

Central Film School

2025-2026

Central Film School

Hardship Fund Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The following is a policy document for the Central Film School (CFS) Hardship fund for students. It will cover how all Hardship Fund applications are handled, processed and resolved.
- 1.2. Students who face unforeseen financial problems during their course can apply to the Central Film School Hardship Fund to help meet costs such as childcare, books/equipment, travel or general living expenses such as rent. If you qualify for a payment from the fund, it will not usually have to be repaid.

2. Application process

- 2.1. All applications must be made through the Student Experience Classroom. The process will include the need to provide supporting information; without which, your application cannot be assessed. Once we have received your initial application through the Student Experience Classroom you will be contacted to provide supporting documentation by the Student Services Team.
- 2.2. Students can apply at any time during the academic year, assuming there are funds remaining. Every effort is made to ensure funds are available throughout the year, but CFS reserves the right to close the fund prior to the end of the academic year, without notice. Final-year students need to apply at least 4 weeks before the end of their final semester.
- 2.3. 1st year undergraduate students who experience delays in receiving their maintenance support can apply for an interim loan from the fund, provided they have no other funds available. Applicants will be

expected to repay this loan when their first instalment from Student Finance arrives.

3. Assessment Process

- 3.1. The assessment will consider the applicant's circumstances across the whole academic year, regardless of when a student applies for support. As such, it would not be expected that a student will apply more than once in any academic year. However, if a student experiences a further significant change of circumstances during the year, they may submit a second application
- 3.2. The assessment process is quite complex but is designed to be as fair as possible to all students. The below section explains various key areas of the assessment process.
- 3.3. All applications are considered by members of the Finance & Commercial Committee (FCC). If an appeal is then made, it will be considered by a separate assessor, nominated by the FCC and independent from them but within the school.

4. Appeals

- 4.1. Once an application has been assessed; students have the right to appeal a decision. This option will be available upon completion of the initial assessment. An appeal must be 1 submitted within 30 days of the original application decision being made. Application decisions can only be appealed once.

5. Awarding Hardship funds

- 5.1. Standard awards from the fund are based on the shortfall between expected income and what is considered to be 'reasonable' expenditure. Standard awards are made as a percentage of the shortfall between income and expenditure which varies through the year and may be as low as 15%; or 0% if/when the fund is exhausted. If a student is facing a financial emergency or other special circumstances, the assessor may decide to make a 'non-standard' award based primarily on the individual circumstances detailed in the supporting statement
- 5.2. There are limits on the size of awards. Please note these indicate the maximum awards available and are not typical of the awards made. The below figures include any award(s) for Digital Hardship.
 - UK Students: up to £500pa
 - EU and International Students: up to £300pa
- 5.3. It is felt that any student choosing to study overseas should only do so with a reasonable and robust contingency fund in place. Such planning should accommodate the majority of unforeseen issues which might arise, with the Hardship Fund only offering a top-up award in extreme circumstances.

- 5.4. If an award is to be made, then in most cases it will be paid directly into the applicant's bank account and the applicant will be prompted to provide their bank details at the appropriate point in the process. Generally speaking payments can only be made to a UK bank account or building society account which is in the student's name. However, in some circumstances the FCC may make certain recommendations.
- 5.5. If it is felt that the applicant would benefit from additional support, then some/all of an award may be withheld pending the completion of an appointment with a specified professional (e.g. Teaching & Learning Support Manager, School Counsellor).
- 5.6. If the applicant is in arrears with their tuition fees then some/all of an award may be paid directly to their tuition fees account. Priorities for assistance In the Panels assessments priority is given to the following groups of students:
- Students from low income families
 - Students on high-cost courses
 - Students with children (especially lone parents)
 - Mature students (over 25)
 - Disabled students - especially where the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is unable to meet particular costs)
 - Students who have entered higher education from care or former Foyer residents
 - Students receiving the final-year loan rate who are in financial difficulty.
- 5.7. If you are not in one of the priority groups you can still apply, but you should provide as much evidence as possible to show why you have an exceptional need for help.
- 5.8. Applicants will receive a notification email, to their CFS email address, explaining the outcome of their application within 2 weeks of submitting a complete application. CFS has a closure period at Christmas which may delay assessments and payments. Please note that 3 applications can only be considered once all required information, including evidence documents, has been submitted. Incomplete applications will remain as 'pending' until all required information has been received. Further Support and Guidance For further advice on how to apply to the Hardship Fund, please contact the Student Services team.
- 5.9. The FCC will relay any queries via the applicants' university email account.
- 5.10. Please note that unsuccessful awards, If the FCC considers there to be no 'additional need' or no 'unforeseen' financial issue, a nil-award will be recommended. In such cases, no award will be made.

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