

Access Bursary

This policy is of relevance to students / staff / applicants

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As part of its Access Agreement commitments, the School has established an Access Bursary to assist UK undergraduate students who are not supported financially by their families, ie students who are:

- Recent care-leavers
- Estranged from their parents
- Financially independent from their parents

These bursaries are available for both new and continuing students. They have been created in recognition of the difficulties of juggling an intensive full-time programme with paid employment, and the need for sufficient rest and recuperation. They are intended to meet the additional maintenance costs for students without family financial support or a family home to retreat to during vacations.

There will be up to twenty bursary awards in 2019/20, valued between £3000 and £5000. Successful applicants will be paid in three termly instalments. The Access Bursary is not automatically recurrent and **students will need to re-apply each year.**

In order to be eligible for this Access Bursary, students will need to satisfy the following criteria in both Section 1 and 2.

Section 1

1. Be registered on a full-time UK undergraduate programme at the School

Applicants who have accepted a place at the School may apply in anticipation. Continuing students should apply when the internal scholarship applications open.

And

2. Be on a low income

To be eligible for this bursary, applicants will be required to receive the full maintenance loan¹ from their UK funding body² which indicates a household income of under £25,000. The School cannot consider applicants from anyone on a higher income, regardless of their status as a care-leaver, estranged or independent, as this bursary is awarded on the basis of financial need. The School cannot accept applications from students who have not accessed all the financial support that they could receive from their student funding body.

Additionally, students must demonstrate that they fall into one of the categories listed in Section 2 below at the start of the academic year for which they are applying for support:

Section 2:

1. A recent care leaver

To be eligible the student will need to have spent at least **13 weeks of the last 5 years, including their 16th birthday**, in local authority care. This could include

- Living with foster parents
- Living at home with parents under the supervision of social services
- Living in a residential children's home
- Living in another residential setting like a school or secure unit

2. Estranged

To be assessed as estranged from their parents; the student should have had no contact with their parents for at least 12 months before the start of their academic programme and be unlikely to have a relationship with them again.

3. Independent

To be considered as financially independent from their parents, the student will need to meet **one** of the following conditions:

- Be aged 25 or over at the start of their academic programme
- Be married or in a civil partnership
- Be in charge of a dependent child
- Have supported themselves for at least three years before the start of their programme of study. This could include full-time employment or self-employment, receiving benefits including for sickness and disability, or receiving training under a government scheme for unemployment
- Have no living parents

¹ Applicants for the Access Bursary are required to be eligible for, and have applied for the full UK undergraduate maintenance loan. Students who are not eligible are not able to apply for the Access Bursary.

² These are: Student Finance England, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Finance Wales and Student Award Agency for Scotland.

Application Process

Before making an application for the Access Bursary, applicants/students will be required to:

1. Contact the School's Widening Participation (WP) Officer, by emailing wp@gsm.d.ac.uk, to express an interest in applying for the Access Bursary or alternatively contact the Student Funding Officer studentfundingofficer@gsm.d.ac.uk. The final deadline for notifying the WP Officer of their interest to be included in the 2019/20 bursary allocation will be the 1st of June 2019.
2. Apply for a full maintenance loan from their funding body. Students should ensure that they **have ticked 'consent to share'** on their funding body record which will enable the School to confirm their student status as either a care-leaver or as an independent student. Funding bodies will not normally confirm a student's status as an estranged student and, therefore, the School will require additional information to confirm this.

Continuing students will be required to reapply for their maintenance and tuition fee loans from their student funding body every academic year and **should ensure that 'consent to share' is activated** on their account.

3. New students should apply for a Guildhall Scholarship via eGo, as soon as they have accepted an offer of a place at the School. The application deadline for the Guildhall School Scholarship differs by department. Please see http://www.gsm.d.ac.uk/about_the_school/shared_left_nav/fees_and_funding/guildhall_school_scholarships_and_other_funding/ for more information about the Guildhall School Scholarships

Continuing students will be required to reapply for a Guildhall Scholarship by the deadline set out by their department.

4. Contact the School's Widening Participation Officer with further evidence, if required, regarding student status under Section 2 above. The deadline for submitting this evidence will be the 1st of June unless otherwise notified.

The School will liaise with the student's funding body to check their status as an independent student or a care-leaver; however students will be required to submit the following supplementary information:

- **Care-leavers:** If care-leaver status is not reflected on the student's funding body record (ie the student has not disclosed this information to them), they will be expected to supply a letter from a local authority or social work department, which states the period that they were in local authority care and when they left local authority care.
- **Estranged:** As estrangement is not reflected in student funding body records, estranged students will be expected to supply a letter from a social worker, doctor, teacher or another professional, stating that the student is "irreconcilably estranged" from their parents and have not had contact with them for a period of 12-months or more.

- **Independent:** Independent students will have this status reflected on their funding body record - providing that they have informed their funding body of their status and have ticked the 'consent to share' box, which allows the School to access their information.

Students may apply for the Guildhall Access Bursary before they have received their student funding award letter from their funding body. The School may provisionally offer eligible students a bursary, but it will only be confirmed on receipt of the student's funding information.

Students who receive an Access Bursary will need to accept the [Guildhall School Scholarships Applicants and Award Holders Terms and Conditions](#).

Confirmed awards of Access Bursary funds will be disbursed in three equal instalments after full enrolment and all the Terms and Conditions have been met.

Where there are more eligible applications than bursaries, applications will be ranked by need, with priority given to care leavers. The Widening Participation Officer will liaise with departments to assess overall scholarship awards.