Hallam Hardship Fund 2026/27(v2)

Overview

1. The Hallam Hardship Fund offers one-off payments to support students experiencing **unforeseen** financial difficulties. The fund is intended to help cover essential living costs and ease short-term financial pressure that could affect a student's ability to continue their studies.

2. There is no automatic entitlement to an award and applications are assessed on their individual merits. The Hallam Hardship Fund cannot be used to cover medium or long-term living costs or to subsidise a substantial shortfall in income or rise in expenses.

3. It is the University's expectation that students in financial hardship make a reasonable effort to supplement their income through employment. However, we recognise that may not be possible for everyone.

4. We are unable to make payments to students whose bank statements show poor or inappropriate spending habits.

What you could receive

5. Normally, awards will not exceed **£600**.

Who can apply

6. You can apply if you:
    - are studying a taught credit-bearing course or research degree at Sheffield Hallam University during the 2026/27 academic year,
    - have 'home' fee status,
    - are studying a course that attracts a fee payable directly to Sheffield Hallam University,
    - are willing to securely share your financial information through Open Banking, and
    - have a UK bank account in your name.

7. You are not eligible to apply if you have 'overseas' fee status. International students can apply for the International Emergency Fund.

8. You are not eligible to apply if you are studying a School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) course, as you are not paying a fee directly to Sheffield Hallam University. Please contact your SCITT provider for information on the financial support available to you.

When to apply

9. Applications are open throughout the academic year. However, if all available funds have been allocated, applications may close before the end of the academic year.

How to apply

10. A link to the application form can be found on the Hallam Hardship Fund page.

11. The application form will ask you to provide:
    - Information about your personal circumstances.
    - Information about your unforeseen financial difficulties.
    - Funding and benefit entitlement letters.
    - Relevant supporting evidence.

12. Applications with missing or incorrect information/evidence will take longer to process.

13. The application form will also ask you to provide your bank details. We will use these to make a payment to you if your application is successful. Please double check that you have entered your account details correctly. Changes cannot be made easily after we have processed your application. Mistakes will cause a delay in a payment being made to you and your payment may be cancelled.

14. Please **do not** include dashes in your sort code and **do not** enter a 16-digit card number.

Evidence requirements

15. The following table provides details of the evidence you will be asked to provide.

Your personal circumstances	You will be asked to provide information such as your relationship status, who you live with, if anyone contributes towards your finances, and if you have dependants.
Your financial situation	You will be asked to provide information such as your plan to fund your studies, details of your unforeseen financial difficulties, what steps you have taken to address your financial situation, and the impact on your studies and wellbeing.
Student funding documents	If you receive funding from Student Finance England or another national funding body, you will be asked to upload your entitlement letter(s) for the current academic year. You must include all pages, and they must clearly show all the support provided to you, including your tuition fee and maintenance loan payment schedule.

NHS funding documents	If you receive the Training Grant from the NHS Learning Support Fund, you will be asked to upload your entitlement letter(s) for the current academic year. You must include all pages, and they must clearly show all the support provided to you, including your payment schedule. If you have applied for the Exceptional Support Fund (ESF), you will be asked to upload the response detailing whether your application was successful (including how much you were awarded) or not.
Other funding documents	If you receive funding from any other organisation or funding body (such as Social Work Bursary, Teacher Training Bursary, or third-party scholarship), you will be asked to upload your entitlement letter(s) for the current academic year. You must include all pages, and they must clearly show all the support provided to you, including your payment schedule.
Benefit documents	If you receive benefits (such as Child Tax Credit, Universal Credit, and/or Housing Benefit), you will be asked to upload your entitlement letter(s) that are relevant for the current academic year. You must include all pages, and they must clearly show all the support provided to you.
Additional documents and supporting evidence	If you have any other documents or evidence you wish to provide in support of your application, you will be asked to upload it. This could be: ▪ A doctor's fit note showing you are/were unable to work. ▪ A letter/email of support or referral from a third party. ▪ A breakdown of your short-term costs. ▪ Evidence that you have applied for a student loan, but your payment has been delayed. ▪ Evidence that you have a job and when your first payment is due. ▪ An estimate, receipt or invoice for an item or a service, if you have experienced an unexpected cost.
Financial information	To help us understand your income and expenditure, we may ask you to securely share your financial information through Open Banking, by doing this will we have access to view your bank statements. For this we use an Open Banking platform provided by Soar Tech Ltd. The information you share will only be used to assess your application and will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation and the University's Privacy Notice. Typically, we will only review the last 90 days of transactions.

Financial information cont.	In most cases, this means you will not need to upload bank statements to your application. If we need you to share your financial information, you will receive an email from **studentfunding@shu.ac.uk** containing a secure link to connect to your bank. You will then need to select all your accounts to share them with us. You must share **all** current, savings and other bank accounts that are available through Open Banking and held with any bank or building society you use. If you use multiple banks, please return to the email with the Open Banking link and repeat the process to share your accounts from a different bank. You will have two weeks to share your financial information. If you do not so within the timeframe provided, the Open Banking link will expire, and your application will be closed. Most account types from UK banks can be shared using Open Banking. However, some, such as some savings accounts, cannot be shared through Open Banking. If this is the case, we will ask you to upload statements from those accounts to your application form. Before uploading documents, you **must** read the guidance on providing bank statements. Your statements must clearly show: ▪ your account balance as of the date the statement was produced, ▪ the last 30 days of transactions (in some cases we may ask to see the last 90 days), ▪ your name, and ▪ your sort code and account number. All statements must be **dated within five days** of submitting your application. We understand that your regular bank statements might not fall within this five-day period. If that's the case, please refer to the guidance on how to obtain acceptable, up-to-date statements. Without these, we won't be able to assess your application, and it will be delayed.

Confidentiality

16. We understand you may not always feel comfortable sharing personal or sensitive information. Normally, the details in your application will not be shared outside of the Student Funding team. However, in exceptional circumstances, we may share relevant information with other support services (an Academic or Student Support Adviser for example) to help provide appropriate support. We may also receive information from other services to support your application.

How applications are assessed

17. Applications are assessed on their individual merits. When assessing your application, we will consider the following factors that may support your eligibility for financial support:
    - You had a reasonable plan in place to fund your studies before enrolling.
    - Your financial difficulties were unforeseeable.
    - There is a risk of harm without financial support.
    - Your financial situation is having a significant impact on your ability to study.

18. We will also consider the following factors that may limit your eligibility for financial support:
    - You have access to other significant sources of funding or savings.
    - Your bank statements show a high level of non-essential spending.
    - Your spending habits have not changed following the onset of your financial difficulties.
    - You have prioritised non-essential costs (socialising for example) over essential costs (rent or priority bills for example)
    - Your financial situation appears unsustainable even with additional support.

19. We may need to discuss your application with you, and we may ask you:
    - to explain sources of income and expenditure on your bank statements, and/or
    - to clarify an aspect of your application.

20. Your application will take longer to process, and it may be closed, if you fail to respond to a request for further information or fail to share your financial information through Open Banking in a timely manner.

21. As part of the application process, you will be asked to state how much money you need. Funds are strictly limited, and we can only make an award where we are satisfied the amount of money you are asking for is reasonable.

22. There is no definitive list of situations that would guarantee financial support. However, we have provided examples of situations that **may qualify** for financial support in annex one and examples of situations that would **not normally qualify** for financial support in annex two.

What happens next

23. If we need you to share your financial information through Open Banking, we will contact you using your student email address. This will include instructions on what to do.

24. We will also contact you using your student email address if we need:
    - additional information or evidence,
    - missing documents, or
    - bank statements for accounts not available to be shared through Open Banking.

25. Failure to respond in a timely manner will delay the processing of your application and could result in your application being closed.

26. Once a decision has been made, we will contact you using your student email address with the outcome of your application.

27. Most students receive a decision within two weeks once they have shared their financial information and provided any other information requested. Most successful applicants receive payment approximately three weeks after submitting their application.

28. If financial information is not shared and other information is not provided when requested and/or if your case is complex, a decision can take up to six weeks.

29. For successful applicants, your award amount and payment date will be confirmed in your outcome email.

30. If you have provided incorrect bank details, the payment date given in your outcome email will not apply. Your payment will be delayed, and it may be cancelled.

General terms

31. The Hallam Hardship Fund is subject to the General Funding Terms and Conditions.

32. If you receive benefits and/or any other financial support, it is your responsibility to check whether receiving an award from this scheme will affect your entitlement(s)/payments.

Appeals

33. If your application is unsuccessful, you may have the right to appeal if you have valid grounds to do so. For information about this process, please visit the appeals page.

Need help

34. If you have any questions about the Hallam Hardship Fund, please contact Hallam Help.

Annex one

35. The following are examples of situations that **may qualify** for financial support, along with relevant limitations, relevant evidence may be required in each case:
    - **Short-term cash flow issues** – for example, a delay in receiving a student loan payment, waiting for a loan to be assessed or means-tested, or waiting for the first payment from a new job.
      Support will be limited to bridging short-term gaps only.
    - **Urgent housing needs** – for example, an unexpected and immediate requirement to move.
      Support will usually be limited to one month's costs and only available where there is a credible long-term plan in place.
    - **Unexpected additional financial responsibility** – for example, the death of a close family member.
      Support will be limited to immediate and essential costs only.
    - **Sudden loss of financial support** – for example, a parent, guardian, partner or sponsor no longer being able to provide help.
      Support will be limited to essential, short-term needs, whilst alternative funding is investigated.
    - **Inability to work** – for example, an illness or injury leading to the loss of income that impacts on your ability to meet essential costs.
      Support will be limited to essential, short-term needs.
    - **Risk of harm without financial support** – for example, urgent need to pay for a prescription or essential medical treatment.
      Support will be limited to essential, short-term needs. We cannot support medium or long-term healthcare.
    - **Impact of a criminal act** – for example, theft or damage to personal property.
      Support will be limited to immediate and essential costs only. We cannot support compensation claims.
    - **Delay from an insurer** – for example, a valid insurance policy exists but the insurer is unable to provide timely assistance.
      Support will be limited to immediate and essential costs only.
    - **Inability to travel to a mandatory placement** – for example, urgent car repairs.
      Support will be limited to essential, short-term travel needs only.

Annex two

36. The following are examples of situations that would **not normally qualify** for financial support:
    - Requests for medium or long-term living costs.
    - Multiple applications for the same issue where the maximum award has already been granted.
    - Requests to subsidise a significant shortfall in income – for example, lack of expected parental contributions.
    - Requests to cover a substantial increase in expenses.
    - Situations where significant alternative sources of funding or benefits are available but have not been applied for.
    - Requests to cover the loss of benefits or other forms of funding – for example, student loan/grant overpayments caused by errors/omissions in your funding application(s).
    - Lack of a reasonable financial plan to fund studies prior to enrolment.
    - Evidence of unchanged spending habits following the onset of financial difficulties.
    - Evidence of prioritising non-essential costs (socialising for example) over essential costs (rent or priority bills for example).
    - Evidence of excessive or non-essential spending – for example, substantial spending on gambling, alcohol, recreational drugs, high-risk activities/investments, holidays, subscriptions, shopping, or vehicle purchases.
    - Requests for ongoing vehicle-related costs – for example, MOTs, repairs, maintenance, insurance, or business travel cover.
    - Failure to purchase appropriate insurance or requests to cover excess payments.
    - Requests for repayment of personal debts.
    - Requests for payment of tuition fees.
    - Evidence of bank account sharing with third parties.
    - Requests for payment of fines issued by the University or by a third party.
    - Requests for compensation relating to injury, illness, or negligence caused by a third party.
    - Claims for financial compensation from the University – please refer to the University's complaints process.
    - Requests to cover the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) personal contribution – eligible students should instead apply for the Student Support Scholarship.