

# Charities - UK Students 2017/18

This guide aims to provide information to UK students studying at Middlesex University and who find themselves in financial hardship.

Money from charities may sometimes be the only way of bridging financial gaps so may be worth considering.

Some Trusts and Charities make awards to assist students with study-related costs, such as books, equipment, travel or childcare but they will often have strict eligibility criteria to adhere to. For example, they may want evidence of unforeseen financial difficulties not just bad budgeting or unrealistic expectations of course costs. They may also prefer to support students nearing the end of their course. There are likely to be strict deadlines within which to apply, so take a note of these too. There is no point in writing difficult personal letters requesting help if you have failed to meet essential criteria or the funds have already been spent!

There are also Community Organisations where you can get specific items which are nearly new or good quality second hand. For example, books, clothes, furniture and domestic appliances are often available at the fraction of the price you would expect to pay in a shop and can help students on limited budgets to cope with having to purchase expensive items.

**Note:** Ensure you have maximised all Government funding available. Read our information guides to learn more about Student Finance England Loans and Grants, Welfare Benefits, Tax Credits, Bursaries, Scholarships and the University Student Support Funds. Postgraduate students will also find relevant information here. <http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/swat>

## What kind of qualifying criteria will charities expect?

The eligibility criteria of charities and trusts can be diverse and restricting. However the vast majority require applicants to meet one or more of the following; age, sex, religion, subject of study, country of birth, parents occupation, children. It is a waste of yours and the charities time if inappropriate applications are submitted so read carefully to see who they are trying to support.

## Procedure for applying

The procedure can vary enormously. Most charities request a cover letter with an application form and a letter of reference to support your case. You may also be interviewed over the phone to clarify your situation. If there is no clear guidance, write to the

charity detailing the type of funding required, your personal circumstances and academic background, including any supporting evidence.

## When to apply

Most trusts have specific opening periods with deadlines for receipt of the application. It is important to follow the guidance in the information supplied. If there is no deadline it may mean you can apply at any time during the year. Try not to leave your applications for charitable funding to the last minute, as some charities can be slow in processing your details.

## What to consider when writing your letter

When writing your letter to a charity you should include the following:

- Who you are – describe yourself, this could include your age, the country/region of UK you are from, your religion if any and any other background information.
- What you are studying, which year you are in, where you are studying and why you chose to do the above.
- Details of unforeseen circumstances and evidence if applicable.
- How much you require – try to use realistic amounts, check the trust criteria for stated maximum awards. You can request a contribution to the entire amount.
- Supply references i.e. from an academic member of staff, a Student Adviser or Counsellor. If references are not available in time you can send off a letter and suggest you will send them later. Often applications require a university stamp; you can visit UniHelp for this.

**Note:** Be honest and concise, display correspondence neatly, try and tailor your letter to a particular charity. However, it may be possible to use a similar letter for a variety of charities.

## What if you don't get a response?

These organisations deal with a large volume of applications and letters. If you do not receive a response it is most likely that you have been unsuccessful. However, you can chase up your letter/application by telephoning or sending a polite e-mail.

## How do I find relevant Trusts and Charities?

Turn2us is a key search engine which can give advice on sources of funding and other types of help. These search engines are good starting points as they are clearing houses which can identify charities for student's particular needs. Turn2us has a database of around 3,000 charities who give grants to people who require help with the costs associated with education or training courses and have welfare and financial needs.

Visit [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk) or call 0808 802 2000

## Other search engines

[www.unigrants.co.uk](http://www.unigrants.co.uk)

[www.charitychoice.co.uk](http://www.charitychoice.co.uk)

[www.disability-grants.org.uk](http://www.disability-grants.org.uk)

[www.trusselltrust.org/gethelp/grants-search](http://www.trusselltrust.org/gethelp/grants-search)

You might also like to try the following books, available from local libraries.

- The Educational Grants Directory
- A Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need
- Directory of Grant Making Trusts
- Charities Digest
- The Grants Register

## Relevant Charities we are aware of:

Somerset Undergraduate Award awards are for former pupils (under 25) of secondary schools in the London Borough of Haringey who are also resident in the Borough. Application forms are published on 1st May prior to the academic year to which they relate too. Decisions are made November to July. Go to the website for more details:

[www.gc-solutions.org.uk/page11.html](http://www.gc-solutions.org.uk/page11.html)

## Nursing charities

- The Sandra Charitable Trust
- Edith Cavell Nursing fund - [www.cavellnursestrust.org](http://www.cavellnursestrust.org)

The Edith Cavell Fund requires that all applicants were previously employed as a nurse. Please complete the on line application first to check you meet their criteria.

**Note:** These charities require supporting letters from tutors.

- The Eaton Trust (For Artists, Nurses and Gentlewomen) can only be used for specific items of need  
[www.eaton-fund.co.uk](http://www.eaton-fund.co.uk)

## Community Organisations

Check your local council that might have community projects which recycle and reuse domestic furniture and appliances for the benefit of people in need. Items include fridges, freezers, cookers, sofas, beds, tables, chairs, bookcases, and wardrobes to name a few. Items are sold at a low cost and you may need to be referred by the University, or show evidence of being on benefits, on low income, a student or OAP.

**The Freecycle Network** is a non-profit movement where people advertise items they are giving away, thereby cutting waste. Membership is free. [www.uk.freecycle.org](http://www.uk.freecycle.org)

**The National Childbirth Trust** provides support and information for parents. They also hold nearly new sales with baby and children's clothes and equipment at reduced prices. [www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)

**Netmums** is a family of local sites that cover the UK, offering information to parents on almost everything a family needs to know. They also have a message board where you can exchange nearly new items. Sometimes they are free!  
[www.netmums.com](http://www.netmums.com)

**Oxfam's Second-hand Store** is the largest Oxfam Shop in the world! All money raised goes towards funding Oxfam's work around the world. Items include clothing & shoes, books, music & movies, bric-a-brac, toys etc. [www.oxfam.org.uk/shop](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/shop)

**Preloved** is a website where you can buy and sell second hand goods at a very low cost. Register on the site and look for local bargains of all kinds. [www.preloved.co.uk](http://www.preloved.co.uk)

**Local Charity Stores** encourage recycling of useful clothes, toys, bric-a-brac and sometimes, furniture items, all of which are sold at a fraction of the retail price and of course, proceeds help good causes.

**Car Boot Sales** are useful places to both buy and sale under-used items around the home, so why not try to make some money as well as find useful items for your own home.

**Alternative Guide to Funding.** This is an online publication with sample letters and tips on how to apply to charities. This 146 page booklet is in the reference section of the Sheppard Library.  
[www.postgraduate-funding.com/gateway](http://www.postgraduate-funding.com/gateway)

**Note** for MPhil's and PhD's. Ideally most 'studentship' funding applications and identifying a potential Supervisor at your subject

school should be made nearer 9 months to one academic year prior to the start of the course. Also check for advice about potential 'fee waivers' during your course in the first year.

Visit: [www.mdx.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate-research-degrees](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate-research-degrees) or contact the Research Office: [studentship.research@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:studentship.research@mdx.ac.uk) or Research Council at [www.rcuk.ac.uk](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk)

### University resources

The Employability Centre includes a number of the publications listed above, e.g. 'Prospects' Postgraduate Funding Guide available free for students. They are based in the Employability Centre College Building. Email [Employability@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:Employability@mdx.ac.uk) or Tel: +44 (0)20 8411 4923

### Useful websites

[www.scholarship-search.org.uk](http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk)

[www.scholarship-positions.com](http://www.scholarship-positions.com)

[www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)

[www.postgrad.com](http://www.postgrad.com)

[www.findaphd.co.uk](http://www.findaphd.co.uk)

[www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk](http://www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk)

[www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk)

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)

[www.universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk)

[www.stapleytrust.org](http://www.stapleytrust.org)

[www.wellcome.ac.uk](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk)

[www.vegetariancharity.org.uk](http://www.vegetariancharity.org.uk)

[www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study)

### What if you are successful in your application?

In some cases the award granted might be specifically designated to help with University accommodation costs or tuition fees. You must request a letter saying they will sponsor you (include your student number) Our finance team will then issue an Invoice to the charity to pay into your Middlesex University account.

### For those needing help with budgeting and debt issues:

**Money Advice Service** offers free, unbiased information and advice on all money matters. Visit: [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk) or call 0300 500 5000.

**National Debt Line** has free resources and advice to help you budget and deal with debt.

Visit [www.nationaldebtline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldebtline.org.uk) or call 0808 808 4000

**Civil Legal Advice Service.** Get free and confidential legal advice in England and Wales, if you're eligible for legal aid, on welfare benefit appeals, debt, if your home is at risk, housing, and special educational needs, amongst other things. Visit [www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice](http://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice) or call 0845 345 4 345

### Any questions?

Call 020 8411 3008 or contact Kevin Ward from the Student Welfare Advice Team - [k.ward@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:k.ward@mdx.ac.uk)

You can access all of our other Welfare Advice Guides at: <http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/welfare-guides>

Middlesex University Student Welfare Advice Team have made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this leaflet is accurate. Middlesex University however, cannot be held responsible for any omissions or errors.

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