

Students with children

How to complete the 2011-12 application form - Guidance Notes

Applications for term-time awards can be accepted throughout the academic year until the closing date

4.30 p.m. on Friday 1 June 2012

ALF awards do not, usually, have to be repaid. However, if your attendance is poor or you intermit or withdraw from your course before the end of the academic year, you may be required to repay all or part of the award. It is your responsibility to inform ALF if your circumstances change.

Assessment Period

The assessment period is 43 weeks for continuing students who are unable to work because they have children under 16 years of age or a long term illness or a disability for which they receive a disability benefit or premium.

All final year undergraduate students will be assessed over 39 weeks.

NHS degree students who receive student support for 52 weeks of the year will be assessed over 52 weeks.

NHS Diploma students are assessed over the actual weeks of the course.

Postgraduate students, undergraduate part time students and distance learners will be assessed over the actual number of weeks of their course.

1 Part 1: Personal details

Complete all sections

2 Dependants

Complete this section giving details of all children and/or adults who are financially dependant on you.

3 Disability/Special Medical Needs

Complete this section if relevant

If you wish to apply for the cost of a diagnostic assessment **only**, eg a Dyslexia test, please complete the 'fast-track' form available from the university's Student Enabling Centre; Caroline Loven at the School of Health or the nominated contact at your SURF or Franchise college. You do not have to take out the student maintenance loan to receive this funding. The completed form should be returned to Student Finance, Information Centre, Staffordshire University, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2DE.

Please note that it is not our policy to reimburse the costs of the assessment unless this has been agreed in advance. Payment is usually made directly to the supplier of the service.

If you wish to enquire about assistance for special equipment, the Student Enabling Centre will be able to advise you.

4 Care Leavers

If you are in receipt of Local Authority funding as a care leaver please tick the box.

5 Part 2: Course details

Complete all sections. Please indicate the **site** where you study, e.g. Stoke, Stafford, Shrewsbury, etc.

6 Part 3: Bank details

Please complete this section in full and provide three months consecutive, up to date bank statements for **ALL** accounts held in your name and your partner's name, including joint accounts and savings and investments accounts. You **MUST** write on your statements where **ALL** credits have come from, i.e. salary, parental contribution etc. Please also state what **ALL** withdrawals of £50 or more have been spent on, i.e. rent, food, shopping, course costs etc. **Please note** one of your statements must show the deposit of your student loan instalment. Your application may be rejected if you do not provide all of the relevant information, including a copy of bank statements.

7 Part 4: Supporting Statement

This is required for auditing purposes. Please provide a statement saying why you are applying to the fund and the reasons why you need additional financial support.

Part 5 A: Student income

8 Maintenance Grant or Special Support Grant, Welsh Assembly Grant, Scottish or Northern Ireland Funding

Please enter the type of grant and the full amount as listed on your Financial Notification. ALF will disregard the first £1,694 of the Maintenance Grant or Special Support Grant.

9 Maintenance Loan (Student Loan)

Student Loans are available to most undergraduate full-time students under the age of 60. You must take out the maximum amount of loan you are entitled to, and have received the first instalment, **before** applying to ALF. Please enter the full amount.

10 Student Support Number

All students will have a unique reference number on the Financial Notification starting with the letters SFDU12345678A. **(This is not the ART. ID number).**

11 Parent/Partner contribution to living costs

A percentage of the Maintenance Loan (Student Loan) is guaranteed, the remaining amount, plus additional weeks, is based on your family income. If you do not receive the full amount of student loan the difference should be entered as parental/partner contribution

For courses longer than 40 weeks the rate for additional weeks is £83 per week, or £54 per week for students receiving the parental home rate of student loan.

12 University Bursary

Please enter the **full amount** of the bursary you will receive, even if you have not yet received the first instalment. For ALF purposes we will disregard the first £338 of the bursary.

13 Parents Learning Allowance

Students with dependent children can get up to £1,508 depending on their family income. Please enter the full amount you are entitled to.

14 Childcare Grant

Full-time students with children in registered childcare can receive a childcare grant of up to 85% of the total cost. This applies to term-time and vacation childcare arrangements. Please enter the full amount of childcare grant you receive for term time.

15 Adult Dependants' Grant

Eligible students may receive up to £2,642 per year. Please enter the total amount you are entitled to.

16 Scholarships/Grants/Bursaries

If you receive a grant, bursary, scholarship etc. that is not listed elsewhere on the form, please enter the total amount here. For example, NHS bursary, Social Work bursary, Teacher Training bursary etc.

If you are a postgraduate student in receipt of a research grant please include any funding under this heading. Please state what type funding you receive.

17 Professional/Career Development Loan

Please enter the full amount of loan you have taken out and ALF will make the adjustment for the payment of your fees. Please provide evidence of the loan.

18 Net Earnings/Assumed Income

Full-time students with health problems or dependent children will have their salary disregarded, but part-time students' salary will be included in full.

NHS secondees will also have their salary included in full.

Full-time Postgraduate students will have an 'assumed' income included. This is known as the Notional Postgraduate Income (NPI). The rate for students with dependants or a disability will be £129 per week, but part-time Postgraduate students' salary will be included in full. ALF does not have discretion to change these DIUS Guidelines.

19 Income Support/Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance/Job Seekers' Allowance

If you are in receipt of any of these benefits, please include the full amount you receive here, and provide evidence.

20 Child Tax Credit/Working Tax Credit

Please enter the full amount of tax credits you receive. Please ensure that you provide a copy of the whole of the assessment document.

21 Child Support Maintenance

Please enter the full amount you are entitled to receive.

22 Other Income/Savings etc.

If you are in receipt of any other income, e.g. a personal pension, or have savings or an ISA, please enter the full amount here and state where the income is from. Please provide evidence.

23 Part 5 B: Partner's income

Please include your partner's income in full and state if it is a salary, state benefit and/or personal pension etc. Please also declare any savings. If your partner does not have an income please state the reason why.

24 Part 5 C: Income not included in ALF Assessment

Certain funding and benefits such as Disability Benefits are not included in the income calculation. However, in order to ensure that you are in receipt of all of the income you are entitled to, please enter this information here.

25 Postgraduate Bursary

If you are a new postgraduate student and have received a bursary from ALF of either £500 or £250, please enter the full amount here. If you haven't yet applied, please note the deadline of 4.30pm on 3 February 2012.

Part 6: Student and partner's expenditure

26 Rent/Mortgage payments

Please note that the maximum capped amount of rent or mortgage payments that can be included for ALF purposes is £600 per month. Evidence must be provided please. Please include a copy of your rent agreement.

Students who live at the parental home should include a maximum of £30 per week. You must include a signed copy of the 'Rent Payment - Parental Home' form.

27 Council Tax

Full time students are not liable for Council Tax unless they live with one or more non-students. The annual bill is reduced by 25% if there is also a non-student living at the property. Please include the full amount of Council Tax payable and provide the appropriate evidence.

28 Mobile Phone

The capped amount is £6 per week to cover the cost of the contract and emergency calls.

29 Life Insurance

Please enter the cost of the annual premium. Evidence must be provided please.

30 Buildings Insurance

Please enter the cost of the annual premium. Evidence must be provided. If the premium includes contents insurance, include half of the annual premium only.

31 Composite Living Costs (CLC) - and Disability Premium. CLCs are dictated by the DIUS

Single Student £69

Student with partner £109

Child (for whom child benefit is paid) £64

Family Premium £18

The CLC covers items such as food, clothing, utility bills, mobile phone and entertainment.

32 Disability Premium

If you are in receipt of a disability premium, please state the weekly amount. Evidence must be provided please.

33 Priority Debts

Please complete the form contained in the application pack. You must speak to an adviser in the Student Advice Centre to discuss priority debts.

The reverse side of the form asks you to declare your outgoings on non-priority debts. This information will give us a clearer picture of your financial circumstances.

34 Childcare costs

Evidence of **actual** costs, such as invoices or receipts should be provided. **Informal childcare** - a form is available from the Information Centre or on the website for the childminder to sign. The completed form should be attached to your application form. The informal childcare cost is capped at £50 per week for one child and £70 per week for two or more children regardless of the age of the child.

35 Disability costs

Please take advice from the Employability and Student Support service and provide evidence of the need for the additional support/equipment and the total cost. The application must be supported by Employability and Student Support.

36 Public Transport

Please provide evidence of your travel to and from the university and state whether this is by bus or rail. Please note the maximum capped amount is £70 per week. A maximum amount of £17.80 will be included for a weekly bus pass, unless evidence is provided showing a different amount. It is assumed that you will have a railcard if travelling by train.

37 Private vehicle

Mileage from home to the university should be calculated at 28p per mile. Please state the number of miles and the number of trips per week. Please note the maximum capped amount for travel to the university is £70 per week.

38 Travel Premium

Full time students who travel by car should include a maximum of £12 per week to cover all running costs.

Part time students should include £6 per week.

39 Travel to Work

Please note the maximum capped amount of £70 per week for both the student and the partner. Please give the employer's name, address and **postcode**.

40 General Travel

Please include a maximum of £16 per week for full-time students and £8.00 per week for part-time students. This is to cover travel costs for shopping, entertainment, medical appointments, taxis etc.

41 Books/Equipment/Course costs

Please note that these rates take account of field trips and professional subscriptions. Please use the capped figures below

Full-time - Arts, Media and Design studio based courses, all levels £34

Part-time - Arts, Media and Design studio based courses, all levels £17

Full-time - all other programmes £28

Part-time - all other programmes £14

42 Other costs

If you have other essential expenditure, such as child maintenance payments, please include the full amount here and provide appropriate evidence. If evidence is not provided the expenditure will not be included.

43 Part 7: Data protection act 1998

Please note the contents of this paragraph.

44 Part 8: Declarations

This is required for **auditing purposes**. Please **read the declaration**, tick all the relevant boxes that apply to your circumstances and remember to **sign and date** the form in both places.

45 Academic confirmation of attendance

Please ask your tutor to sign and date this section and submit your application within one calendar month of this date. Distance Learning students should ask their tutor to confirm that they are actively pursuing the course by emailing www.staffs.ac.uk/askalf

46 Student advisers signature

The adviser will sign your form at the end of the workshop - if you need further advice you may want to ask for a one-to-one appointment or for details of the SAC's drop-in sessions. Distance Learning students should telephone the SAC before submitting their application form to book a telephone interview. The signature will be valid for one calendar month.

SAC telephone numbers are:

Stoke site - 01782 294469

Stafford site - 01785 353311

47 See over

Tips

- Keep a photocopy of your application form.
- If you are posting your application, have your envelope weighed and attach the correct postage. The university will not accept mail that has postage to pay on delivery.
- Write your name and address on the reverse side of the envelope in case it has to be returned by the Post Office.
- Please remember that proof of postage is not proof of delivery.

47 Evidence Required – students with children

HAVE YOU ENCLOSED YOUR EVIDENCE?

WE CANNOT ASSESS YOUR INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, AND THEREFORE YOUR ENTITLEMENT TO AN AWARD, WITHOUT IT

PLEASE REFER TO THE 'EVIDENCE REQUIRED' DOCUMENT IN THE APPLICATION PACK

Photocopies of documents only please – all evidence has to stay on file for auditing purposes (please keep your originals for future reference)

48 Requesting a review of your application

If you want to request a review of the decision on your application please contact the Student Advice Centre (SAC) in the first instance. If appropriate the Adviser will contact Student Finance and ask to see a copy of your application form which will include the income and expenditure calculations. The Advisor may contact Student Finance, on your behalf if they believe your circumstances are not straightforward. Alternatively the SAC may help you to make your own additional case if you believe that your circumstances warrant it.

If later in the year you would like a review of your application because of a significant change in your circumstances, please write to the Student Finance, Information Centre, College Road, explaining the change. Please attach an up to date bank statement and, if possible, provide evidence of the change of circumstances.

49 Appeals and Complaints – Access to Learning Fund application procedure only

We would encourage any student who wishes to appeal or complain about the way their application has been treated to speak to an adviser in the SAC in the first instance.

Appeals must be received in writing by Student Finance within ten working days of the date of the result letter or email. The only grounds for appeal will be:

- that there has been a material error or irregularity in the decision making procedure,
- that the university failed to give regard to pertinent information contained within or attached to the original application form

The Director of Student Administrative Services and the Students' Union Membership Services Manager, or her nominee, will hear the first stage of the appeal. Afterwards, if the student wants to continue with the appeal they should write to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar within ten working days after the first meeting. The Dean of Students and Academic Registrar, or her nominee, and the Students' Union Education and Welfare Officer will invite the student to a meeting to discuss the appeal.

Complaints. Students who wish to complain about the way in which their application has been administered should do so in writing within ten working days of the date of the results letter or email.

Complaints should be forwarded to the Director of Student Administrative Services, Information Centre, Staffordshire University, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2DE. You will be notified of any action that may be taken as a result of your complaint.

Please return your completed form and evidence to Student Finance, Information Centre, Staffordshire University, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2DE