

**CHILDCARE FUND FACT SHEET FOR STUDENTS**

Students can apply for funding to assist with childcare costs. There is an expectation that you will apply for all Government or Local Authority funding to which you are entitled. If you have additional costs that aren’t covered by that funding, then you can apply to the University of Stirling for a contribution towards your remaining study-related childcare costs each semester.

**Government Funding**

The Scottish Government provides a set number of Funded Early Learning and Childcare hours. It is your responsibility to apply for this funding if applicable. To find out more information please visit [Government Funding Early Learning and Childcare](https://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare). For out-of-school care (e.g breakfast/after school clubs) there may be Local Authority discounts or funding available. Please contact your child’s school or your Local Authority for more information.

**Study related childcare**

There is an expectation that claims will be made for reasonable levels of childcare in relation to study commitment time. We will allow study related childcare for:

* Attendance at lectures – virtually or in person.
* Attendance at seminars – virtually or in person.
* Travel time when attending in person.
* Group work as a requirement of your module.
* Independent study and research time as a requirement of your module.
* Placements

Your timetable is likely to change each semester. We therefore require that you apply each semester to ensure that claims from the Childcare Fund cover the study related childcare costs accurately.

**How much childcare do you need?**

At the University of Stirling, we have two 19-week semesters each year. This is therefore the maximum number of weeks that you can claim from the Childcare Fund each semester. In some situations, you will not need childcare for the full 19 weeks. This is most likely to be the case when using childcare which is not operational over the school holidays. Please ensure that you only claim for the number of weeks your child will be receiving care, making sure to take school holidays into consideration when doing so.

The fund is not usually available to cover the cost of childcare during the summer period. There are some exceptions to this for students who are registered and attending courses or placement which run over this period in the academic calendar.

**Who can apply to the fund?**

To be eligible to apply to the Childcare Fund you must be:

* studying on a **full-time** undergraduate, postgraduate or TQFE course but **not** a nursing or paramedic science course.
* Receive undergraduate tuition fee funding from SAAS or have taken out the full postgraduate loan from SAAS.
* Have taken out the **full** entitlement of all support available to you (e.g., SAAS bursary, lone parent grant)

We can only consider Childcare Fund applications from students who are using a formal, registered childcare provider. The fund cannot be used for payment of informal childcare provided by family or friends.

**Applying to the Fund**

To be considered for the Childcare Fund, you must agree to be assessed for the main Discretionary Fund also. You only need to complete the main application form and we will ensure you are considered for both funds.

Once you have received your timetable of study and have fully enrolled on your course, you can make application to the fund. Applications are made online and are located on the [Money Support Webpage](https://www.stir.ac.uk/internal-students/student-support/student-money-support/apply/) along with further, more detailed guidance on the fund. This guidance will outline the required evidence needed in support of your Discretionary and Childcare Fund application.

When you apply, you will be sent a link to your own evidence file where you will be required to complete the Fund Application workbook and upload any supporting evidence needed for your Discretionary Fund application. Please ensure that as well as the income and expenditure tabs of the workbook, that you also complete the childcare tab. This is where you will provide your care providers contact details and details of the childcare you are claiming for.

If you are re-applying for childcare for the Spring semester, then you will not need to be assessed again for the Discretionary Fund. You will be contacted at the start of the semester with a link to the Spring Childcare Application Form.

**Childcare Provider Forms**

Once we have received your completed application to the funds, we will contact your childcare provider/s directly and ask them to complete a form which forecasts the hours and costs of the childcare you are claiming for. We will ask that your childcare provider/s completes and returns this form to us within 5 working days. You may wish to get in touch with your childcare provider at this point to ensure that this is returned within the timescales. Any delay in this form being returned will slow down the processing of your application.

If you apply again to the fund in the Spring semester, your childcare provider/s will need to follow the same process again by competing a new form outlining the forecast of care being provided for that semester. In addition to this, we will require them to confirm the actual cost of the care they provided in the previous semester.

**Awards and Payments**

Awards made from the fund are paid directly to you, not to your childcare provider. The award paid will be to cover the full semester in which you have applied but may only be a contribution to your costs.

Awards are made into the banking details that are held on your Student Portal, which you must ensure are always kept up to date.