



BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY HARDSHIP FUND

OPERATING POLICY AND PROCEDURE Academic Year 2017-18

Owner: Mandi Barron, Head of Student Services

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Introduction to the Bournemouth University Hardship Fund 2017-18

1.0 Scope and Purpose

- 1.1** Bournemouth University (BU) provides hardship support to students in the form of the BU Hardship Fund. This document details how the BU Hardship Fund (referred to hereafter as the Fund) operates and aims to promote consistency, clarity and fairness in the way the Fund is managed and allocated. Further details on the way in which assessments are made are contained in the appendices.
- 1.2** The most important consideration of the Fund is to assist with the relief of financial hardship that may impact on a student's continued participation in their studies at BU. This includes assisting those who need extra financial help to meet particular costs (other than tuition fees) which are not already met from statutory (or other) sources of funding and providing one-off emergency payments for unexpected crises. Payments made as a result of a hardship assessment of applications to the fund are non-repayable.

2.0 Overview of 2017-18 Provision

- 2.1** The Fund will be reviewed on a regular basis and BU reserves the right to amend the Fund eligibility criteria or to cease the fund at any time.
- 2.2** Applications for assistance from the Fund will be administered by the Financial Support Team. The fund will be monitored and percentages of assessments of awards to be made may be reduced in order to manage the fund availability throughout the academic year, however it should be noted that if the annual allocation has been spent in full before the end of the academic year, further applications to the fund may not receive any payments if there are insufficient funds remaining.
- 2.3** BU allocates an annual pot of funds for distribution through the Fund. The Student Financial Support Team is required to account for the way in which the funds have been administered and distributed each year.
- 2.4** Eligibility criteria and exclusions for the Fund are subject to annual review.

- 2.5** BU aims to create a consistent, transparent assessment process in considering applications but it is not possible to provide for every eventuality and BU reserve the right to use discretion to make decisions on complex applications.
- 2.6** BU use the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) 'composite living costs' (CLC) in reaching a 'Reasonable Living Costs' (RLC) calculation which is determined to cover basic costs such as food, household bills, clothes, entertainment etc. This ensures that all applicants to the BU Hardship Fund are treated fairly regardless of where they study and their individual lifestyle choices. These calculations take account of the different household needs for different groups of students. The RLC are fixed for each academic year and are used in **all** standard award assessments. The RLC amounts for 2017-18 are listed at Appendix B.

3.0 Overview of the BU Hardship Fund

3.1 Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply?

- Students who are classed as Home students for fee purposes on an eligible HE course as defined at 3.2. This includes:
- Part-time students (studying at least 50 per cent of a full-time equivalent (FTE) course). Any student whose disability (including physical and mental health) prevents them from studying at least 50 per cent of a full time course is eligible to apply to the BU Hardship Fund provided they are studying for at least 25 per cent (30 credits) FTE
- Students on sandwich courses, including any periods of work placement
- Students who are studying abroad as part of their BU course
- Postgraduate (including MRes) students meeting the same criteria as 'home' undergraduate students as defined above and following a course that is a minimum of 1 year
- NHS students eligible to apply for a means tested or non-means-tested bursary
- Students from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland who are eligible for support from the appropriate devolved administration and are able to otherwise satisfy the eligibility conditions can apply for assistance from the BU Hardship Fund.

Who is not eligible to apply?

- Students who are classed as International, EU, Channel Islands and Isle of Man for fee purposes
- PhD students are not eligible for support from the BU Hardship Fund
- Students who have interrupted or withdrawn from their studies at BU are not eligible to apply to the BU Hardship Fund

3.2 Eligible Courses

3.2.1 Students applying for assistance from the Fund must be studying on one of the following eligible HE Courses:

- First degree such as BA, BSc or Integrated Masters
- A Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
- A Foundation Degree
- A postgraduate degree such as MA, MBA, MSc, LPC, CPE, GDL, MRES

NHS courses – Nursing, Midwifery, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, ODP and Paramedic Science are treated as 52 week courses for assessment purposes, along with final year BA Social Work students.

4.0 The Assessment Process

4.1 Assessment Overview

There are two types of hardship award that may be made: a standard or an exceptional award. Students will usually be considered for a standard award unless exceptional circumstances have been outlined on their application form.

- For students to be assessed they must have applied for all available funding including means tested student loans, means tested grants, NHS bursaries, Post Graduate Loans, Professional and Career Development Loans as appropriate, before submitting an application to the Fund.
- Students have to demonstrate by submitting bank statements that they have little or no funds remaining.
- Students can apply for the BU Hardship Fund until the end of their academic year. The assessor will check the student is enrolled for the current academic year on the Student Record System (SITS). Students who can evidence that they are unable to work or have dependent children can apply for funding after their academic year has finished and before their next one commences.

4.2 Standard Awards

4.2.1 Standard awards are assessed using the student's income (**see appendix A**) and their essential expenditure (**see appendix B**) as listed and evidenced as part of their application. If applicable the student's partner's income and expenditure will also be included as detailed in Appendix B. The period of assessment is dependent on the course the student is studying as outlined below:

Category	Student Group	Period and Type of Assessment
A	Students on a course with standard course dates without dependents	39 Weeks Assessment
B	Students on a course with standard course dates with dependents or who are unable to work due to ill health	43 Week Assessment (in line with DWP benefit assessments)
C	Students on sandwich placement	40 weeks Assessment
D	Students on courses studying longer than 45 weeks. Typically NHS students	52 weeks Assessment
E	Students on postgraduate courses	52 Weeks PG Assessment

4.2.2 The number of weeks used to make a standard BU Hardship Fund assessment varies. For the majority of students without dependants, 39 weeks would be the normal duration of the academic year, excluding the summer vacation. The period of assessment remains the same regardless of the point in the year that the student applies to the fund.

4.2.3 To be able to complete an assessment, it is required to know the student's income and essential expenditure and this must be evidenced where required. The income and expenditure is calculated into weekly amounts to determine whether a student has a deficit or surplus.

4.2.4 All income for undergraduate study will be calculated based on the number of weeks of assessment. For example, if a student falls under category A as above, receives a student loan of £4,500, this will be divided by 39 weeks to provide a weekly figure.

4.2.5 In most cases it will be required to calculate expenditure over 52 weeks to determine a weekly figure. Course costs will be calculated based on the

weeks of assessment. For example if a student falls under category B as above and lists £200 of course costs, this will be divided by 43 weeks of study.

- 4.2.6 Once the assessment is completed, if there is a deficit between the student's income and essential expenditure, an award can be made. This is calculated by multiplying the deficit by the number of weeks of assessment. If there is a surplus in the funds, then no standard award can be made. The maximum awards permitted are detailed in section 6.
- 4.2.7 If a student has returned from interruption part way through the year or is studying less than the standard course length, any deficit should be multiplied by how many weeks of study, as reflected on the student's enrolment record.
- 4.2.8 The hardship fund assessor will use their discretion whether the student has adequate funds based on the current balance of the student's bank statements. It is at the discretion of the hardship fund assessor whether an award is made or to deduct any positive balance from the award made.

4.3 Exceptional Awards

- 4.3.1 Exceptional awards can be made for students who have to meet exceptional and unexpected costs such as replacement or repairs to essential household equipment and emergency situations. These awards will be capped. **In most cases evidence will be required.** The table below outlines exceptional awards which can be considered. This list is not exhaustive.

Exceptional Award	Capped amount
Washing Machine	Up to £200
Fridge Freezer	Up to £200
Cooker	Up to £200
Children's Bed	Up to £200
New Born Baby start-up costs (cot, bedding, essential items)	Up to £500
Assistance with eye test/glasses	Up to £100
Laptop/computer repairs/replacement for students with dependent children	Up to £200
Car repairs/replacement car where a car is considered essential – students with dependent children and those courses listed in 3.2	Up to £500
DSA assistance, EP assessment or equipment/software requirements	Up to £320 (£120 assessment and £200 equipment software)

- 4.3.2** Additional essential expenditure not fully met through statutory grants may also be considered, for example additional childcare costs not met by the HE Childcare Grant for Full time HE students.

Childcare should initially be assessed based on the Childcare Grant from SFE or the NHS. This will be anything up to 85% of a student's actual childcare costs. Therefore by using the childcare grant and dividing this by 85%, will give the amount of childcare we use in our calculation. However, if a student is able to provide evidence either from their childcare provider or through bank statements, where the childcare is higher than the calculation, we will use the actual childcare being paid.

- 4.3.3** Exceptional awards can be made for students with priority debts, where the consequence of non-payment is significant – for example, court action, removal of property.
- 4.3.4** Exceptional awards can be made to students where they require an Affidavit from a solicitor to evidence estrangement or separation, to allow them to access funding from Student Finance England or NHS Bursaries. In most cases where we have met with the student to discuss their situation, we can advise for the solicitor to invoice us. Payment would be made directly to the solicitor by cheque.
- 4.3.5** Exceptional awards are considered on a case-by-case basis. Students at risk of withdrawing due to financial difficulties are generally assessed at 4 weeks Composite Living Costs (CLC) in an attempt to prevent the withdrawal.
- 4.3.6** The BU Hardship Fund is not intended to provide additional study support that is available from the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs), unless the DSAs are insufficient to cover the whole cost, or the cost cannot be met from the DSAs. Therefore the BU Hardship Fund can assist with shortfall in DSA support and assistance with the DSA assessment, where evidence is provided.

5.0 Debts

5.1 Set out below are debts that are classed as priority and those that are classed non-priority. The BU Hardship Fund cannot normally be used to assist with repayment of non-priority debts, only priority debts.

5.2 The amount used in the assessment should be based on the minimum payment required to prevent further action being taken by the creditor during the rest of the academic year.

Priority Debts

- Loan repayments which are subject to a realistic and minimum repayment plan
- Rent arrears where non-payment may result in eviction or court action
- Council tax where non-payment may result in eviction or court action
- Debt which will result in serious action if not paid, for example, court action, eviction, re-possession of goods
- Hire Purchase/Conditional sale agreements for goods that are essential for the debtor to retain

Non-Priority Debts

- Loan repayments to family members and friends
- Bank overdraft facilities
- Credit card and store card debt*
- Tuition fee debt
- Debts which relate to non-essential items or items that could have been purchased at a more reasonable value
- Credit and store card debt for a student's partner
- Those where non-payment will not result in the loss of the debtor's home, liberty, essential goods or services

**Where a student has already agreed a realistic repayment arrangement of a non-priority debt and has stopped using that source of credit, the repayments can be included as expenditure in the assessment for a standard award.*

5.3 It is recommended that students with debts should be encouraged to seek advice from a debt advice service (e.g. SUBU Advice) or externally (e.g. Citizens Advice).

6.0 Maximum Amounts Payable

6.1 To effectively manage the annual allocation of available funds, upper limits to the amounts that can be awarded to students have been set and are listed below. BU will review the threshold limits each academic year and also retains the discretion to amend the limits in-year, normally if the fund balance is at risk from significant underspend or overspend (based on demand).

6.2 Maximum award payment for specific groups

Student Group	Maximum Award Payable
Undergraduate students with dependent children (excluding Level P)	£3,500
Final year undergraduate (Level H/6) without dependent children	£1,000
Undergraduate placement (Level P) students (with or without dependent children)	£1,000
Second year undergraduate (Level I/5) without dependent children	£750
First year undergraduate (Level C/4) without dependent children	£500
Postgraduate students (with or without dependent children)	£1,000

The minimum payment amount will be £50 and the maximum payment amount will be £3,500 as listed above.

7.0 Application Process

7.1 The current application form for the BU Hardship Fund is available to request from <https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/students/help-advice/finance-support/bu-hardship-fund> . Forms should be submitted in person at AskBU, via email or by post to the address on the application form. All applications should be accompanied by the evidence required as listed on the application.

7.2 A decision on a BU Hardship Fund application will normally be provided within 20 working days from receipt of the application. Where further information or clarification is requested to inform assessment of an application this decision may take longer. The Fund administrators have the discretion to consider exceptional cases ahead of other applications based on a priority assessment. Decisions will normally be communicated to students by email to their student email account.

8.0 Evidence Requirements

8.1 All applications must be supported by evidence of circumstances, although this should be kept to the minimum necessary to verify the information provided. Specifics may vary depending on whether the student is undergraduate or postgraduate. BU can only accept photocopies of documents and is unable to return any originals submitted. Additionally, due to Data Protection, all confidential photocopies will be securely destroyed one calendar month following a fund decision.

8.2 When assessing an application for the BU Hardship Fund, it is expected that the student will provide certain evidence as listed below to enable an assessment to be undertaken. An assessor may require further evidence which is not listed below to enable them to complete an assessment.

Evidence required for every student

- Student Finance England and/or NHS Award Notification
- Most recent banks statements for all accounts covering 3 months
- Tenancy/Rental/Mortgage agreement

Evidence required depending on circumstances

- Evidence showing any means tested benefits. This will include benefits such as child and working tax credits, universal credit, housing benefit. This list is not exhaustive
- Evidence of childcare costs
- Evidence of partner's income and expenditure
- Evidence of priority debts and repayment of debts, as listed in 5.2
- Evidence of other expenditure listed on the application form. This may include exceptional but essential expenditure as listed in 4.3

9.0 Payment of BU Hardship Fund Awards

9.1 Successful applications for BU Hardship Fund are normally paid by cheque. Currently cheque runs are only made once a week and any awards advised to F+P before 2pm on Wednesday. Cheques are normally available for students to collect from the following Tuesday. Cheques are normally collected from the AskBU Students Service and students will be asked to provide their BU Student Card as proof of identity. For students who are unable to collect their cheque in person, AskBU will post the cheque to the student at an address recorded on the Student Record System (it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the university has the correct term time, home and correspondence addresses at all times and students are able to update this in [myHub](#)). Cheques cannot be collected by a third party on behalf of the student at any time.

- 9.2** BU Hardship Fund Awards will be made in one instalment. BU does however have the discretion to make the awards in more than one instalment if deemed appropriate.
- 9.3** Payments can only be made payable to a third party at the student's request or with their agreement. Where the student owes money to BU (Emergency Loan), any Fund award would usually be used to reimburse an outstanding debt. Also, where the student owes money to BU the debt and/or debt repayments will not be taken into account in making an assessment.

10.0 Appeals

- 10.1** Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of their application should first discuss their case with the Senior Student Money Adviser in AskBU. If the student believes that they have grounds to appeal, they should follow the financial support appeals procedure. Students who are thinking about appealing a decision on their application for an award from the BU Hardship Fund are strongly recommended to seek advice from the Student Union Advice Centre.
- 10.2** Appeals will only be considered when there is evidence that a procedural irregularity has occurred in processing the application or new evidence becomes available that was not available at the time the application was submitted. Appeals against the University's judgement of the merit of an applicant against the published criteria will not be accepted.

APPENDIX A - Assessment of Income

A1 Assessment of Income Overview

A1.1 BU will look at the combination of statutory, institutional, household and personal support available to the student. These will vary according to level and mode of study however there are some common areas which are treated similarly. The student's own income and expenditure should be assessed, along with that of their partner where applicable (where spouse/partner is used, civil partner should be assumed).

A1.2 For all full-time undergraduate students the following are treated as income:

- Additional parental contributions
- Student's savings (including from an inheritance)
- Capital
- Partner's income (and expenditure)
- Child support maintenance income
- Social security benefits and Child Tax Credits (CTC)
- The maximum Student Loan and Grant minus disregards listed at B7

A1.3 The table below illustrates how benefits and tax credits should be treated when assessing full-time undergraduate students for a standard award.

<i>Income</i>	<i>Count as Income</i>
Means-tested benefits	Yes
Earnings Replacements Benefits	Include as part of assumed income
Non-means-tested benefits	No
Tax credit	Yes
Pension credit	Yes
BU Maintenance and Care Leavers Bursary	The first £360 will be disregarded and the remainder counted as actual income
Scholarships	No – disregarded in full
Specified element of Maintenance Grant and equivalents from other parts of UK	£1,869 of maintenance grant will be disregarded for 2017-18
Local Authority Care Leavers Bursary*	No
Student Loan for pre-2016 entrants	In full
Student Loan for post 2016 entrants	**Calculation below to apply £1,869 disregard
NHS Bursary	In full

Care Leavers may be eligible to a non-taxable £2,000 bursary paid by Local Authorities when they enter Higher Education (for both full and part time students). This bursary should be disregarded in BU Hardship Fund assessments for undergraduate students.

**** To treat all students consistently and fairly, it is necessary to establish the grant, a post 2016 student would receive, to apply the disregard pre 2016 students are entitled to on their grant. The following calculation establishes the split of grant and loan to be used in the standard assessment.**

Income from HEBSS (Higher than £25k) - £25,000 = X

X/£5.14 (how much grant is decreased by per £1) = Y*

£3,482 - Y = Z (Grant)

SFE Loan - Z = Loan for Hardship Fund

**<http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/1158/201718-financial-memorandum.pdf> - page 22.*

Enter both grant and loan amounts calculated, £1,869 disregard will be applied to grant as part of the automatic calculation.

A2 Statutory Support

A2.1 It is expected that a student's full student support entitlement will be taken into account together with any additional support, irrespective of whether the student has applied for or received the full entitlement. **ALL undergraduate students must be means tested by their relevant authority before their BU Hardship Fund application can be assessed.**

** The only exception to undergraduate students being means tested is students who are on sandwich placement as typically these students are non-means tested.*

A3 Other Statutory Support

A3.1 Students are expected to apply for all other statutory support to which they are entitled (in particular tax credits and social security benefits). Eligibility for statutory support should be considered in any assessment, regardless of whether the student has applied for and received any statutory support.

A4 Maintenance Loans

A4.1 Where eligible, full-time undergraduate students must have applied for their full entitlement of student maintenance loan and must have received their first instalment before receiving any payment from the Fund. This can be determined from the payment schedule letter issued by Student Finance England (SFE) and bank statements.

A4.2 Where a student has not been able to receive any statutory support because they have a previous HE qualification, the student may still apply for help from the BU Hardship Fund if they satisfy all other eligibility requirements. However, the 'missing or declined' support will be taken into account as assumed income, as the BU Hardship Fund cannot replace a 'non-award' from Student Finance.

The full support to include would be based on the full loan of £8,430 for 2017-18. This would be broken down for assessment purposes as follows:

Maintenance Grant - £3,482

Maintenance Loan - £4,948

A4.3 It is expected that most students will apply for a tuition fee loan. However there might be students who have paid their fees and then fallen into hardship, though these cases should be rare. Such students will be advised to apply for a fee loan as soon as they are able to do so.

A5 Household contribution

A5.1 The assessed contribution (family contribution) to a student's income will need to be determined in line with the Student Support Regulations (link below). For example – for a 2016 cohort student whose household income is £50,000, the assessed contribution from the family would be £862. This figure would then be divided by the weeks of assessment.

Assessed contribution amounts are provided in the following document:

<http://www.practitioners.sl.cco.uk/media/1158/201718-financial-memorandum.pdf>
(Page 15 for 2016 cohorts and Page 24 for 2012 cohorts)

A5.2 Where parents are contributing more than the assessed contribution, any contributions above the assessed contribution figures in the previous section will be included in the assessment.

A6 Reassessments

A6.1 If a student experiences a change of circumstances during the year or an emergency situation arises, they may submit subsequent applications to the Fund.

A7 Treatment of Benefits and Tax Credits for standard awards

A7.1

Benefit	Count as Income
Means-tested benefits	Yes
Earnings Replacements Benefits	Include as part of assumed income
Non-means-tested benefits	No
Tax credit	Yes
Pension credit	Yes

- A7.2** A student in receipt of CTC is eligible to apply for help with childcare costs from the Fund, as CTC is not specifically for childcare costs. Any CTC a student or their partner receives should be treated as income for the standard award methodology.
- A7.3** If the student declares any other income, for example from savings, additional parental contributions or an occupational pension, any amount over the relevant 'assumed income' should be counted in full. This does not apply to earnings from part-time work as it forms part of the assumed income.
- A7.4** A partner's net earnings should be taken into account in full (and the partner's essential expenditure should also be included in full with the exception of credit/store card debt and debt repayments relating to non-essential items).
- A7.5** Any income that a student receives for Child Support Maintenance should be taken into account.
- A7.6** The Welsh Assembly Learning Grant, bursaries provided by the Scottish Government and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland should be treated in the same way as the HE Maintenance Grant/Special Support Grant. Any income from these over £1,869 should be included as income in the BU Hardship Fund assessments.
- A7.7** The first £360 of any BU Bursary will be disregarded and the remainder counted as actual income. Scholarships will be disregarded in full as these are effectively recognition of 'excellence'. However, a student in receipt of a Scholarship will still need to demonstrate 'hardship' by showing that little or no funds are available.

A8 Assumed income

A8.1 It is expected that students will be able to supplement their income from a variety of routes, for example, part-time work, vacation work, bank overdrafts (regardless of level), savings or additional parental support where appropriate.

A8.2 The standard assessment uses an ‘assumed income’ figure to cover these elements of income rather than taking into account the actual income. Actual earnings from part-time work are disregarded to give students the capacity to earn larger sums without affecting their payment from the Fund. This enables them to meet expenditure which is either not covered in the assessment e.g. mobile phone bills, or course costs and other items which exceed the standard/capped amounts used in the assessment. Assumed income rates are set out below. There is no discretion to vary these amounts.

A8.3 The following grants will be disregarded in the BU Hardship Fund assessments (see checklist below for further details on how to treat these payments).

- A specified element of HE Maintenance Grant and equivalents from other parts of the UK (£1,869 for 2017-18)
- The first £360 of BU Bursaries awarded on income grounds.

A8.4 Assumed income rates

The assumed income rates to be used for all undergraduate students are:

Year 1 students	£1,869
Year 2 students	£1,120
Final year	£623
Students with dependents or unable to work due to ill health/disability	£0

A9 Exceptions to assumed income

A9.1 The assumed income is not used for students with dependants (even if the student is working) or those unable to work due to ill health/a disability. These two priority groups should have a zero assumed income. ***Evidence is required for those students who are unable to work. This would usually be a letter from a medical professional, or can be evidenced through the type of benefit the student may be receiving (for example PIP/ESA/DLA).*** In addition, BU has the discretion to reduce or remove the assumed income level for students with caring responsibilities. However, other types of benefit income many need to be included for these students relating to their caring responsibilities.

A10 Estrangement

A10.1 Where students declare that the expected household contribution is not met, for example such as through estrangement, evidence will be required.

A10.2 The Fund will not be used towards subsidising the household contributions as calculated by SFE for cases other than genuine relationship breakdown. Students who find themselves in financial hardship because their parents are no longer able to meet the cost of the household contribution due to a drop in income (of 15% or more) should be encouraged to contact SFE for a reassessment. However, parental outgoings such a high housing costs etc, will not be a factor in the anticipated household contribution.

A11 Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

A11.1 BU can provide a letter to students detailing the BU Hardship Fund Award to assist the DWP assess the student for relevant benefits.

A12 Assumed Income and Notional Postgraduate Income (NPI)

A12.1 The income is based on Notional PG Income figure of £177 per week. This encompasses any income from the PG Loan/Professional Career Development Loan, part time work, support from family and friends. This is a set figure which is outlined below. There is the expectation that realistic provision has been made to fund both tuition fees and living costs before embarking on the course.

Rather than taking the actual amount of income gained in this way, the assessment uses fixed amounts to take account of this type of income as outline below:

Student	NPI Amount per week
Student living elsewhere	£177
Student living in London	£214
Student with dependants* or students who are unable to work due to disability, living elsewhere.	£142
Student with dependants* or students who are unable to work due to disability, living in London.	£178

*who are financially reliant upon the student

A13 Part-Time Students

A13.1 For all part-time students, the assessment should be taken over the actual number of weeks of study including the short vacations. The period of assessment remains the same regardless of when the student applies during the year. Amounts of awards should not be pro-rated if the student applies in the second or third term.

A13.2 Treatment of income

<i>Income</i>	<i>Count as Income</i>
Means-tested benefits	Yes
Earnings Replacements Benefits	Include as part of assumed income
Non-means-tested benefits	No
Tax credit	Yes
Pension credit	Yes
BU Maintenance and Care Leavers Bursary	The first £360 will be disregarded and the remainder counted as actual income
Scholarships	No – disregarded in full

A13.3 Any statutory or discretionary fee support should be disregarded.

A13.4 A partner’s (including civil partner’s) net earnings should be taken into account in full but the partner’s essential expenditure should also be included in full to balance this.

A14 Treatment of Benefits

A14.1 Means tested and non means tested benefits

In assessing BU Hardship Fund applications it is important to know which social security benefits and tax credits to count and which to disregard in the calculations. As a general rule any means-tested benefit (such as Housing Benefit, or Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance) for which a student is eligible should be counted in the assessment. Means-tested benefits should be counted in full in the assessment, for both the student and their partner (if applicable). Any non-means-tested benefit the student has is generally disregarded.

A14.2 Similarly, as a general rule, BU will include any income from benefits for which students are eligible, even if they have not included this in their application. BU (with assistance from SUBU Advice if appropriate) will alert students to the need to apply for, for example, Child Tax Credit in the response to such applications. The BU Hardship Fund is designed to be an additional assistance rather than an alternative.

A14.3 Earnings Replacement Benefits

Some benefits from both means-tested and non-means-tested groups are known as earnings replacements. These Earnings Replacement Benefits (ERBs) are paid to claimants who do not or cannot earn a full wage. For example, a person who is in receipt of Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) receives this benefit whilst they are trying to find work.

A14.4 These are benefits that may be available to those who are unable to work:

- Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit (after 28 weeks) and contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Statutory Maternity Pay
- Maternity Allowance
- Statutory Sick Pay
- Carers Allowance
- Retirement Pensions
- Bereavement Benefits

A14.5 For full-time students, income from these non means-tested ERBs should not be counted separately (it can form part of the 'assumed income' figure for full-time undergraduates and part of the 'notional postgraduate income' for full-time postgraduates – see Section B5). Income from ERBs should be included in full where it is the income of a full-time student's partner or the income of a part-time student or their partner.

A14.6 Other non means-tested benefits

Entitlement to these benefits usually depends upon the individual's personal circumstances rather than income levels. For example, if you have an eligible dependent child you will receive Child Benefit. Again, some of these benefits are due in time to be replaced by Universal Credit, and further advice will be issued in due course.

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- PIP
- Attendance Allowance (AA)
- Industrial Injuries Benefit
- Child Benefit (CB)
- Guardians Allowance
- Adoption Allowance

A14.7 These non means-tested benefits should be fully disregarded in the BU Hardship Fund assessment but can be a useful indication of the person's particular circumstances i.e. a person in receipt of DLA clearly may have extra needs relating to their disability.

A14.8 The relevant tax credit should be included in the income section of a BU Hardship Fund assessment. The majority of students with children should be in receipt of Child Tax Credit. If they do not appear to be receiving it, they should be alerted to the availability of this funding.

A14.9 Pension Credit is a means-tested allowance. There are two parts to it and it is possible to receive one part of Pension Credit or both. There is more information about Pension Credit on the Gov.uk website at www.gov.uk

APPENDIX B – Treatment of Expenditure

B1 Reasonable Living Costs

BU has judged that the amounts listed below are Reasonable Living Costs for the 2017-18 Academic Year

Outgoings	Maximum levels
Rent for single students <i>For students living in the parental home, the composite living costs are classed as any rent paid, which cover the student's living</i>	£370 per calendar month (£85.38 per week)
Rent for students living with partner	£740 per calendar month (£170.77 per week)
Rent for students with dependent children	Uncapped
Course requirements – books, printing, stationary	£250 per year
Course requirements – equipment (if relevant to course)	£250 per year
Phones	£25 per month
Help with house/flat deposits and estate agents fees*	£200 per year
Assistance for students at risk of withdrawing – up to 4 weeks RLC* (£78 per week for 17-18)	£312

* Items noted with an asterisk can be considered for exceptional awards

B2 Composite Living Costs

B2.1 Composite Living Costs (CLC) figures have been determined to cover expenditure on basic costs such as food, household bills, clothes, entertainment, etc, which ensures that all applicants are treated fairly, regardless of where they study and regardless of their individual lifestyle choices. These take into account the different household needs for different groups of students. The CLCs are fixed and will be used in **all** standard award assessments.

B2.2 Expenditure on rent, travel, course costs, childcare, etc, which will vary between students is not included in these amounts (see B3 for variable expenditure levels).

B2.3 The following table illustrates CLC amounts for 2017-18 and has scope to change for each academic year

<i>Student profile</i>	<i>Based on DWP applicable amount (assuming no disability in family)</i>	
	<i>Elsewhere Per week</i>	<i>London per week</i>
Single student	£78	£121
Student with partner	£122	£165
Dependent children* (each)	£72	£72

*As evidenced through student's child benefit/child tax credits award notifications

- B2.4** In addition add an extra one-off cost of £20 (family premium) where a student has at least one dependent child.
- B2.5** The amounts for London apply to students eligible for the London rate of loan (and are calculated in line with the difference between the London and elsewhere loan rates). BU students on placement in London qualify for the higher levels of support.
- B2.6** Where a student or their partner is receiving a premium other than family premium, e.g. disability premium through a means-tested benefit, the amount of this premium should be added to the amounts shown above. The benefits notice from the DWP will give this information.
- B2.7** The table below lists the elements that should/should not be included as CLC. This list is not exhaustive.

Item	<i>Composite Living Costs</i>	<i>Variable expenditure</i>
Independent or Commercial Rent/mortgage		Yes
Rent whilst living with parents	Yes	
Food	Yes	
Utilities	Yes	
Phone / Mobile		Yes
TV Licence	Yes	
Clothes	Yes	
Travel to Uni		Yes
Course requirements		Yes
Medication		Yes
Priority debt repayments		Yes
Entertainment / Clubs / Societies	Yes	
Childcare		Yes
Council Tax		Yes

B3 Variable expenditure

- B3.1** Expenditure on rent, travel, course-related costs, childcare and other exceptional costs is excluded from the CLC, and actual or capped costs will be included in the assessment. Students will need to provide evidence of their expenditure on these items, and BU will use the 'cap' ceilings for each item outlined at Appendix A.

B3.1.1 Travel

Capped amounts for travel

The amount the student specifies on their application will be used in the calculation, providing it is not above the capped amounts as listed below.

It is generally expected that students on NHS courses, Paramedic Science and 3rd year Social Work students will need to be running a car due to placement.

- *Students with dependent children - uncapped + car costs (tax/insurance/maintenance)*
- *Students without dependents on NHS courses, including 3rd year Social Work students and Paramedic Science students - £20 per week + car costs (tax/insurance/maintenance)*
- *Students without dependents who live in outlying areas - £20 per week + car costs (tax/insurance/maintenance)*
- *Students without dependents who live on UNIBUS routes - £10 per week*

Further consideration can be given if students have other significant reasons for high travel costs, for example, a disability or carer responsibilities, if evidence is provided.

If an assessor feels travel costs are unrealistically high, then further information or break down of costs can be requested.

B3.1.2 Child Support Maintenance

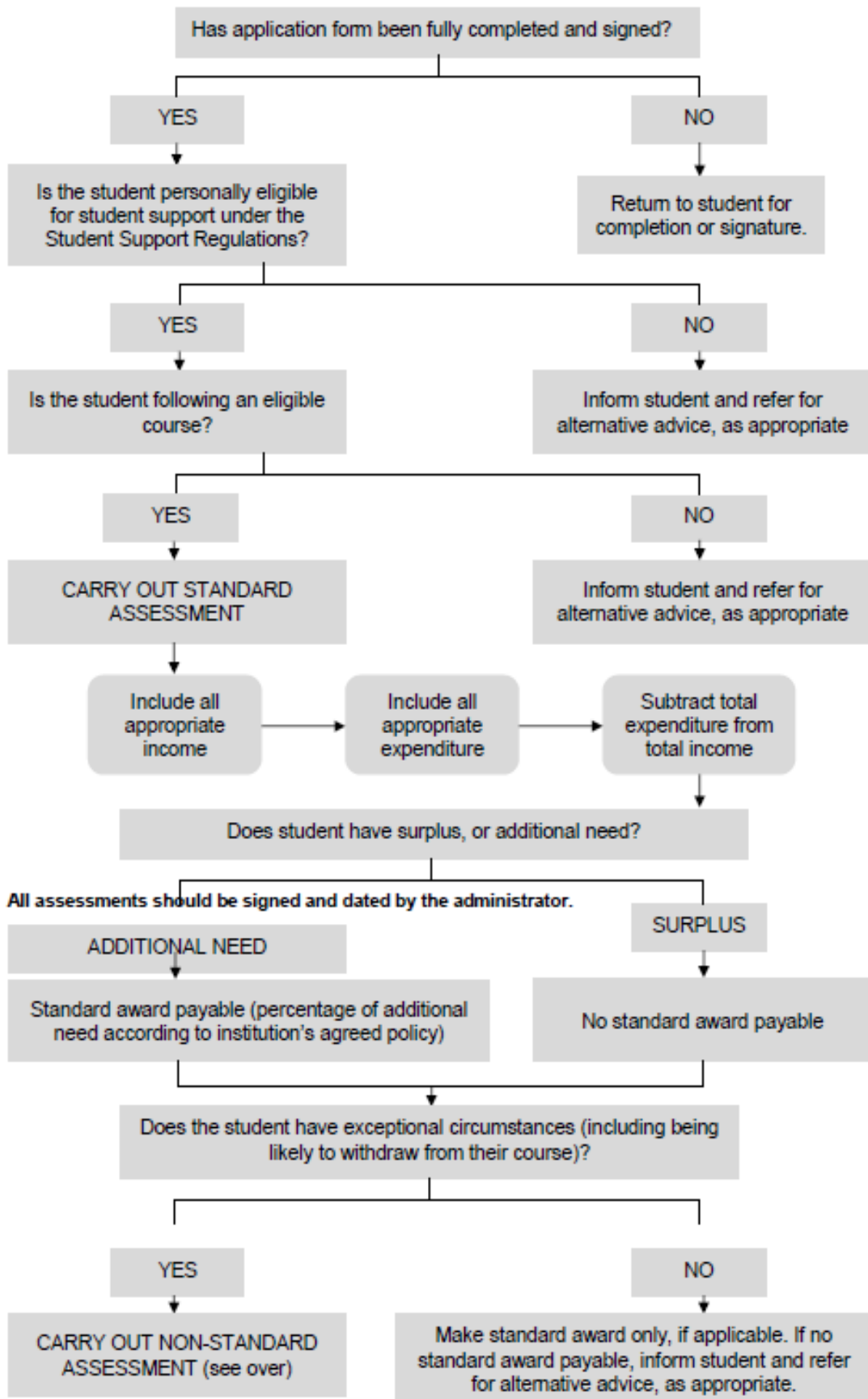
Payments that a student has to make from their salary, following an order to pay Child Support Maintenance should be counted as variable expenditure.

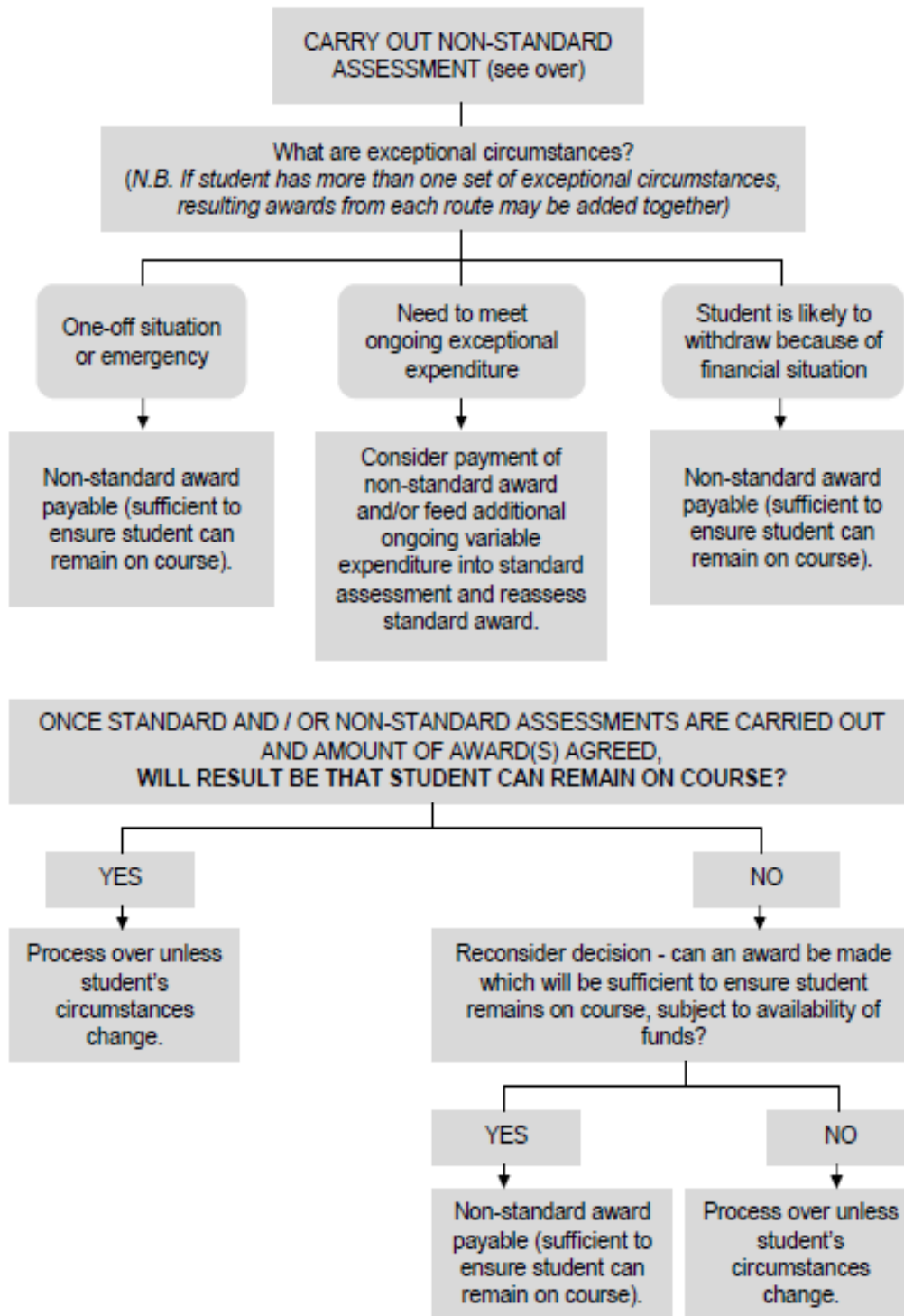
B3.1.3 Students with caring responsibilities

If the student has children who are living with a former partner, and the student is not receiving Child Tax Credit or Child Benefit for them, a level of expenditure will still be included for costs associated with visits/weekend or holiday care, linked to the level of contact/care. For students who are caring for an elderly relative, either at weekends or during holidays or if the relative is living with them, the income of that person should not be included but a level of expenditure associated with their caring responsibilities will be included.

B3.1.4 Where a student has evidenced on bank statements that they have incurred charges relating to overdraft fees, these can be included in expenditure. These are calculated by adding up any fees/charges listed and dividing by 52 weeks.

APPENDIX C - BU Hardship Fund Application Flow Chart





All assessments should be signed and dated by the administrator.

APPENDIX D - Acronyms and abbreviations

AI	Assumed income
BU	Bournemouth University
BUHF	Bournemouth University Hardship Fund
CB	Child Benefit
CLC	Composite Living Costs
CTC	Child Tax Credits
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DSA	Disabled Students Allowance
DWP	Department for Work & Pensions
EEA	European Economic Area
ELQ	Equivalent or lower qualification
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
HB	Housing Benefit
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
NASMA	National Association of Student Money Advisers
NPI	Notional Postgraduate Income
NUS	National Union of Students
PCDL	Professional Career Development Loan
PG	Postgraduate
SFE	Student Finance England
SLC	Student Loans Company
SSG	Special Support Grant
UG	Undergraduate
WTC	Working Tax Credit