

Student Assistance Fund

The Student Assistance Fund provides financial assistance for full-time higher education students who are experiencing financial difficulties whilst attending college. Students can apply for Student Assistance to help them with either temporary or ongoing financial difficulties. The Student Assistance Fund provides a further source of funding for higher education students in addition to the [Student Grant](#).

Each year, the State allocates a certain amount of Student Assistance funding to all publicly funded higher education colleges based on the size of the college's full-time student population. Students in need of financial support can then make application in the college for assistance under the Fund.

The Student Assistance Fund is not available in further education/PLC colleges.

To work out whether you may be eligible for the Fund you need to be aware of the main conditions of the programme.

The Student Assistance Fund is funded by the Irish Government and part-funded by the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013.

Check Your Eligibility

In order to be eligible to apply for student assistance, you must be registered on a full-time undergraduate or postgraduate course of not less than one year's duration in a [participating college](#). Unlike the student grant schemes, you cannot be considered for Student Assistance prior to registering in a participating college.

Students participating in access or foundation courses which do not lead to an undergraduate qualification are not eligible to apply for Student Assistance.

Students participating in part-time courses are not eligible to apply for Student Assistance

Eligible Expenses for Student Assistance

The Student Assistance Fund typically provides financial assistance to students who are having difficulty covering the following kinds of expenses:

- Books
- Class materials
- Rent
- Heating/lighting bills
- Food
- Travel of an urgent or essential nature
- Medical expenses, i.e. doctor or dental visits
- Expenses associated with family breakdown
- Expenses associated with bereavement
- Expenses associated with accidents
- Childcare
- Compulsory study abroad

This is not a definitive list.

Ineligible Expenses for Student Assistance

Students requiring financial assistance to help with tuition fees or registration fees cannot be considered under the Student Assistance Fund.

How to Apply

Currently, each participating institution decides how the Student Assistance Fund will be operated at local level, within the overall guidelines set by the Department of Education and Science. The application process may vary therefore between participating institutions.

All colleges have an application form which must be completed by students wishing to apply for Student Assistance.

Applicants may be required to attend a meeting with a member of the college staff to discuss the application. Applicants may also be required to provide documentation to verify details of the income and outgoings provided in the application.

In general, due to demand for Student Assistance, participating colleges are not able to approve all applications they receive. Likewise, participating colleges may not be able to award all the funding being sought by successful applicants. The Department of Education and Science requires colleges to target the Student Assistance Fund at those students most in need of financial support.

This may mean, for example, that priority is given to applicants who are in receipt of a maintenance grant, this being an indicator of limited means

Further Information

The Frequently Asked Questions part of the website www.studentfinance.ie

contains a section on the Student Assistance Fund. Student services or Access staff in participating institutions can also provide further information on the fund. Lastly, the list of [participating colleges](http://www.studentfinance.ie/mp7584/check-participating-colleges/index.html) provided at this web link: <http://www.studentfinance.ie/mp7584/check-participating-colleges/index.html> has further information on participating colleges.