

Charities - UK Students

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 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!

Note: Ensure you have maximised all Government and student funding available. Read our Welfare Advice Guides at:

<http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/welfare-guides>

Also look at scholarships the university has to offer ideally before the start of the course at:

www.mdx.ac.uk/study-with-us/fees-and-funding/scholarships-and-bursaries

There is the University's (discretionary) 'Student Support Fund' which is open in November it is 'means tested' on your income. Look on your student account for this if you want to. Note you must have maximised your student income to qualify but read the qualifying criteria before you make an application.

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 covering 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, and any other background information which you think is relevant and what you are trying to achieve with your qualification
- 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.
- 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 an application with an additional letter explaining you will send references later. Often applications require a university stamp; you can visit UniHelp for this.
- If you are a Nursing Social work student it is often a requirement that you need a supporting letter off your tutor on how your Placement is progressing.

Remember this is a formal letter write your name, address, contact details, date of birth and student number in the top right hand corner of the letter. 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. So it could take up to 2 months to reach a decision. If you do not receive a response after this time it is most likely that you have been unsuccessful. You can chase up your application by telephoning or sending a polite e-mail. Remember one of the main reasons for unsuccessful applications is the failure to follow the eligibility criteria correctly.

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. If they are not going to pay you directly which is often the case now, you must request a letter from a charity on their headed note paper stating 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.

How do I find relevant trusts and charities?

Turn2us is a key website which can give advice on sources of funding and other types of help. Turn2us and other search engine websites are good starting points as they can identify charities for student's particular needs. Visit www.turn2us.org.uk or call 0808 802 2000

Other useful search engine websites

The following websites can also be used as tools to search for additional financial support:

www.charitychoice.co.uk

www.disability-grants.org/

www.trusselltrust.org/gethelp/grants-search

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

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

Other charities we are aware of

Somerset Undergraduate Award awards

This is 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

Check your local authority or school to see if they run a similar scheme.

Social Work Charities: www.swbt.uk/

www.basw.co.uk/what-we-do/financial-support-social-workers

The Gilchrist Educational Trust and The Sidney Perry foundation

They both require a completed form, your personal statement, names and addresses of 2 referees. One of which should supply the academic reference (on official paper) and statement by an independent person recommending you for a grant (see application form). If you are continuing to a postgraduate course include a copy of your transcript of progression. Make sure you meet the eligibility criteria:

www.gilchristgrants.org.uk

www.the-sidney-perry-foundation.co.uk/what-we-do/

Nursing charities

- The Sandra Charitable Trust - request this application from : Lynne.Webster@moorefamilysupportgroup.com
- Edith Cavell Nursing fund - Only open to applicants that are or previously employed as a Nurse/Midwife. Please complete the online application first to check you meet their criteria for applying. www.cavellnursestrust.org

Note: These charities require supporting letters from tutors that describe your academic performance on your placement.

- The Eaton Trust (For Artists, Nurses and Gentlewomen) can only be used for specific items of need e.g. domestic appliances, furniture www.eaton-fund.co.uk

Community Organisations

Check your local council that might have community projects which recycle and re-use 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 a low income, a student or OAP.

Mutual Aid groups

Mutual Aid is a list of local support groups that have been established during the corona-virus (COVID-19) pandemic. Whether you're self-isolating or are just in need of help, or you

have time available and want to help others you can use this website to find a group local to you. There are currently 2061 groups listed in UK on their website. www.mutual-aid.co.uk/

Foodbanks

The Trussell Trust is working to stop UK hunger and poverty. They have network of foodbanks which provide emergency food and support to people in crisis. Call or email your nearest one first to find out what the criteria is for applying www.trusselltrust.org

The Freecycle Network is a non-profit movement where people advertise items they are giving away, thereby cutting waste. Membership is free. www.freecycle.org

The National Childbirth Trust (NCT) 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

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

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

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 sell under-used items around the home, so why not try to make some money as well as find useful items for your own home.

University resources

Alternative Guide to Post Graduate Funding. This is an online publication with sample letters and tips on how to apply to charities. This 160 page booklet is in the reference section of the Sheppard Library.
www.postgraduate-funding.com/gateway

MDXworks on-campus As well as assisting students with CV's and Interview skills the Employability Centre includes a number of the publications, e.g. 'Prospects' available free for students. They are based College Building Rm CG07 open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm (call first, opening times may vary)
<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/employment>
Tel: 020 8411 6161

Also for maximising your income through paid, part-time opportunities you can do this through Middlesex Unitemps you can register now at: www.unitemps.com

Useful websites

www.scholarship-search.org.uk

www.scholarship-positions.com

www.postgrad.com

www.findaphd.com

www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk

www.stapleytrust.org

www.wellcome.ac.uk/funding

www.vegetariancharity.org.uk

www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study

If you have any questions or need assistance with charity applications?

Please note: this support is available for existing/prospective students at Middlesex University: Email Kevin Ward from the Student Welfare Advice Team: k.ward@mdx.ac.uk
Or submit an enquiry at:
<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/unihelp>
(use the subject Welfare Service in the enquiry) or make an appointment.

You can access some of our other Welfare Advice Guide information leaflets 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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Help with your finances

Life at university can prove expensive at times so to help you manage your finances, we offer a selection of services that cover everything you need to know about things like loans, fees, welfare benefits, housing and much more.

Appointments

To book an appointment with a SWAT Advisor visit the following link:
<https://unihelponline.mdx.ac.uk/#/offlineBookAppointmentService/MzAw//MTY=/>

STUDENT WELFARE ADVICE TEAM

Welfare Advice Guides

Our Welfare Advice Guides cover key areas of advice relevant to students:
unihub.mdx.ac.uk/welfare-guides

Contact us

Enquiry: <https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/unihelp>
Phone: 020 8411 3008 -
(11am - 1pm and 2pm - 4pm Mon to Fri)