

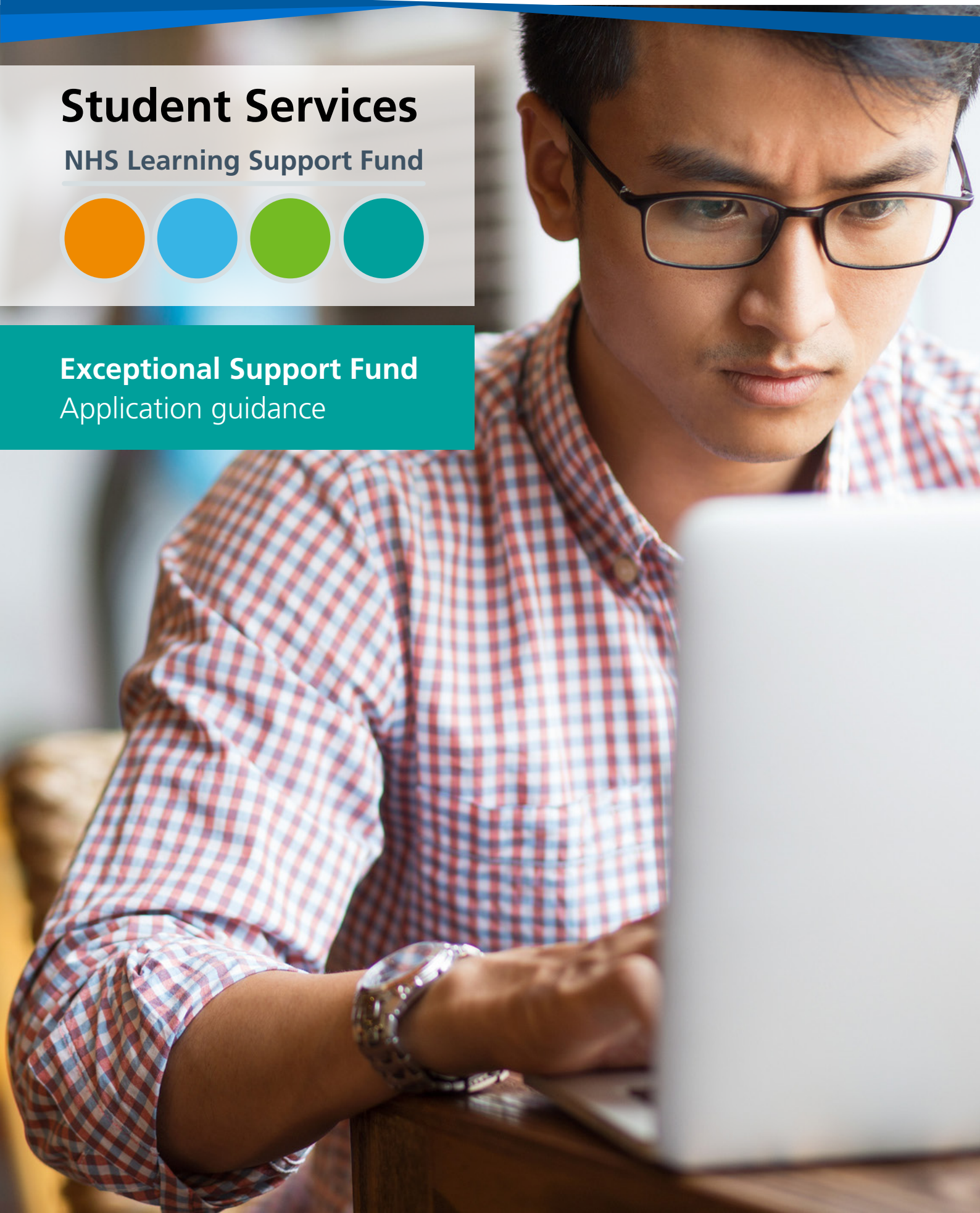
Student Services

NHS Learning Support Fund



Exceptional Support Fund

Application guidance



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Introduction

Exceptional Support Fund

If you are a healthcare student experiencing unforeseen financial hardship during your academic year, you may qualify for additional help from the Exceptional Support Fund (ESF).

The ESF is a non-repayable income-assessed grant of up to £3,000 per student, per year.

About this guide

This guide is intended to help you complete the ESF application form. It is important that you read these guidance notes whilst completing your application to ensure you provide the correct information as this will help us to process your claim quickly.

Making an application

To apply for ESF, you must first register and create an online account on the NHS Learning Support Fund (NHS LSF) application system.

The ESF application form should ideally be completed online. Once you have completed the form please print it off and take to your university's hardship fund administrator or student money advisor for authorisation at section 8.

Eligibility

To be able to apply for ESF you must meet the following requirements:

- be eligible for the NHS LSF
- demonstrate a shortfall between your income and expenditure which you are unable to manage by your own actions
- demonstrate you have exhausted all other available sources of funding support, including student loans (see box below) and university hardship funds. You will be asked to provide evidence of these with your application form.

Information

If you have decided not to apply for a student loan for personal reasons, please see the information on page 7 of this guide.

Evidence

As noted on the application form, we will require original supporting evidence. All students must at least provide:

- bank statements (for all the accounts they hold) which should cover the last three months prior to the date of your ESF application.
- If you are in receipt of student loan funding you must provide your full notification award letter for the same academic year for which you making an ESF claim.

A full checklist is provided at Section 6 of the form to help you include the supporting evidence appropriate to your individual claim.

You must ensure you provide all of the evidence relevant to your claim. If you do not, this will delay your application.

Sending your form to us

Once your form has been authorised, it needs to be posted to us along with your relevant supporting evidence. Your form should be sent to the address on the application form.

Assessing your ESF claim

We aim to fully assess all ESF applications within 15 working days from the date we receive your completed form **and all the requested supporting evidence**. If you do not enclose the requested evidence, or it is incomplete, this will delay your application.

If we have a query about anything on your claim form we will contact you directly by telephone or email.

You will be informed of the outcome of your application by email, so please ensure the email address you provide on your NHS LSF account is up to date.

If your application for ESF is successful, payment will be made in a lump sum and we will notify you of the date this is expected to be in your account.

If your application is not successful on this occasion we will inform you by email.

Reapplying

An unsuccessful application will not prevent you from making another claim for ESF within the same academic year if your circumstances change.

This also applies if you have been awarded an amount that is less than the maximum of £3,000. You may make another claim for ESF within the same academic year and, if this claim is successful, the maximum you could receive from the second claim will be the difference between the amount you received originally and £3,000.

Example: You make a claim for ESF and you are awarded £1,500. Later in the same academic year you submit a second claim. The maximum you could be awarded, regardless of the new shortfall would be £1,500.

We will also contact the university Student Money/Welfare Advisor (or equivalent) who countersigned your form to let them know the outcome of your ESF application for their records.

1. Personal details

Complete this section in full. If any of your personal details have changed since you registered for your NHS LSF account, please log in and amend them online.

Student Services Reference Number (SSRN)

The 7 digit reference number you are being asked to provide is the unique reference number allocated to you when you registered for your online NHS LSF account.

Repeat study

If you are repeating all or part of an academic year for any reason, please tick yes and provide brief details at Section 5 of the form.

2. Your circumstances

Please tick the relevant box to indicate your **term time** living arrangements, i.e. the address you normally live at whilst you are attending university.



Evidence

Section 6 of the ESF application form sets out the types of supporting evidence you will need to submit depending on the information you have entered on the form.

You should refer to this list very carefully and ensure you have enclosed evidence for **all** of the information you have given.

If you do not provide sufficient evidence your application will be delayed.

You should complete this section by ticking the yes or no boxes for each question. If you tick 'yes' to any, please provide brief additional information in the Personal Statement section at 5

Other members of your household

Use this section to tell us about any dependent children you have and whether you have a partner.

Provide their name(s), their relationship to you (e.g. partner, son, daughter, step-child etc) and date(s) of birth in the table.

3. Bank and building society accounts

Provide details of **all** of the accounts you hold that are in your name, any joint accounts you may hold with another person and any individual account(s) held by your partner. These can include current accounts, savings accounts, ISAs, and any accounts you (or your spouse or partner) have that are open but may not be in regular use.

If you have closed any previously active accounts during this academic year, you must also include details of these as requested on the form.

You will need to provide statements to cover the last three full months for **each** account you hold and you must **mark or highlight on your statement(s) all corresponding entries for the income and expenditure you have declared on the ESF application form**, where applicable.

4. Income and expenditure

In this section we need you to provide information about the income that is currently available to you as well as your day to day expenses. If you have a spouse or partner, you must include their income as well.

4.1 Income

Provide details of the income you (and your spouse or partner, if applicable) receive during the academic year and tick how often this is received.

If you (or your partner) do not receive income from a particular source, please type or write 0.00 or N/A in the box.



Evidence

You must include evidence that supports each of the sources of income you have given details, including those of your partner if applicable. The checklist at Section 6 of the application form sets out the evidence you will need to enclose, depending on the type(s) of income you have declared.

i Information - assumed income

It is generally expected that students will be able to supplement their income from a variety of routes, for example part-time work, vacation work, bank overdrafts, savings or additional household support where appropriate.

The ESF assessment uses an 'assumed income' figure to cover these elements of income rather than taking into account actual income

Depending on your circumstances an assumed income figure may be applied to your total income when we calculate your entitlement.

This figure will not be applied in the case of students who are unable to work due to a disability or who have parental or other caring responsibilities.

If you have any income in excess of the standard assumed income figure, we will only use the portion of your income which exceeds this amount.

4.2 Expenses

You should enter any applicable costs for the expenses listed in this section and tick whether you pay this yearly, termly, monthly or weekly.

For travel, include the total weekly costs for the family members you have listed at Section 2 if you are responsible for meeting these. Do not include your costs to placement as most students can claim reimbursement towards these via [Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses](#).

The checklist at Section 6 of the claim form sets out the evidence you will need to enclose, depending on the type(s) of expense you have declared.

i Composite Living Costs (CLC)

Most students have to pay for essential items such as food, bills, clothes and leisure/entertainment, these are known as composite living costs (CLC). We will apply fixed amounts for these to ensure that all students are treated fairly, regardless of where they are living and studying and what their individual lifestyle circumstances may be.

Composite living cost figures

Student profile	Living outside London (weekly)	Living in London (weekly)
Single student	£90	£121
Student with partner	£122	£165
Each Dependant	£72	£72
Family premium	A £20 additional one-off cost will also be applied where students have at least one child.	

i Information: Variable expenditure

Expenditure on items such as accommodation, childcare and travel varies widely between students. In assessing your ESF claim we use the actual amounts you declare for these on your form, as long as these are supported by the appropriate evidence.

Examples of the types of expenses to which we will apply a fixed amount CLC and those where the actual cost will be taken into account (variable expenditure) are shown below.

Type of Expense	CLCs	Variable expenditure
Rent/mortgage		✓
Council Tax		✓
Food	✓	
Utilities	✓	
Childcare		✓
Mobile phones	✓	
TV licence	✓	
Clothes	✓	
Travel		✓
Home contents insurance	✓	
Buildings insurance		✓
Car insurance		✓
Medication		✓
Entertainment	✓	
Clubs and societies	✓	
Personal loans		✓
Car finance		✓

Priority debts

If you have debts that have been incurred as a result of attending your course, we may be able to include some of these as part of your regular expenditure, as long as you have discussed the matter with the organisation concerned and you can demonstrate that you currently have an agreement in place to make regular repayments.

Priority debts are those debts which should be dealt with first and quickly, otherwise the penalty could be a fine or a prison sentence, lack of essential facilities or loss of your home. Do not include any debts where repayment has been frozen, such as those under a Debt Relief Order.

If you are declaring any priority debts you will need to provide evidence of the repayments you are making, the relevant dates, how much you have repaid and the amount of debt still left to pay. If you do not provide this information we will not be able to include these in your assessment and the outcome of your claim will be affected.

The types of debt we class as 'priority' are listed below. When completing your form, **please do not include details of any normal/regular payments you may make**, for example for a credit card or loan repayment, where there are no actual arrears.

Priority debts

Secured loans

Rent arrears

Council tax

Fines, maintenance & compensation orders

Charges for utilities

TV licence

Tax and VAT

National Insurance contributions

Hire purchase/conditional sale agreements for goods that are essential for the debtor to retain

5. Personal statement

Use this section to provide any further information about your circumstances which you feel may be relevant to your claim, or where you have been asked to provide an explanation to any of the questions on the form.

6. Evidence you must include

It is extremely important that you include documentary evidence for all the income and expenditure you have listed on your form. The checklist is to assist you in sending the correct documents and it also provides a useful summary for our claim assessors.

7. Student declaration

Please read the declaration carefully before signing and dating it.

8. Authorisation

This section must be signed by a hardship fund administrator or student money advisor from your university. **We are unable to accept any claims received where this section has not been completed.**

Information: University hardship funds

You must have applied to your university for assistance from their hardship fund before you apply for ESF.

If your university does not have such a fund or the fund has closed, we will still consider your ESF application as long as your university has supported it and signed the form on your behalf. Any hardship funds you may have received recently from your university will not be counted as income in your ESF assessment.