

GRADUATION SUPPORT FUND 2023/24

STUDENT GUIDANCE NOTES

The Graduation Support Fund has been put in place to provide assistance with the costs of attending graduation in Autumn 2023 or Spring 2024 for students experiencing financial hardship.

Please read these guidance notes carefully before completing the Graduation Support Fund Application Form in Blackbullion. As part of the application you will be asked to tick a box confirming you meet the Eligibility Criteria which are listed below.

Eligibility

You must meet the eligibility criteria listed below to apply for assistance from this Fund:

Undergraduate Students

- You must have successfully completed your course within the past 12 months and expect to graduate at a ceremony taking place in Autumn 2023 or Spring 2024; AND
- You must be a UK student who is “not subject to immigration control” (this means if you are on a Student Route, Tier 4 or any other visa, or you are from a European Union country and do not have settled status in the UK you will not be eligible); AND
- If you were eligible for income-assessed student financial support from Student Finance England (or equivalent) for your most recent year of study then your household income must have been assessed as being zero; if you were ineligible for income-assessed student financial support then your only income for your most recent year of study must have been from means-tested benefits; AND
- Your only current income (if your course has finished) must be from means-tested welfare benefits and you must not have any earned income; AND
- You state in your application with what you need assistance.

Postgraduate Students

- You must have successfully completed your course within the past 12 months and expect to graduate at a ceremony taking place in Autumn 2023 or Spring 2024; AND
- You must be a UK student who is “not subject to immigration control” (this means if you are on a Student Route, Tier 4 or any other visa, or you are from a European Union country and do not have settled status in the UK you will not be eligible); AND
- Your only current income is from means-tested benefits and you do not have any earned income; AND
- You state in your application with what you need assistance.

If you do not meet all of these criteria your application will be rejected.

Sponsored students are not eligible.

How to apply

Complete the online application at www.blackbullion.com

You will need to sign up using your ULaw email address as a user name.

Make sure you answer all the questions in the application.

You will need to confirm your name and course details first.

You will then be asked to confirm what help you need. You can select from the following:

- Graduation gown hire
- Guest tickets (Maximum of 2)
- Travel costs (Maximum of £50)

Evidence needed

You need to upload the following:

- Student Finance England notification, clearly showing your Customer Reference Number and amount of Maintenance Loan received; AND
- Proof of receipt of means-tested benefits; AND
- Three months' most recent bank statements for all accounts you hold.

Finally, complete the declaration and then submit. Your application will then be sent to a member of staff for processing.

What happens next?

Once you have submitted your application and supporting evidence it will be reviewed by a member of staff.

If we need further information to make a decision on your application we will contact you via email.

How we assess applications

Firstly, we will check that you meet the eligibility criteria (student status and income details).

We will then undertake a simple financial assessment – this will look at the bank account balances available to you over the period of assessment. If you have, on average, more than £500 available to you, your application will not be successful.

You can expect to receive a decision within two weeks once we have confirmed we have all the evidence we need.

Payment of awards

If you receive an award for graduation gown hire or guest tickets we will inform the Graduation Team on your behalf.

If you receive an award for travel costs, we credit this to your account with the Aspire University Portal, rather than directly into one of your bank accounts. The Aspire University Portal is a platform the University of Law (and many other universities) use to make hardship funds and bursary payments.

We do this because it is extremely quick for you to access the funds from the Aspire University Portal and draw them down to your personal bank account (usually within minutes of the award being made). You will receive an email from the University of Law Aspire University Portal explaining how to withdraw the funds, and a separate email with your log-in details.

Reviews and appeals

There is a review and appeals process if you are not happy with our decision, which can be found in the 'How we assess applications' guidance in the Student Financial Assistance Funding section of the Student Support Services page on the ELITE Institution page. A copy will also be sent to you if your application is unsuccessful.

Any questions?

The Team are happy to help.

Please email studentsupportfunds@law.ac.uk

If you have any technical issues with making your application please contact the Blackbullion Support team at support@blackbullion.com