

## Financial Support 2021-2022 Policy and Procedures

This information is available in an alternative format such as large print. Please contact extension number **5300**, if you need us to provide this information in a different way.

QMC financial support is largely available from the 16-19 bursary fund to provide assistance to students who are in proven financial need so that they can successfully complete their programmes of study. The Student Support Team is responsible for the administration and distribution of these funds, in line with the guidelines provided by the Government.

### Financial support available to students: Overview

There are five sources of support available to QMC students:

1. **Hardship grants – students on a low household income and students the Government classes as ‘vulnerable’ (see below page 2-3)**
2. **Free College Meals – Students on a household income of below £16,190, in receipt of income-related Employment Support Allowance, Income Support or income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net income of no more than £7400), Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit. (page 3)**
3. **Specific support (small items) from QMC Welfare Fund – (page 3)**
4. **Queen Mary’s Foundation – a charity which helps some of our students (page 4)**
5. **Childcare support – for students who are parents themselves (page 4)**

**Students will be informed of this financial support in a variety of ways:**

- **Prior to enrolling** at the College, reference will be made to financial support in the College Prospectus, at Open Evenings, and in presentations in school.
- **Upon application** to the College, all students and their parents/guardians will be informed of the funds as part of their pre-enrolment information.
- **At enrolment**, students will be reminded about the funds via support staff.
- **During a student’s programme of study**, financial support will be explained to students as part of tutorial, as well as via the student support website, plasma screens, posters, and in the Student Guide. Subject and Personal Tutors will also be informed of the funds so that they are able to direct appropriate students for financial support during the year.

Payments will be made:

- a) Direct to a third party in kind
- b) By transfer to another QMC departmental budget
- c) Into a student’s bank account by BACS
- d) Directly on to the student’s QM card for free college meals

In exceptional cases only we can pay by cash.

### **Financial support available to students:**

#### **1. Hardship Grants – students on a low household income and students the Government classes as ‘vulnerable’ (where there is actual financial need)**

##### **a) We are able to support students who are -**

- Care leavers
- Students looked after by the local authority
- In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right
- Disabled and in receipt of Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments

with a hardship grant of up to **£1200** for specific costs (transport, food, resits, emergency accommodation and essential trips) and living costs. **Payable half-termly by BACS** or in-kind directly to bus passes, trips or Housing providers. In exceptional cases cash payments will be made.

##### **b) We are able to support students whose household income is under £16,190 and with savings below £16,000 with a hardship grant for specific costs, to cover transport, free college meals, resits, limited emergency accommodation, course resources costs up to £150 and up to 2 essential trips only. By prior arrangement with teachers and relevant support staff we can cover print credit and or books.**

##### **c) We are able to support students whose household income is under £25,000 and with savings less than £16,000 with a hardship grant for some transport costs and/or course resources costs up to £150 payable in-kind directly to bus pass providers and College. Where a student does not require travel assistance we can also consider the costs listed under b).**

##### **d) We are able to support students whose household income of under £30,000 and with savings below £16,000 with a hardship grant for course costs up to £150 payable in-kind directly to College.**

In cases b) and c) the amount given depends on individual circumstances, available funds, discussions with teachers/support staff and on agreed criteria of status and attendance as below.

#### **Status criteria: Students must be -**

- Aged 16 or over
- Undertaking a course which is funded by the government at QMC
- A UK resident

#### **Attendance Criteria: Students are expected to have –**

- Attendance of 85% or above and preferably of 95% or above. Students must sign the declaration & learning agreement included in the application form.
- Where attendance falls below 85% students will be written to termly to explain that their bursary is suspended until their attendance improves. In exceptional cases we can issue weekly bus passes to encourage a student to improve their attendance.
- Subject teacher support
- Positive VISTA evidence – the College’s online tracking database

## How and When to Apply:

Students can apply for grants by using the Student Finance application form; this form and instructions on how to complete it are available from The Financial Student Support Administrator at the Help Desk, or on our website at <https://www.qmc.ac.uk/student-life/financial-support>. Students and parents/guardians of under 18's must sign this form to say that they accept and agree to abide by the criteria outlined above.

There is no deadline for application, but funds may not be available if students apply after Christmas 2021. From August 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 applications will be dealt with as they arrive in the office and within 20 working days. Early application is more likely to be successful given the availability of funds.

All grants will be subject to a detailed **financial assessment** based on:

- Family income – if the student is 16-18 and lives at home. In line with Universal Credit, anyone with savings above £16,000 is not entitled to support.
- Student's income – if you live independently and are 16 -19 as at 1 September 2021.

Documentary evidence, to support figures given, must be submitted with the application form as outlined on the form, and the information booklet available on the website or from the Financial Support Administrator. **No assessment can be made without supporting evidence.** Receipt of bursary funding will not affect other means-tested benefits. If any of the evidence given is later found to be fraudulent support will be withdrawn and this will be reported to the relevant authorities. Evidence for free college meals can also be provided via application to HCC at the following website <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/fe-apply>

The grant will be allocated by the Assistant Principal, Organisational Support following consultation with a student's Personal Tutor, Subject Tutor or Assistant Principal (as appropriate). In all cases the AP (Organisational Support) has the right to award/decline claims in exceptional circumstances disregarding this policy.

Students/parents will be notified of their award by email or letter. If an award is refused, or the award is subject to any conditions, this will be explained in writing.

If the student is asked to leave college or chooses to leave college before the end of the course, no further payments of the award will be made after the leaving date. All reasonable attempts will be made to reclaim a portion of the grant if applicable to individual cases.

If the student's attendance falls below an acceptable level, or if a student's attitude to study is poor, or behaviour in college is unacceptable, the college reserves the right to withdraw any further payments of the award.

### Appeals

Students have the right of appeal which will be considered by the AP, Organisational Support in the first instance. If unable to resolve, the appeal will be referred to the Deputy Principal, then Principal.

## 2. Free College Meals

The government has introduced free college meals for students whose household income is below £16,190, (terms and conditions apply – see application form). A healthy meal to the value of £3.20 per day will be provided in College catering outlets on a daily basis and will be issued to those students in receipt of a valid QM Card. Application is via the same form as for the hardship grant, and evidence can be provided via the HCC website at <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/fe-apply>

## 3. Specific support (small items) from QMC Welfare Fund – open to all students

The College allocates a small sum of money to assist students in *immediate* financial need.

All students may apply to this fund through The Student Financial Support Administrator for help with specific small costs at any time throughout the year, such as lunch costs or one-off travel costs. Completed application forms will be passed to the AP, Organisational Support who may wish to see the student to discuss their request. Wherever possible this money will be made available as a loan to the student, to be paid back at a date agreed with them. Payment will be made in cash or by transfer to another college budget.

If an award is refused, or the award is subject to any conditions, this will be explained verbally, and if necessary by college email. Students have the right of appeal. Appeals will first be considered by the AP, Organisational Support. A further appeal will take place if the student remains dissatisfied. The second appeal will go to the Deputy Principal. Further appeals will be considered by the Principal.

#### **4. Queen Mary's Foundation – a charity which helps some of our students**

Students in financial need may also be referred by the College to the Foundation for a separate Foundation Grant. Application is via the QM Foundation application form, available from The Student Financial Support Administrator or Jane Stockdale (Help Desk). By making an application, the student agrees to the detailed financial assessment outlined above being shared with QMF.

#### **5. Child Care – for students who are parents themselves**

Students requesting support for childcare will be directed, in the first instance, to apply for support from Care to Learn <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>. Assistance with these applications will be available from The Student Financial Support Administrator. Specific Support Funds will also be available to students for childcare support for use in emergency cases.

Caroline Watson, reviewed Nov 2021.