you'll need to think about the whole year and plan ahead.

IMPORTANT:

- University term breaks usually do not align with school holidays. Be careful to check and to apply for all days/weeks that you are going to need.
- You should discuss your childcare requirements in detail with your Childcare Provider. They will then need to complete and sign the **Childcare Provider Form**, detailing your agreed requirements after any Government funding has been taken into account.
- It is you and not the Childcare Provider who is applying to the University for funding. Your childcare contract is between you and your Childcare Provider.
- You remain ultimately responsible for any contract and payments to which you have committed.

- Applicants may apply for a contribution towards their study related childcare costs in any University academic year.
- We will query any childcare costs that appear excessive or unreasonable.
- We will not consider any costs associated with any family members providing care for a child.
- Benefit rules prevent us from contributing to any work-related childcare costs students may have, without this directly reducing the benefit they may be eligible to receive (i.e. childcare element of Universal Credit)
- We will only be able to consider the costs of registered childcare.
- If studies are extended for any reason and you require additional childcare that leaves you in financial hardship, please [contact us](#).

How to apply:

- Applications will open before the beginning of semester one, please refer to [our website](#) for updates.
- **Students can only apply for childcare support if they apply for their statutory student support and provide a copy of their award letter.** We cannot finalise applications without this information.
- Applicants should complete all sections of the application and include the supporting documents requested. Any missing documents or incomplete information may delay a decision being made.
- If applicants have a quick question about their application or the process, please [contact us](#)
- Applicants should ensure all information provided is accurate.
- Access to the application form can be found within the ‘**Scholarships and Funding**’ section of [MySaint](#).

How we assess applications:

- Applications are assessed in the order they are received.
- We assess applications as quickly as we can, but it can take up to three weeks for us to respond and may be longer at peak times in the year or if your application has missing information. We ask that applicants refrain from enquiring about the status of their application until three weeks has passed from the date of submission to allow us time to process it.
- A uniform method of assessing is adopted to ensure continuity and fairness, all applications are income assessed, using the evidence provided.
- Once an application is submitted, we will ensure that applicants are:
 - eligible to apply
 - have all other funding in place
 - have completed the application fully and correctly
 - have provided all required evidence
 - have shown appropriate money management, including reasonable figures for expenditure
- If anything is missing from the application, we will contact the applicant requesting this.

- Once submitted we will contact the childcare provider using the details on the form to confirm the information provided is correct.
- Applicants must tell us of all forms of income, such as benefits, parental contribution, child maintenance etc.
- If further information is requested and is not provided within three weeks of the request, an application will be automatically rejected. If the student still requires support, they can [contact the Money Advice Team](#) and a new application can be opened.

What happens next:

- Once an application is submitted you will receive an automatic email confirming this.
- All correspondence will be sent to your university email address, please ensure you check this regularly, especially if you submit an application over a semester break.
- You will receive a response once the application has been assessed.
- Our response may be an award notification, request for further information, request for a meeting with a money adviser or an email notification that the application has been rejected and reason for this.
- If it is agreed that awarded payments will be made monthly, directly to the student, it is then the students responsibility to use this funding to pay for childcare.
- Award notifications will state the award amount, frequency of payment and method of payment. **Please ensure you have added your bank details to the system within [MySaint](#) to allow any BACS payments to be made quickly.**
- A percentage of random checks may be carried out on awards made for audit purposes. Any fraudulent claims will be reported to the relevant authorities and may result in disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the University [Code of Conduct](#).

What you need to do if you receive an award:

- You must notify us as soon as possible if there any changes to your circumstances, this should be sent [here](#). This includes but not limited to:
 - Leave of absence/withdrawal from course
 - Change to your financial circumstances
 - Change to your module credit load
- Any change to individual circumstances may result in a revised award. If an overpayment has occurred, we may request that it is repaid. However, any repayments would be discussed with the student to ensure this is manageable and will not put the student into financial hardship
- In order to satisfy our audit requirements, you need to send us evidence that you have used the funds to pay childcare costs. This can be in the form of a receipt issued by the childcare provider or a screenshot of the payment transaction coming from your bank account.
- **Please send us this evidence by the 15th of every month.** If we do not receive evidence that the funds have been used for childcare costs, future instalments may be stopped.
- If you think that you will need additional funding from us (e.g. because your circumstances have changed, or childcare costs have increased, since the application for support was assessed) please let us know and we will arrange a call with one of the Money Advisers who must approve any additional funding.

- You must update us of any changes to your childcare provision during the academic year. If there are any changes to the childcare provision during the academic year which mean that you will not require the level of funding initially assessed, please let us know as soon as you can so that a Money Adviser can arrange, if appropriate, to reduce or stop future instalments.

Confidentiality:

- The university retains all documents related to an application as audit checks are performed annually to ensure awards are being made appropriately. Digital records are stored in a secure system.
- The privacy and confidentiality of students is respected at all times during the application process. Please see the [University Confidentiality Policy](#).
- Although the information given on the application form is confidential to Student Services, you should be aware that the University's auditor may also have access to this information.
- Anonymous statistical information is collected about financial expenditure for students for reporting purposes and budget management.
- Application forms and related documents will be retained within our system for seven years, after which they are deleted.

What to do if you disagree with the application decision:

- Applicants are encouraged to contact the [money team](#) in the first instance if they disagree with the outcome of their application, in most cases a conversation will allow applicants to present information that might not have been included in the first instance and may make a difference to the award outcome.
- If, after speaking to an adviser, an applicant wishes to formally query the outcome of their application, the reasons for disagreeing with the decision should be submitted in writing to the Student Services Director, within 28 days of receiving the final decision. Correspondence can be submitted [here](#), the Director will aim to respond within 5 working days or less (unless there are exceptional circumstances).