

The Student Assistance Fund

Guidelines



Application Guide 2023

Important Information for All Applicants

This Applicant Guide sets out the information each applicant requires in order to make an application to the SAF Scheme.

You are required to carefully read this Guide.

You should pay particular attention to supporting documentation that has to be uploaded.

Please look at the DkIT Data Protection Policy. As a condition of application to the SAF, you must read and give your agreement to this Policy. Contact details have been provided if you have any queries regarding this Policy.

Information on the Student Assistance Fund Application Process

Section 1

Personal Details / Financial Situation

What is the Student Assistance Fund?

The Student Assistance Fund (SAF) provides financial support to students who are experiencing short or long-term financial difficulties while attending higher education.

What is the application guide?

This guide will:

- answer any questions
- explain the application process
- provide key dates
- allow you to gather the required information and documents
- Outline the DkIT Data Protection Policy.

Who is eligible to apply?

DkIT Students registered on courses leading to a higher education award (NFQ level 6-10) are eligible to apply for SAF.

Part-time students registered for a course of not less than one year's duration that leads to a higher education award at Level 6 to 10 of the national framework of qualifications and who belongs to one of the following target groups as specified by the HEA's National Access Plan:

- **mature students**
- Students with a **disability**
- **Irish Travellers**
- **Further education** award holders
- **Lone parents**
- **Ethnic minorities** (including programme refugees)
- People who are or were in the care of the state
- Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds

Students on Springboard+ courses, or who are on blended/distance learning courses, are eligible to apply for support through the Student Assistance Fund subject to meeting the criteria outlined above.

You are only permitted to make **one** application for this funding.

Eligible costs

The SAF is available to assist students who are unable to meet costs associated with day-to-day participation in higher education, including

- books and class materials
- rent, heating and lighting bills
- food
- essential travel
- childcare costs
- medical costs
- family difficulties e.g. bereavement
- Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds

Who cannot apply for the Student Assistance Fund?

- Students on courses that do not lead to a higher education award are not eligible for SAF.
- International students are not eligible for this funding.

What does “socio-economically disadvantaged” mean?

This term usually means that you live in an area of urban or rural disadvantage where not many people from that area go on to third level education by tradition or for financial reasons. You may have attended a DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) school. You may be a lone parent or have previously been in the Care of the State/TUSLA. Your family income may mean that you are not able to go to college without financial help. You may be from a socio-economic group that is under-represented in higher education. All of these factors, either individually or in combination, mean that you may have significant additional social and financial barriers making it difficult to access and succeed in higher education.

What do I need to do before I start my application form?

1. You must agree to the **DkIT Data Protection Policy for the Student Assistance Fund** in order to proceed with the application
2. Be registered as a student at DkIT and apply with your DkIT student email account
3. Provide your phone number
4. Prepare your personal statement.

Application opens in October 2023 (once you register as a student at DkIT you can apply using your DkIT student details – an email will be sent to you with the link to the online application form.)

What can I use the SAF for?

Childcare costs, Food/Groceries, Gas/Heat/ESB, Medical Expenses, Rent, Books/Class Materials, Travel, or Emergency Support

What costs are not covered?

Please note that Tuition, Registration, Examination Fees or Loans will not be supported from this Fund.

How do I apply?

- Please submit your completed on-line application form.
- You will then receive an email requesting the necessary supporting documentation.
- You will receive a link to upload your documents and you need to name each document i.e. *(bank statements, Susi Letter)* etc.
- You have two weeks to upload the documents.
- Your application cannot be processed unless you upload the supporting documents.
- You will receive communication to your student email address from DkIT with the result of your application

Is it confidential?

Yes, the SAF is administered on a strictly confidential basis by your institution. Any information you provide as part of your application is protected by data protection policies in your college. To comply with ESF reporting and audit requirements, institutions return data on participants on the SAF to the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Income to be assessed?

Over 23 on January 1st of year of entry for course and living independently of parents
Assessed on their own personal circumstances (single, married, living with partner, separated divorced)

Over 23 on January 1st of year of entry for course living with parent/guardian
Assessed on the income of parent/guardian and their own income

Under 23 on January 1st of entry for course
Assessed on the income of their parent/guardian and their own income

Supporting Documentation

What documentation do I upload my application

Income Type	Supporting Document
Bank Statement Revolut Statement	A copy of up-to-date Bank and Revolut Statements for the past 3 months which must include your name, address and account number
SUSI	Awarding letter with confirmation of rate
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	DEASP statement listing all payments and number of weeks received in 2022
PAYE Workers and/or Social Welfare Recipients	For PAYE Workers and/or Social Welfare Recipients <i>A copy of P60 or P21 Form for year ended December 31, 2022 (available from Revenue Commissioners) and/or</i> <i>A statement from Social Welfare showing the total amounts received up to December 31, 2022</i>
Self Employment/Farming Income	For Self Employed and Persons engaged in Farming activities <i>A copy of Notice of Assessment /Self-Assessment Letter up to December 31, 2022</i> if not available, Email: www.welfare.ie and quote your PPS. No.
Lone Parent	Proof of lone parent payment (means tested social welfare payment)/tax credits Divorce decree; Court Order Maintenance; Barring Order; Decree or dissolution for a civil partnership Evidence from the DEASP confirming receipt of Deserted Wife's Allowance or a One-Parent Family Payment
In the Care of the State/Tusla	Letter from Social/Aftercare Worker – no financial documents are required
Rental Income	Copy of Rental Agreement/Book or Receipt from Landlord Confirming payment (letter has to be dated and signed by the Landlord and include a telephone number)
Medical Card	Copy of Medical Card
Childcare and the Supporting Documents	Copy of Birth Certificate, passports or medical card of Student's Children
Academic Materials	Copy of Invoices of materials purchased related to studying
Loans Agreements	Copy of loans e.g. Bank or Credit Union

What should I discuss in my personal statement?

Question; Why do you need this fund?

Financial Impact.

When replying to this question,
Consider the following:

- Have you/your family experienced severe financial hardship?
- How will you support yourself and manage financially while in college?
- How would you spend the SAF money if your application is successful?
- Your personal and/or family circumstances and the barriers that you have faced in continuing your education
- Your responsibility within your family
- Do you care for siblings/and or parent(s)?
- Do you have to work part-time to support your family financially

Where can I find further information?

If you need assistance or advice on this scheme please contact one of the following: Student Assistance Fund Officer, Student Services Officer, Pastoral Care Service, or the Students Union. For further information please go into <http://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/student-assistance-fund/> and <http://www.studentfinance.ie> or the Student Services Guide - 2023. The Student Assistance Fund regulations issued by the Higher Education Authority apply to this scheme.

What if I have query, Contact the Office?

You can email the office: saf@dkit.ie with any queries or telephone 042-93-70240.

If you are found to have provided false information or to have omitted relevant information as part of your SAF application you will be disqualified from all support from the Fund. If funding had been approved, DkIT will seek to recoup the payment made to you.

Declaration

I understand that if I abuse the scheme, give false information or omit to advise of changes of circumstances that I will be disqualified from all further support from the Fund and the Institute will recoup any payment made. I certify that the information provided on this form is true, complete and accurate and that assistance from other sources has not been received for the stated purpose/service which is the subject of this application. I understand only to spend the money on the items/services for which assistance is granted.

You just tick the icon to indicate you agree to the above Declaration.

The Student Assistance Fund is managed by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

Section 4

Decision

When and how will you contact me?

When application is received, you will receive an email requesting the necessary documentation which has to be submitted within two weeks. If you have missing documents, incorrect documents or we require further information, we will email you and your application may be delayed.

We will send a letter to you via your DkIT email to let you know if your application is successful or not.

If you are successful, you will receive an email from saf@dkit.ie requesting you to fill up a SAF Recipient Bank Detail Form, which will request your BIC and IBAN bank details. This is the only email address that will request your bank details. Do not give out your bank details to any other email address.

If you wish to make an appeal you should do so in writing to safappeal@dkit.ie **outlining the precise grounds on which you are basing your appeal.** As part of this process a student can revise an application or submit new information. The Appeals Committee may then request evidence to support your appeal. The Appeals Committee will endeavour to respond to all appeal requests in a timely manner. The Appeals Committee may uphold, set aside or vary the original decision.

If you are found to have provided false information or to have omitted relevant information as part of your SAF application you will be disqualified from all support from the Fund. If funding had been approved, DkIT will seek to recoup the payment made to you.

The Student Assistance Fund is managed by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

Section 5

DkIT Data Protection Policy for Student Assistance Fund

Personal data that you submit using this application form will be used only for the purpose of processing your application to the Student Assistance Fund. Your data will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Policies of each Organisation. The website links and contact emails for each are listed at the end of this statement.

Why do we need your data?

By applying for the SAF Fund you will be required to provide us with the following personal data:

- Name, address, date of birth, mobile phone number, gender, email address;
- The course you are studying on;
- Information regarding your financial status, if applicable your parents income, your bank statement, loans you possess with the Bank or Credit Union; Rent Agreement; if you possess a medical card;
- Information on your personal status; if you are a lone parent.
- Information in your own words about: your financial situation, and your personal circumstances.

In relation to this Fund, this personal data is necessary for:

- verification of your identity
- the assessment of your application,
- eligibility for the fund
- the selection of successful applicants,
- the provision of additional supports.

Separately, an anonymised version of your information will be shared with the HEA, in order to comply with the Student Assistance Fund's reporting requirements.

If you do not provide the requested data and agree to the above, your application for the Fund cannot be processed.

We collect and use your data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 when we collect and use your personal data. As the applicant, you provide us with explicit permission to process this data. We require this data in order to assess each bursary application and without this data, we would not be able to consider an applicant for receipt of the Bursary.

Data protection rules

Data protection concerns the safeguarding of privacy rights in relation to the processing of your personal data. This includes any information that can identify you. This may, for example, include a name, email address, date of birth or telephone number.

We must comply with of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 when we collect and use your personal data. We act as 'Data Controllers' in respect of your personal data, and comply with our responsibilities under these laws.

How your personal information will be used

We will only process such data for the purpose for which you provide it and to the extent necessary to process your application in line with the regulations attached to this Fund.

You have the right to withdraw your consent to processing and you also have the right to access any personal data relating to you on request (see 'Your Rights' section, below).

The personal data you submit will be held for a period of 10 years. The personal data may be disclosed by each Organisation to relevant internal staff and agents in order assess this application and to deliver support services to you.

We may also share personal data with government departments, statutory bodies and funding agencies where this is required under legislation or for the provision of services to you.

Security

The online application form is based on Microsoft Forms and stored on the OneDrive, to which access is only available to named members of DkIT staff involved in assessing the applications. A record of responses is generated as applicants submit their forms online and is converted to a Microsoft Excel file. Application details will be stored on a secure network, and password protected.

Your rights

Under data protection rules, you have rights as a 'data subject'. These rights include:

- The right to be informed about what happens to information relating to you (personal data) (Articles 12-14 of GDPR);
- The right to access information relating to you which is held by DkIT (Article 15, GDPR);
- The right to rectification, to correct any errors in your personal data (Articles 16 & 19, GDPR);
- The right to erasure, to delete/destroy information relating to you which is held by DCU (Articles 17 & 19, GDPR);
- The right to data portability (Article 20, GDPR);
- The right to object to processing of information relating to you (Article 21, GDPR);
- The right of restriction, to limit the way DkIT uses information relating to you (Article 18, GDPR); and,
- Rights in relation to automated decision making, including profiling (Article 22, GDPR).

Who to contact

If you have any questions in relation to how your personal data is used by that higher education institution, you may contact that institution's Data Protection Officer (gerald.odriscoll@dkit.ie). If you have any questions in relation to the Student Assistance Fund, you may contact Student Services (saf@dkit.ie or studentservices@dkit.ie – please ensure that you put the words "SAF query" in the subject line of the email).

In addition, the Data Protection Commission (DPC) is the official authority overseeing data protection in Ireland. You have the right to lodge a complaint with the DPC if you believe your personal data is being processed by us unlawfully. To find out more information about how to make a complaint to the DPC, please visit dataprotection.ie

Consent Declaration

By proceeding to complete the following Student Assistance Fund Application Form, you confirm:

- that you have read and fully understand the above statement and its contents
- that you consent to the obtaining, processing and retaining your personal data for the purposes described in the above statement

Important: If you proceed to complete the Student Assistance Application Form, your personal data will be processed as described in the above statement. **If you do not wish to have your personal data collected by and further processed, please do not proceed with an application for the Student Assistance Fund.**