

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE FOUNDATION YEAR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING - 2023/24

Please read the following guidance notes carefully before completing an application.

Overview

The purpose of this fund is to help Foundation Year Students who commenced their course in the 2023/24 academic year, are currently enrolled, and who may require financial assistance in a range of circumstances, ranging from a shortfall in their finances to help with meeting additional exceptional costs after they have started their course.

Eligibility criteria

All current Astrophoria Foundation Year students are eligible to apply for the funding.

Students will be expected to have accessed all available funding from the Astrophoria Foundation Year before they can be eligible for Foundation Year Financial Assistance Funding. Students should first discuss their situation with the Foundation Year Welfare Lead.

How to apply

You should have been given a link to begin your application for Foundation Year Financial Assistance Funding by the Foundation Year Welfare Lead, and should not proceed with an application until you have discussed your circumstances with them (you will be required to confirm this at the start of the application). Students who are unable to complete the form electronically should contact welfare@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk.

Your application will consist of your own application form alongside the required supporting documentation (part A). You will also require a supporting statement from the Foundation Year Welfare Lead ([part B](#)). All parts must be received in order for the application to be considered. When you submit your application, the Foundation Year Welfare Lead will be contacted and asked to submit part B within 7 days.

The Astrophoria Foundation Year will send an email confirming receipt of your completed Foundation Year Financial Assistance Funding application (all parts) to both you and your college welfare lead. Any queries will be addressed to you, with your college welfare lead copied into the email, where relevant.

Applications received after the Friday of Trinity Term week 9 will not be processed, except where students are participating in the September resit period.

Application deadlines

Applications are processed on a rolling basis during term time, from week -1 to week 9 of each term. The Astrophoria Foundation Year is responsible for processing and reviewing applications for Foundation Year Financial Assistance Funding. Applications will be assessed within 30 days of receiving your completed application. Outside of term time applications may take longer to process. Students will be contacted via email to confirm the outcome of their application upon completion of the assessment.

Bursaries

A non-repayable bursary of up to £3,000 is available. Depending on the level of demand, the award amount may be capped below the maximum in order to ensure sufficient funding is available to students in need of assistance throughout the academic year.

We may ask for clarification relating to your application or for further information. If this is the case, you will receive an email from Astrophoria Foundation Year. If no response is received within 21 days, we will consider the application withdrawn.

Evidence required to support the application

In order to complete your application, you will need the following evidence ready to upload. Failure to do so could prevent your application from being processed:

- Official bank/building society statements showing the 30 September 2023 balance for all current and savings accounts in your name or joint, in the UK or Overseas.
- Official bank/building society statements as above for the last two months. These should be annotated with explanations of any incoming transactions over £150, or explanations included in a separate document.
- Outgoings related to additional expenditure you wish to be considered in your application should also be included (e.g. car costs, medical costs).
- Evidence of your rent/mortgage/college accommodation costs for the year, such as battels statements or a tenancy agreement.
- Your financial notification (Student Finance Breakdown) showing your maintenance funding where you have applied for it
- Evidence of your net earnings (i.e. after tax, if applicable) from employment for the current academic year (1 October-30 June or 31 October, depending on length of academic year).
- Evidence of any scholarships or awards, either external or from your college, department or the University.
- Evidence of any UK Government benefits
- Evidence of any additional costs, such as additional medical costs, vacation residence, and council tax.
- Any other additional evidence you would like to provide. For example, if you have any credit card or loan repayments, you may wish to provide statements showing the outstanding balance and minimum monthly repayments.

Periods of assessment

The period of assessment will vary depending on your course type as set out below. You should ensure that the income and expenditure that you declare relates to the relevant assessment period if declaring 'annual costs'.

Completing your online application

The form is broken down into a number of sections. You will see below a summary of the questions in Part A that you will need to answer and the supporting documents that will be requested, with guidance in italics. The asterisk * indicates compulsory questions.

- Section 1 – This section asks you questions about your eligibility. Once you have answered these questions you will be guided either to speak to the Foundation Year Welfare Lead for further information/support, or guided to complete the rest of the form.
- Section 2 - This section will ask you questions about your personal details. You should answer all questions.
 - Title*
 - First name*
 - Preferred name* - *the name you would like us to address correspondence to*
 - Surname/family name*
 - University email address*
 - Student number* - *your student number can be found via your Student Self Service account (www.ox.ac.uk/students), or next to your picture on your bod card; not the number above the barcode*
- Section 3 – This section will ask you questions about the course that you are on and the college that you are part of. You should answer all questions.
 - College*
 - Full course title* - *please enter the full course name and award, e.g. MEng Engineering Science with Foundation Year*
 - Have you currently suspended your studies? *
 - Have you ever suspended your studies? *
 - Dates of current/previous suspension – *please enter the terms for which you were suspended, e.g. MT22-HT23.*
- Section 4 – This section will ask questions about whether you consider yourself to have a disability or a chronic medical condition.
 - Do you consider yourself to have a disability or chronic medical condition?* – *if so, you will be expected to have registered with the Disability Advisory Service for support but if you have not done so, this will not disadvantage your application.*

- (If response above is yes)
 - Have you registered with the Disability Advisory Service?
 - Are you in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance?*
 - Do you have any disability-related costs which cannot be covered by through the DSA or other relevant funds?*
 - Please specify disability-related costs and the amounts you are having to provide through your own means* - *this will enable us to better understand your request for assistance.*
 - Are you unable to work this academic year/during vacations (in line with University guidance) due to your disability/medical condition?* - *your application will not be disadvantaged but this will enable us to get a better picture of your financial situation.*
- Section 5 – This section asks questions about your living arrangements.
 - During term time, do you live in private or college accommodation?*
 - (If in private accommodation)
 - Do you live: alone, with your partner/spouse, with your parent(s)/guardian(s), or in a house share?*
 - Do you each cover your own living expenses individually?*
 - If not, please explain how you divide household expenses - *please clarify how your expenses are shared. If you are living with your partner/spouse, please clarify if one of you is subsidising or financially supporting the other in any way.*
 - How many adults including yourself live at this address?*
 - Do you live with any non-students?*
 - Do you have any child dependants?*
 - Do you have any adult dependants?*
 - Do you have any caring responsibilities not mentioned above?* (*you provide care for another person in, or outside of, the family home for someone who is physically or mentally ill, or disabled*)
 - *If you answer yes to any of these questions, you will be invited to provide further details.*
- Section 6 – Bank accounts. You will be asked to list each bank account held in your name alone or jointly, as well as any ISAs or savings instruments, and the balance of each account on 30 September 2023. Information in this section along with the bank statements you upload will be used to determine what funding you had available at the start of the academic year. You will also have to attach these bank statements as evidence (see Evidence Required above).
- Section 7 – This section asks you for details of your confirmed or expected income for the current academic year. You should provide full details of all your expected available income for the current academic year. If a source of income is not applicable to you then enter 0 (zero) or n/a. It is expected that students will use all available funding to support themselves. Please specify any amounts which were already in your bank balance before 30 September 2023 so that your funds are not double-counted. Enter all income for the assessment period above unless otherwise specified.
 - The AFY comes with an amount of funding automatically to all students. This includes:
 1. The start up funding (fixed fee of £550)
 2. The Foundation Year Student Bursary (fixed fee of £1750 per term)
 3. The Foundation Year Accommodation Bursary (varies according to college).

Please confirm below that you have received all of this funding to date (and are therefore scheduled to receive the rest of your funding this academic year)

- State the amount of Foundation Year Travel Supplement that you have received from the AFY this academic year
- State the amount of Foundation Year General Academic Grant you have claimed from the AFY this academic year
- State the amount of Foundation Year Financial Assistance Funding claimed from the AFY this academic year
- State the amount of funding claimed from your college this academic year
- State the amount of funding claimed from central university funds this academic year
- Did you claim a student loan from student finance this academic year?
 - (if yes): State the amount of student loan you have claimed this academic year
- State the amount of savings you have (balance as at 30th September 2023)

- State the amount of UK Government Disability Support - e.g. Personal Independence Payment, Disabled Students' Allowance
- State the amount of UK Government Childcare/Carer Support - e.g. Childcare Grant, Child Benefit, Adult Dependants' Grant.
- Any other UK Government support
- Expected income from working for current academic year from 1 October 2023 - please include net amounts; i.e. after tax and provide details of any paid employment in your supporting statements. *Foundation Year students do not need to declare income from working during term time or the short vacations unless they are on a paid year abroad. Any income from the previous Long Vacation will be automatically included in your bank balances.*
- Expected family/partner contribution for current academic year from 1 October - please enter either a total expected over the year or a fixed monthly amount if you receive monthly contributions. You must enter all expected contributions before the end of the academic year – not just the amount you have received so far. Please specify any amounts paid out directly on your behalf e.g. rent paid to a letting agency.
- State any other sources of income (e.g. employer contribution) - please provide details and include amount in GBP. Please include any loans as well as grants.
- Section 8: Expenditure. A standard allowance will be included in our assessment to cover essential expenditure such as food, household costs, personal items, travel and course costs. This is based on the University's published lower range of living costs for the year. The University's estimated lower range living costs for 2023/24 can be found [here](#). These figures are based on a single, full-time student with no dependants living in college accommodation (including utility bills). For students living in college accommodation we will take into account your actual rent in our assessment.
 - If you have any costs above the University's estimated lower range of living costs for 23/24 please state these costs here and include a reason why you have incurred these additional costs or a justification for increased expenditure in this area. When assessing your application, it is at the AFY team's discretion whether to take these additional costs into consideration.
 - Your share of rent/mortgage/college accommodation costs* - *do not include utilities unless these are automatically included in your rent. If you are living in college, enter the cost of your room and not the total of your battels.*
 - Is this a monthly, termly or annual cost?* - *do not enter an annual cost unless you have a 37/39 week contract or an irregular termly charge. Do not include costs for accommodation over the Long Vacation if you are not attending your course during this period.*
 - Do you pay utilities separately?*
 - (If yes) Your share of utilities costs per month* - *please include gas and electricity only.*
 - Total college vacation rent (if not included above) - *the assessment will only take into account Christmas and Easter Vacation for Foundation Year students*
 - Council tax, if applicable (per month) - *please enter your exact monthly contribution if you are living with one or more non-students and paying a share of the bill. If you live in a house with one nonstudent it is expected that you will have organised a student reduction with your local council.*
 - Travel costs between your Oxford residence and family home.* Please enter the cost of a single oneway journey - *if you are an estranged or care experienced student who is permanently based in Oxford, please include the cost of a return journey to visit a member of your extended family/support network.*
 - Car costs, only if essential (per year) - *please provide an estimate of your total costs (think about maintenance, insurance, tax and fuel). We will only be able to include these costs if you require a car for an essential reason such as a disability or having child dependants.*
 - Nursery/childcare costs (per month) - *a standard allowance will be included for each child's living costs, so please only include the cost of paid childcare.*
 - Monthly loan or credit card repayments – *please provide further details and include your actual monthly payments as well as the minimum monthly payment, if applicable.*
 - Do you claim free NHS prescriptions* - *you may qualify for free or reduced rate prescriptions, dental treatment, eye test, glasses and other treatments and services. Details can be found at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1874.aspx. We may not include prescription costs in your assessment if you should be eligible for free prescriptions.*
 - Specify any medical prescription costs (per year)
 - Specify optician/glasses/contact lenses costs (per year)

- Specify dental costs per year - *if you have dental costs to meet beyond check-ups, please provide further details.*
- Any other additional medical expenses - *please provide further details, and attach any relevant evidence to your application, noting that we may not be able to include these in full*
- Section 9: Supporting statements. You should clearly explain the reason(s) for your application and why you feel you require assistance, addressing each of the questions in this section.
 - Please explain why you are applying for financial support. You should include a brief justification of the reason for any increased expenditure/shortfall in your finances and a short explanation of the level of parental/family support which is available to you.*
 - Please detail any steps you have taken find alternative funding, such as having your Student Finance entitlement reassessed or applying for scholarships.*
 - Is your financial situation likely to change in future years? *
 - (Optional) Has your financial situation changed since you started your course in a way which could not have been predicted? – your situation does not need to have been unexpected to receive an award and you can leave this question blank. However, this information may assist us in determining your eligibility for further support

How do I submit additional information relevant to my application?

If you wish to submit additional information to support your application, you should provide this to welfare@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk. It should be clearly identified as additional information relating to your application for a Foundation Year Financial Assistance Funding Application so that it can be processed appropriately. Any additional information must be received by the published deadlines to be processed as part of the application.

How will my application be assessed?

Applications are reviewed by Astrophoria Foundation Year who will take into account your current situation, the University's published lower range of living costs, the amount you have requested, and why you require additional funding.

Applications will be treated in the strictest confidence subject to the University's GDPR Policy as detailed in the application form declaration page.

How will I be notified of the outcome of my application and how will the funds be disbursed?

The outcome of your application will be sent to you via email, with the Foundation Year Welfare Lead copied in. Payment of any bursary will be made directly to you, usually in one instalment.

Can I submit a repeat or new application?

It is possible to reapply within the same academic year if your financial circumstances have changed, provided you have not already received the maximum award of £750. You should note that any subsequent application and request for funding will be reviewed based on your current circumstances and using the latest available information.

How can I appeal the decision or award?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your application, you may appeal in writing to Astrophoria Foundation Year at contact@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk.

Any appeal must be made within four weeks of the date Astrophoria Foundation Year notifies you of the outcome of your application. Decisions made regarding appeals are final.

An appeal must either:

- (i) Contain new or more detailed information relating to your situation which was not available to you at the time of your original application; or
- (ii) Dispute the application decision by demonstrating that the decision was not conducted in accordance with the stated procedure.

Contact details

Please contact us at welfare@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk if you have any queries or require further clarification before submitting your application form.

Last reviewed: November 2023