

# Bursary Policy

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## Introduction

1. Northeastern University London (the University) provides bursaries to students who evidence their eligibility for financial support. These bursaries are means-based and assessed when financial information has been provided. These awards can be taken as a reduction in tuition fees, a reduction in housing (where applicable) or as a bank transfer payment in Great British Pounds (GBP).
2. The University's Policy relating to this scheme attempts to provide an equitable allocation of available financial resources to the widest range of students.
3. This document outlines how the University allocates the bursary award.

## Eligibility Requirements

### Registration

4. The University's bursary scheme applies to undergraduate students only.
5. Students must be designated [home fee status](#), as determined by the Admissions Team.
6. Bursary applications are open year-round. Only one bursary award will be made per student per academic year.
7. Previous academic year eligibility does not guarantee future eligibility.
8. The University recognises there may be some instances where a student that is not eligible for a tuition fee loan may still be eligible to apply for a bursary.

### Means-Tested Household Income Assessment

9. Students' eligibility is assessed on a means-tested basis via one of two routes: on the basis of their parent(s) and/or guardians' gross household income, either as a two-parent or a one-parent household, or on the basis of their independent status. Household income thresholds for the relevant academic year are included in [Annex A](#), which is updated annually.
10. Where an applicant resides with one or more parent(s) and/or guardian(s), an application will be made on the basis of the gross household income of those parent(s) and/or guardian(s).
11. Applicants must apply via a two-parent household route where the applicant has two parents and/or guardians in their home address, with both parent(s) and/or guardian(s) required to submit relevant evidence to assess an application (see [Application Process and Evidencing](#)).

12. Where parent(s) and/or guardian(s) live in separate households, and both contribute to the financial support of the student applicant, an application should still be made using the two parent(s) and/or guardian(s) route, with financial information from all relevant parties required to make an assessment.
13. Where parents and/or guardians live in separate households, and only one parent or guardian provides financial support for the student applicant, students will be directed to apply via the one-parent household route. Students with only one parent and/or guardian should also apply using the one-parent/guardian household route.
14. Both dependent and independent students will need to provide their own relevant financial evidence. All evidence collected from students and/or parents/guardians will be treated confidentially and non-judgmentally, but are necessary for ensuring students are not receiving undisclosed financial support that could affect their application. Any income made by the student will not be taken into consideration when calculating the total household income.
15. A student who does not feel their household circumstance is reflected in this Policy should seek further guidance from a [Student Support Coordinator](#).
16. Students who are able to evidence their independent status should apply via the independent student route, and will be assessed on the basis of their own household income. This will include the income of any spouse with which an independent student applicant shares a household. Additional information regarding independent status can be found in [Annex B](#).

## Award Amounts

17. Bursaries will be assessed as being within one of two bands: Band 1 and Band 2.
  - 17.1. Applications assessed to fall within Band 1 will be awarded £2,000 per year of study.
  - 17.2. Applications assessed to fall within Band 2 will be awarded £3,000 per year of study.

## Additional Uplifts

18. Students who evidence that they are care-experienced, or have been estranged from both parents (or one parent, where this is the only living parent) are eligible for an extraordinary uplift to their bursary award of

£1,000. Additional evidence from a relevant professional body or service with knowledge of the estrangement will be requested.

19. When the additional bursary uplift of £1,000 for care leavers or estranged students is applicable, this will be added to the total bursary award regardless of banding.
20. Students who can evidence childcare responsibilities to dependents under 18 will be eligible for a further one-off Parental Support Uplift of £400, in addition to any standard bursary award.
21. When the discreet additional bursary award of £400 for students with parental responsibility is applicable, this will be made as a one-off payment during the second term of study.

## Application Process and Evidencing

22. Applications are made via our partner platform, Blackbullion. The application form is available [here](#).
23. Applications are subject to a two stage approval process. Applications are initially assessed by a Student Support Coordinator and are subsequently assessed by the Finance Manager. Where both parties are satisfied that an applicant is eligible and has provided all relevant evidence, the University will award a Bursary.
24. Where an application is made via the two parent(s) and/or guardian(s) route, evidence from both parents will be required.
25. This evidence should include:
  - 25.1. The three most recent months' bank statements from all accounts held by each parent and/or guardian involved in the application.
  - 25.2. The three most recent months' proof of income. This should be in the form of payslips, tax returns and/or as evidence of relevant benefits and entitlements.
26. All evidence must be clearly addressed to the parent or guardian. The University reserves the right to request additional evidence where this is unclear.
27. Student applicants will be required to provide:
  - 27.1. The three most recent months of their own bank statements.
28. Students applying via the independent route will be required to prove they adhere to the criteria outlined in [Annex B](#). Only evidence from the student's household will be required. The student's household will consist

- of their income and/or entitlements, and any income (and/or entitlements) of a spouse.
29. Where a student is applying as an estranged student, they will also be required to complete an Estrangement Form. For further details on this, students can contact a [Student Support Coordinator](#).
  30. The evidence of an independent student applicant should therefore include:
    - 30.1. The three most recent months' bank statements from all accounts held by each person in the household.
    - 30.2. The three most recent months' proof of income for each person in the household. This should be in the form of payslips, tax returns and/or as evidence of relevant benefits and entitlements.
    - 30.3. Proof of their independent status ([see Annex B](#)).
  31. Where all evidence is provided, applications should be assessed within 28 calendar days.
  32. Applicants will be sent an email via Blackbullion informing them of the outcome of their application.
  33. For those applying for the Parental Support Uplift, students will be required to provide:
    - 33.1. A birth certificate of a child under the age of 18 for whom they have parental responsibility.
    - 33.2. Evidence of childcare costs. This can take the form of proof of government support for childcare or receipts of childcare costs. If these costs appear in bank statements already provided in the Bursary application, no additional evidence of childcare costs will be required.

## Bursary Payment Options

34. The University provides a flexible scheme to allow students to receive their bursary award in three ways.
35. Students have the option to either take their bursary award as:
  - 35.1. A reduction in their tuition fee amount,
  - 35.2. A reduction of their NU affiliated housing (where this is applicable to a bursary recipient), or
  - 35.3. A bank transfer payment in GBP.

36. Students must select one distinct payment option and cannot spread their award across different payment options.

### Bursary Taken as a Bank Transfer Payment in GBP

37. The University will make payment in two installments as outlined in [Annex A](#) for students who elect to receive the bursary award as a cash amount.
38. Students will provide the bank details of the account they wish to receive their Bursary via the Blackbullion platform during their application.

### Bursary Taken as a Reduction in Accommodation Fees

39. Where students are staying in NU London affiliated halls of accommodation, students may choose to offset their bursary award against their accommodation fees.

### Bursary Taken as a Reduction in Tuition Fee

40. The University's home fee for undergraduate programmes is £9,250 per annum.
41. For students who elect to receive their bursary as a tuition fee reduction, the award will be deducted from their fees. For example, if a £2,000 bursary is awarded, the student's fees will reduce to £7,250.
42. The reduction of fee level may impact the maximum a student could be able to borrow for tuition fees via the SLC and/or other national schemes (in the example above, to a maximum of £7,250).
43. Please note that although the example above will impact the amount a student could borrow as part of a student fee loan, a reduction in fees will not impact the student's ability to access other forms of government support that apply to them, such as maintenance awards.

## Terms and Conditions

44. In addition to the rules indicated in the sections above, below are general terms and conditions relating to a bursary award(s). The University is required to ensure that those receiving financial assistance (hereafter referred to as Recipients) meet the relevant criteria:
  - 44.1. Recipients meet the University's minimum matriculation requirements.
  - 44.2. The information provided by the Recipient and used in the assessment of the Recipient's award(s) is true and correct.
  - 44.3. In the event that the information provided by Recipient is subsequently found to be untrue and/or misleading, the

award(s) will be withdrawn, and the University may seek repayment of any award(s) paid to date. The Recipient may also be liable for any shortfall in fees and may potentially face disciplinary action.

44.4. A Recipient's award(s) may be withdrawn, reduced and the Recipient may be asked to repay if:

44.4.1. The Recipient is in breach of the University's terms and conditions.

44.4.2. The Recipient does not maintain good standing, including the required level of attendance.

44.4.3. The Recipient's behavior leads to disciplinary action.

44.4.4. The Recipient withdraws from the University.

44.4.5. The Recipient is excluded from the University.

45. Bursary awards are made on an annual basis. It is the Recipient's responsibility to reapply at the end of each academic year. Past eligibility is no guarantee of a future award.
46. Eligibility criteria are assessed annually and are awarded to those who meet the criteria at the time of allocation.

## Repayment and Change in Circumstances

47. As a general rule, bursaries are not paid back. However, if a Recipient withdraws from the University, take a leave of absence or is withdrawn, a Recipient may be asked to pay back a proportion of any bursary received in that academic year.
48. In addition, if a Recipient's circumstances change, for example a Recipient's household income is reassessed at a higher level by the SLC, the Recipient may have to repay all or part of any bursary award.
49. Bursary payments will not be made to those in arrears to the University, as the University reserves the right to offset bursaries against outstanding debts.

## Appeals

50. This section applies to student appeals against the decision of an unsuccessful application for a University bursary.
51. Students are expected to submit an appeal in a responsible manner. Where the University receives a frivolous or vexatious appeal, the matter will be referred under the [Disciplinary Procedure for Students](#).

52. An appeal may only be lodged by the student and may not be made by a third party, other than in circumstances where, at the time allowed for the appeal to be lodged, the student is suffering from such physical or mental incapacity as to prevent the student acting for themselves.

## Bursary Appeals Procedure

53. A student may make an appeal against a decision of a bursary and/or scholarship application by completing an [Appeal Form for Students](#) and submitting it together with supporting evidence to the [Student Conduct and Complaints Officer \(SCCO\)](#).
54. The email should be clearly marked 'Bursary Appeal' in the subject header, and be submitted within 14 calendar days of the student being notified of their application outcome.
55. Students wishing to appeal should make clear they are doing so on one of the following grounds:
  - 55.1. There has been a significant procedural flaw or irregularity that compromised the fairness of the process.
  - 55.2. New material evidence (which must be supported by explanation of why it is being submitted at this late stage).
  - 55.3. There is a bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure.
  - 55.4. An outcome, decision and/or penalty, being unreasonable or disproportionate.
56. The standard of proof in appeals is on the 'balance of probabilities' rather than 'beyond reasonable doubt'.
57. In making an appeal, the burden of proof is on the student to show that one of the matters listed above applies.
58. The SCCO shall assess whether there are valid grounds for an appeal within seven days of an appeal being received. The student will be informed by the SCCO of their decision by email within the same timeframe.
59. If the SCCO determines that there may be grounds for an appeal, a Bursary Appeal Board (BAB) shall be convened within fourteen days of the SCCO's decision and subsequent communication with the student.
60. The BAB will comprise:
  - 60.1. Director of Finance (Chair),
  - 60.2. Financial Student Aid Manager, and
  - 60.3. Head of Student Support & Development.



61. The BAB's considerations will be limited to the grounds specified by the appellant in the Appeal Form for Students and should not take the form of a re-assessment of financial information. The BAB will be provided with the original bursary application, the application outcome and the completed Appeal Form for Students with any accompanying evidence.
62. If the BAB is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of grounds for appeal, the appellant may be invited to an interview with the BAB.
63. The proceedings of the BAB will take such form as the BAB determines appropriate to investigate the grounds for appeal stated in writing by the appellant.
64. The BAB may:
  - 64.1. Reject the appeal, in which case the original bursary application outcome will stand.
  - 64.2. Uphold the appeal, in which case the BAB will recommend a new bursary amount.
65. The BAB shall notify the appellant of their decision within seven days.
66. The decision of the BAB shall be final, and no further appeal may be permitted. Registry will issue a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter to advise that the Bursary Appeal Procedure has been completed. This letter will include the contact details of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

### Office of the Independent Adjudicator

67. At the end of the appeals procedure, the appellant will receive a Completion of Procedures letter. At this point, if the student remains dissatisfied, they have the right to refer the decision to the OIA, within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. Details are available [here](#).
68. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is an independent body set up as a result of the Higher Education Act 2004 to run a student complaints scheme. Membership of the OIA is a requirement of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and the Office for Students.

## Version History

<b>Title: Bursary Policy</b>				
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Referenced documents	Bursary Form (Blackbullion); <a href="#">Appeal Form for Students</a> ; Completion of Procedures (COP) Form.			
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access: Student Loan Company; Stand Alone; Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000; Student Finance England			

## Annex A: Bursary Details for the 2023/24 Academic Year

### Bursary Amounts

Total annual gross household income up to £24,999	Total annual gross household income between £25,000 and £50,778
Band 1	Band 2
£3,000	£2,000
<p>Figures above represent the two bandings of bursary funding provided by the University for the AY 23/24.</p> <p>The bursary award can be taken as a discount from fees, a discount in NU London affiliated housing, or as a semesterly bank transfer (see below).</p>	

### Bursary Award Schedule

Payment Dates	Payment Amounts		
	£4,000 <sup>1</sup>	£3,000	£2,000
First Week of First Semester	£2,000	£1,500	£1,000
First Week of Second Semester	£2,000*	£1,500*	£1,000*
<p>* An additional £400 will be awarded to students who evidence their eligibility for the Parental Support Uplift. This will come as an additional, one-off payment at the beginning of the second semester.</p>			

<sup>1</sup> This award is only applicable to students eligible for a full £3,000 bursary and an additional £1,000 bursary award applicable to care leaver and estranged students.

## Annex B: Independent Status

### Independence and Other Extraordinary Criteria

1. Although most bursary awards will be on the basis of family income, the University recognizes that a student's own income may be the more relevant measure.
2. If you are an independent student, the University applies the rules adopted by the Student Loan Company (SLC), and requires that you show you have been financially independent for three or more years before your course begins.
3. If you are an estranged student, the University applies the rules adopted by the SLC, and requires that you supply a letter from a relevant professional confirming your estranged status. For more help and information about applying for student finance as an estranged student please visit Stand Alone.
4. If you hold refugee residency status, the University applies the rules adopted by the SLC and requires that you supply a letter from SLC confirming your eligibility for maintenance loans, and a letter from a professional confirming your refugee status.
5. If you are a care leaver, the University will ask you to provide a letter from your local council or care authority. This letter should confirm you were under the care of your local authority (LA), have now left the care of the LA and are a care leaver as defined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.
6. If you have a dependent, the University will apply the rules adopted by the SLC and require that you provide evidence that dependence is financial in order to determine eligibility.
7. Northeastern University London will consider a student independent if any of the following apply:
  - 7.1. You are the primary carer of a person under the age of 18 on the first day of the academic year you're applying for student finance.
  - 7.2. You're 25 or over on the first day of the academic year you're applying for student finance.
  - 7.3. You have no living parents.
  - 7.4. You've not communicated with your parents for one year before the start of the academic year that you're applying for student finance, or you can demonstrate you're permanently estranged

from your parents. This includes where your parents can't be traced, or it's not practical or possible to contact them.

- 7.5. Your parents live outside the EU and an income assessment would put them in jeopardy, or it's not reasonably practical for them to send funds to the UK to help support you.
- 7.6. You are care-experienced (meaning you have experience of care for any three month period ending on or after the date you turned 16) or have lived in a foyer.
- 7.7. You've supported yourself for at least three years before the start of your course. This includes supporting yourself through:
  - 7.7.1. Paid, full-time employment.
  - 7.7.2. Receiving Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or other state benefits.
  - 7.7.3. Receiving any pension, allowance or other benefit because of their disability or by any reason of confinement, sickness or illness.
  - 7.7.4. Receiving training under any scheme for the unemployed or other funding by any state authority or agency.
  - 7.7.5. You've been married or in a civil partnership before the start of the academic year (even if you're now divorced or separated).