



Please pay particular attention to the following:

- Please note the term time deadline of 4.30pm on Friday 1 June 2012.
- The deadline for Postgraduate bursaries is 4.30pm on Friday 3 February 2012. This deadline may be extended if funds are available.
- Do not wait until the end of the academic year before applying to ALF - if the budget has been exhausted your application will be unsuccessful.
- Students applying **only** for the cost of a diagnostic assessment ie a Dyslexia test, should contact the university's Student Enabling Centre in the first instance
- Your application form will be returned to you if you have not completed all relevant sections and/or you have not included photocopies of all the relevant documentation.
- Documents have to remain on file for auditing purposes. Photocopying is the responsibility of the applicant
- Your form must be signed by you, the Student Advice Centre and your tutor
- The full Notes of Guidance can be downloaded at www.staffs.ac.uk/askalf

Application forms and postgraduate bursary forms are available from the Information Centres and the Students' Union Advice Centres and can be downloaded at www.staffs.ac.uk/askalf

Important contact information

Student Finance - Access to Learning Fund

t: 01782 294510
e: askalf@staffs.ac.uk
www.staffs.ac.uk/askalf

Information Centres

Stafford Campus

Beacon Building t: 01785 353400

Stoke Campus

Flaxman Building t: 01782 295705

Opening Hours

Monday - Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm
Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

e: information-centre@staffs.ac.uk

Or visit the Information Centre website
www.staffs.ac.uk/information_centre

Students' Union - Student Advice Centre (SAC)

Stoke campus t: 01782 294469
Stafford campus t: 01785 353311
www.staffsunion.com/advice

Money Doctors - part of the SAC

Stoke campus t: 01782 294977
www.staffsunion.com/moneydoctors

Student Enabling Centre

Stoke campus t: 01782 294977
Stafford campus t: 01785 353302
www.disability@staffs.ac.uk

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Access to Learning Fund

2011-12

Financial assistance

**Full and Part time
Postgraduate students**

**Term-time deadline -
4.30 pm Friday 1 June 2012**



■ CREATE THE DIFFERENCE

What is the Access to Learning Fund?

The Access to Learning Fund, which is in excess of half a million pounds, provides discretionary financial assistance for 'home' students who need financial help to meet extra costs that cannot be met from other sources of support. Since ALF is a fund of last resort, postgraduate students must show that they have made '*reasonable provision*' to fund both their tuition fees and living costs. This would include net earnings, savings, family loan or contributions, Career Development Loan or Professional Studies Loan.

You can apply to the Fund at any point throughout the academic year as long as funds are available. Any help you receive from the Fund is usually non repayable

Disabled students

Please complete the 'fast track' application form if you require help to meet the cost of a diagnostic assessment **only**. Please contact the university's Student Enabling Centre for more details. If you also want to apply for an ALF award, please complete the ALF application form as well.

Eligibility

'Home' students studying either full-time or part-time. Part-time students must be studying at least 50% of a full time course, usually 90 credits, for the duration of the academic year.

The university reserves the right to check that students are studying on the correct number of credits at any time during the academic year.

Priority groups

- Students who are self funding and not in receipt of sponsorship or other funding
- Students with children (especially lone parents)
- Disabled students (especially where the DSA is unable to meet particular costs and the institution has no legal responsibility to do so)

Assessment process

The DIUS have advised that a notional income be included for full-time postgraduate students and this is set at £161 per week for students without dependants and £129 per week for students with dependants or who are unable to work due to a disability. Part-time students will have their actual income included in their assessment.

Standard assessments will look at the difference between accepted **reasonable** expenditure and **expected** income to see if there is a need for additional financial help to cover living costs such as rent, mortgage, food etc.

Non-standard assessments will look at unforeseen circumstances such as repairs to essential household equipment, high costs for medication, assistance with priority debts etc.

It is expected that awards to part time students will cover course costs only.

Summer Vacation awards

We would not expect to receive summer vacation applications from full and part-time postgraduate students, since term time awards would be calculated over 48 weeks.

Timetable for making a decision

Applications that are fully completed and have all of the relevant documents attached will usually be assessed within twenty working days of submission.

However, applications that have missing signatures or evidence may be put to one side during busy periods until there is sufficient time to chase the student for the missing information. The twenty working days service standard would not apply in these cases.

Payments to students

Awards are usually split into instalments and will be available from the Information Centre on the Stoke or Stafford campus. Third party payments can only be made at the student's request. However, where a non-standard award has been made for a specific purpose such as an overdue priority debt, we would expect to raise a cheque made payable directly to the creditor.

Tuition fees

Unfortunately ALF cannot help with the cost of tuition fees under any circumstances. However part-time students on most postgraduate courses are eligible for a 50% remission of tuition fees from the University if they are in receipt of one or more of the following statutory benefits

- Income Support
- Job seekers Allowance
- Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance
- Long Term Incapacity Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Gross income of less than £16,845 or £18,845 if you have a spouse/partner. These thresholds increase if you have dependent children.
- State Retirement Pension
- State Widows' Pension

Fee remission will be conditional on the university receiving appropriate documentary evidence.

Please note that all students are required to pay any registration fees or residential charges associated with their chosen course.

Contact the Information Centre on 01785 353337 for details.

Postgraduate Bursaries

A small number of postgraduate bursaries, valued at £500 for full-time students and £250 for part-time students, will be available and will be awarded to **new postgraduate students**. Students should meet the relevant criteria, and bursaries will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. The deadline for postgraduate bursary applications is **4.30pm on Friday 3 February 2012**.

This deadline may be extended if funds are available.

Career Development Loans are available from high street banks. In most cases you do not need to be an existing account holder, although the bank may require that you open an account with them. Whilst you are studying the DIUS pays the interest on your loan.