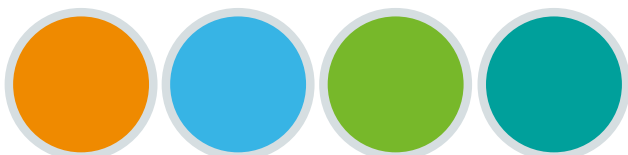


Student Services

NHS Learning Support Fund



Exceptional Support

Fund Application

guidance



Contents

Introduction	3
The Exceptional Support Fund	3
About this guide	3
Making an application	3
Eligibility	4
Evidence	4
Sending your form to us	4
Assessing your ESF claim	5
Reapplying	5
1 - About you and your course	6
2 - Your circumstances	7
3 - Bank and building society accounts	8
4 - Your Income and expenses	9
Income	9
Expenses	10
5 - Your supporting evidence	13
6 - Student declaration	13
7 - Authorisation	13

Introduction

Exceptional Support Fund

If you are a healthcare student who is eligible for the NHS Learning Support Fund, and you experience unexpected 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.

About this guide

This guide will help you complete the ESF claim, and you should read it alongside the application notes on the form. It is important that you refer to all available guidance whilst completing your application to make sure you provide the correct information. This will help avoid delays in processing your claim.

Making an application

To apply for ESF, you must have already applied for the NHS Learning Support Fund Training Grant, and had your application approved.

The ESF application form should ideally be completed online. Once you have completed the form, take it or send it to your university's hardship fund administrator or student money advisor for authorisation at section 7.

Eligibility

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

- be eligible for the NHS LSF
- demonstrate you are applying due to unexpected financial hardship
- demonstrate a shortfall between your available funds (your income from all sources and your annual NHS LSF entitlement) and your essential day to day living expenses which you are unable to manage by your own actions
- demonstrate you have exhausted all other available sources of funding support, including student loans (where applicable.) and university hardship funds. You will be asked to provide evidence of these with your application form.

Information

If you have chosen not to claim a student loan, but one would have been available to you if you had applied, this may affect your eligibility to claim ESF, however you will be asked to provide more information about your circumstances on the application form.

Evidence

As noted on the application form, we will require original supporting evidence. All ESF claimants 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.
- evidence of your student loan funding for the academic year in question if applicable to you and if you have not already provided this as part of your NHS LSF application

A full checklist is provided at Section 5 of the form to help you include the supporting evidence appropriate to your 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

Email your authorised form to nhsesf@nhsbsa.nhs.uk, along with all your supporting documentation.

Any attachments you send should be in .doc, jpg, jpeg, pdf, bmp, png, tif, xlsx or msg format and no larger than 8MB.

Do not provide your documents in the form of a compressed file such as .zip as this may be rejected by our NHS Mail firewall.

You should not provide your files using an external upload link or embed them in the email. You should send them as attachments in your email.

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 provide 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 we will inform you by email also.

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.

Reapplying

An unsuccessful application will not prevent you from making another claim for ESF within the same academic year if your circumstances change and you are able to make a case for unexpected financial hardship with a shortfall between your available income and day to day expenses.

1. About you and your course

This section asks you to confirm:

- your contact details. If any of your details have changed since you registered for your NHS LSF account, please log in and amend them online
- whether you are in receipt of maintenance loan and tuition fee support from the Student Loans Company
- whether you have approached your university for assistance from their hardship funds. If you have not applied for help from university hardship funds, you should not submit an ESF claim before doing this
- your course details and current course attendance. NHS LSF is only available for repeat or extended study in exceptional circumstances. If you are not currently attending your course or you are on a period of repeat study, it may delay your claim if your university hasn't told us. We will ask you to contact them first to officially advise us of the change in your attendance
- If you have not claimed any student loan funding, you will be asked to outline the financial provisions you have made to meet your tuition fee costs and cover your basic living expenses.

2. Your circumstances

Section 2 asks you to provide information about your current circumstances, including:

- Details of the unexpected circumstances which have caused you to be in financial hardship. You must complete this section and provide as much information as possible. You should be aware that ESF is not available for general 'cost of living' increases, as these are not considered to be an unexpected circumstance.
- **What actions you have taken, if any, to try and reduce your financial difficulties.** This section must be completed for your claim to be considered
- **where you are living during term time.** You should tick the relevant box to indicate your living arrangements. This means the address where you normally live whilst you are attending university
- There are **five additional questions** regarding disability, whether you were in care or have current caring responsibilities. You should complete this section by ticking the yes or no boxes for each question, and providing the relevant evidence, where applicable
- **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 (for example, partner, son, daughter, step-child) and their date(s) of birth in the table.

Evidence

Section 5 of the ESF 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

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. Your income and expenses

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.

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.

You do not need to include the payments you are receiving from the NHS Learning Support Fund, such as the Training Grant, as these will automatically be included when we calculate your entitlement.

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 for which you have given details, including those of your partner if applicable. The checklist at Section 5 of the application form sets out the evidence you will need to enclose, depending on the type(s) of income you have declared.

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.

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.

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 5 of the claim form sets out the evidence you will need to enclose, depending on the type(s) of expense you have declared.

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	£109	£167
Student with partner	£168	£227
Each child	£98	£98
Family premium	A £30 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:

- Food
- Utilities
- Mobile phones
- TV licence
- Clothes
- Home contents insurance
- Entertainment
- Clubs and societies

Variable expenditure:

- Rent/mortgage
- Council Tax
- Childcare
- Travel
- Buildings insurance
- Home contents insurance
- Car insurance
- Home contents insurance
- Medication
- 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
- Tax and VAT
- National Insurance contributions
- Hire purchase/conditional sale agreements for goods that are essential for the debtor to retain

5. Your supporting evidence

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.

6. Student declaration

Please read the declaration carefully before signing and dating it.

7. Authorisation

This section must be signed by a hardship fund administrator or student money advisor from your university. This is to confirm that you have applied to their hardship funds before making a claim for ESF. **We are unable to accept any claims received where this section has not been completed.**

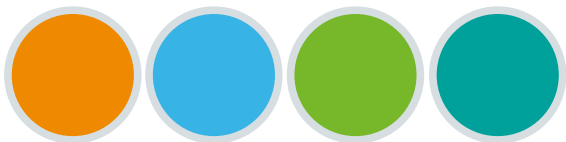
Information: University hardship funds

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 included in your ESF assessment.

Student Services

NHS Learning Support Fund



Exceptional Support Fund Application guidance

 www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-learning-support-fund-lsf