Student Assistance Fund Guidelines

Application Guide

2024/2025

Important Information for all Applicants

This Applicant Guide sets out the information each applicant requires in order to make an application to the Student Assistance Fund (SAF).

You are required to carefully read these Guidelines and pay particular attention to the required supporting documentation that has to be uploaded.

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

Section 1

Student Assistance Fund Overview

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 and are unable to meet the costs associated with day-to-day participation in Higher Education. SAF is managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills.

Who is eligible to apply?

Full-time students, registered on courses leading to a Higher Education Award (NFQ Level 6-10) in the Universities, Institutes of Technology and other approved colleges. PhD students can only apply within the first four years of study.

Part-time students, registered on courses, of not less than one year's duration, that lead to a Higher Education Award (NFQ level 6-10) in the Universities, Institutes of Technology and other approved colleges, and who belong 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 also 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 per academic year.

What does "socio-economically disadvantaged" mean?

This term may mean 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. Your family income may mean that you are not able to go to college without financial help, or you may be from a socio-economic group that is under-represented in Higher Education.

It may also mean that you:
- have attended a DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) school.
- are a lone parent.
- have previously been in the Care of the State/TÚSLA.

These factors, either individually or combined, mean that you may have significant additional social and financial barriers that make it difficult to access and succeed in Higher Education.

Who is ineligible to apply?

- Students on courses that do not lead to a Higher Education Award (NFQ Level 6-10).
- International students/non-EU fee paying students.

Eligible Expenses:

SAF is available to assist students who are unable to meet costs associated with day-to- day participation in higher education, throughout the duration of the academic year, including:

- Books and Class Materials
- Utility Bills - Rent, Heating, Lighting, Mobile data plans.
- Food
- Essential Travel
- Childcare Costs
- Medical Expenses
- Emergency Support such as Family Difficulties

Ineligible Expenses:

Funding is not available to assist students with the costs of:
- Tuition Fees
- Registration Fees
- Student Loans

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

1. You must agree to **DkIT's Data Protection Policy for the Student Assistance Fund** in order to proceed with the application.

2. Be registered as a student of DkIT.

3. Download and print the SAF Application Form - [Student Finance Supports / Student Services / Student Life / DkIT - Dundalk Institute of Technology](#)

4. Complete all sections of the application form, including your Personal Statement (approx. 500 words).

What should I discuss in my personal statement?

Your Personal Statement should outline your personal circumstance and why you need financial support to assist with the day-to-day cost of participation in Higher Education.

Consider the following:

- Your personal and/or family circumstances and the barriers that you have faced in continuing your education.
- 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 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?

How do I apply?

1. Please read the SAF Guidelines before downloading, printing and completing the SAF Application Form.

2. Submit your completed application form, together with all required supporting documentation to the Student Services Information Desk. The Student Information Desk is located in the main reception area of the Faulkner Building.

3. Your application cannot be processed unless all required supporting documents are submitted.

4. Once your application has been assessed, you will receive communication to your student email address from DkIT with the result of your application. Please allow 2-3 weeks for this process to be completed.

Supporting Documentation Required.

Students in receipt of SUSI:

☐   SUSI Awarding Letter – all 3 pages.

☐   Copy of most recent 3-month Bank Statements:

- Statements are required for all Bank, Revolut, Credit Union & Post Office accounts in your name. This also includes any savings accounts, that you may have.

- All statements must be for the 3-month period prior to submitting your SAF Application. Therefore, **if you are submitting your application January 27th 2025, all statements must be for the period 27/10/2024 – 27/01/2024**.

    __Please note:__ We can allow a 5-day grace period only. If statements required, are not available as an E-Statement, you must contact your financial institution to request the correct statement.

☐   Students with Children, must also submit a Copy of Birth Certificate/Passport for each child.

Students not in receipt of SUSI:

☐   Your Statement of Liability, to show earning from employment for the period 01/01/24 – 31/12/24.

☐   Your Notice of Assessment/Self-Assessment Letter, to show earnings from self-employment for the period 01/01/24 – 31/12/24.

☐   Your Social Welfare Statement for the period 01/01/24 – 31/12/24.

☐   Parents(s)/Spouse/Partner's Statement(s) of Liability, to show earnings from employment for the period 01/01/24 – 31/12/24.

☐   Parent(s)/Spouse/Partners Notice of Assessment/Self-Assessment Letter, to show earnings from self-employment for the period 01/01/24 – 31/12/24.

☐   Parents(s)/Spouse/Partner's Social Welfare Statement(s) for the period 01/01/24 – 31/12/24.

__Each of the above document can be downloaded from MyGov.ie__

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Is it confidential?

Yes, SAF is administered on a strictly confidential basis. Any information you provide as part of your application is protected by DkIT's Data Protection Policy. To comply with ESF reporting and audit requirements, we are required to return data on those who have applied for support through SAF, to the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Where can I find further information?

For further information please go to
- http://hae.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/student-assistance-fund/
- https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-services/student-finance.html#saf

What if I have query, Contact the Office?

If you need assistance or advice regarding SAF, please email saf@dkit.ie or contact one of the following:
- Student Support Officer
- Pastoral Care Service
- Students Union

Section 2

Decision/Appeals

When and how will you contact me?

Please Note:** **If you have missing supporting documents, incorrect supporting 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 your application is successful, you will receive an email from saf@dkit.ie requesting you to complete 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 your application is unsuccessful, you can appeal the decision. 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 may revise their application or submit new information.

The Appeals Committee may then request additional evidence to support your appeal. The Appeals Committee will endeavor to respond to all appeal requests in a timely manner. ***Please note:*** The Appeals Committee may uphold, set aside or vary the original decision.

Section 3

DkIT's Data Protection Policy for SAF
& Consent Declaration

Why do we need your data?

We collect and use your data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. We require this data in order to assess each application and without this data, we would not be able to consider an applicant for receipt of the support through the Student Assistance Fund.

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

- o Name, address, date of birth, mobile phone number, gender, email address.
- o The name and level of the course you are studying.
- o Information regarding your financial status, if applicable your parent(s)/guardian(s) income, your bank statement, loans you possess with the Bank or Credit Union; Rent Agreement; Medical Card should you possess one etc.
- o Information on your personal status; eg. if you are a lone parent.
- o Information in your own words about: your financial situation, and your personal circumstances.

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

- o Verification of your identity
- o To assess your eligibility for the fund
- o Assessment of your application
- o Provision of additional supports

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

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 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:

Your data will be treated in accordance with DkIT's Data Protection Policy.

Personal data collected as part of your application may be used for the purpose of processing, monitoring and evaluating the operation of the Student Assistance Fund. This personal data may include special category data, including sensitive data such as socio-economic status, where you choose to share that data. Personal date may be shared with third parties such as the HEA for the purposes of allocating funding and for monitoring.

The personal data you submit will be held for a period of 10 years, however you have the right to withdraw your consent to processing your personal date. You also have the right to access any personal data relating to you upon request (see 'Your Rights' section, below).

Security:

Submitted SAF Applications are stored in a secure filing cabinet that is locked at all times. Processing, Monitoring and Evaluation files are stored on a secure network, that is 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).

Consent Declaration:

By completing the SAF Application Form, you confirm:
- ➢ That you have read and fully understand the SAF Guidelines.
- ➢ That you consent to the obtaining, processing and retaining of your personal data for the purposes of coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the operation of SAF.

    Personal data may include special category data, including sensitive data such as socio-economic status, which may be shared with third parties such as the HEA for the purposes of allocating and monitoring of funding.

Providing consent demonstrates that you understand and agree to the following statement:
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.

Who to Contact:

If you have any questions in relation to how your personal data is used, you may contact that DkIT's Data Protection Officer (gerald.odriscoll@dkt.ie).

If you have any questions in relation to the Student Assistance Fund, you may contact saf@dkit.ie . Please ensure that you put the words "SAF query" in the subject line of your 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 .