UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

The International Students’ Emergency Fund (ISEF) and International Students’ Childcare Fund (ISCF) Guidance Notes 2026-27

These guidance notes are for EU and International students who are either looking to express their interest in applying, or who have been formally invited to apply, to **The International Students’ Emergency Fund (ISEF).** These guidance notes are also for EU and International students who are applying directly to **The International Students’ Childcare Fund (ISCF).**

*Home students should instead refer to **The Warwick Hardship Fund Guidance Notes** for relevant information.*

Topics Covered:

ISEF Assessment Details

ISEF awards are based on “Non-standard” assessments, where a student finds themselves financially impacted by unforeseen circumstances. Non-standard assessments are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the student will be required to submit all the requested evidence. As international students are required to demonstrate to the Home Office they have adequate funding for their tuition fee and living costs as part of their visa application, we would reference what has changed to require a student to have the need to apply to ISEF.

Examples of Unforeseen/Emergency Circumstances that can be considered:

- Repairs to essential household equipment.
- Assistance with priority debts (e.g., rent arrears).
- Travel costs for family illness or bereavement.

ISEF cannot help in cases where there is a need for ongoing maintenance support (e.g., where a parent or other sponsor has suddenly withdrawn funding or where promised funding has not materialised). Similarly, an award from ISEF would not be appropriate if a student has not made adequate provision for their fees and living costs prior to the start of their course. An exception to this may be where a PhD student has been sponsored for 3 years of study, but the sponsorship has come to an end during a period of writing up. In these circumstances, especially if the student has a disability or children living with them in the UK, the Student Funding Adviser may use their discretion to recommend a contribution towards living costs. As with any PhD or Masters by Research student, an application to ISEF in these circumstances can only be considered following an application to the PGR Hardship Fund.

Students who are in financial difficulty can apply to ISEF in the summer vacation, although usually this applies to:

- Mature students.
- Students with dependants.
- Students with a disability.
- Students who are estranged from their families.
- Students from a care leaver/foyer background.
- Non-final year students.
- Students re-taking/re-sitting parts of their course.
- Students who are ill or have a disability and are therefore unable to undertake work.

Students who do not fall in any of the above, can still express an interest in applying to ISEF during the summer vacation via an Expression of Interest form.

ISCF Assessment Details

ISCF awards are based on a means-tested "Standard" assessment. If the assessment identifies that a student has a shortfall between their actual income and the considered essential expenditure, the student will be considered for a childcare award.

Examples of income included/excluded from our standard assessment can be found below (not exhaustive):

Examples of INCLUDED Income	Examples of EXCLUDED Income
Non-means tested bursaries/scholarships	Payment of tuition fees from bursaries/scholarships
Research Funding Council Awards	
Income from Sponsorship	
Financial Contributions from family/friends	
Savings	
Wages from part-time work/ partner wages	

Expenditure caps for **Essential Living Costs** are set at the start of each academic year, based on guidance issued by the **National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA).** Examples of costs included in the **Essential Living Costs Caps** can be found below (not exhaustive).

Essential Living Costs Included in NASMA Caps	
Food	Contents Insurance
Toiletries	Entertainment
Laundry	Clubs and Societies
Telephone	Clothes
TV Licence	Utilities

NASMA Expenditure Rates and Caps (Per Week)	
Essential Living Costs for Single Students	£138 (£121 if utilities are included in rent)
Essential Living Costs for Couples	£211 (£194 if utilities are included in rent)
Child Rate (First Child)	£163
Child Rate (Additional Children)	£122 (per additional child)

The Student Funding Team set caps for **contributions** towards the following based on local information at the start of each academic year (not exhaustive):

Student Funding Contribution Caps	
Rent/Mortgage	• There is no cap set for rent for students with dependents. • There is no cap set for mortgage payments (including building insurance) for any student for their first hardship application, subsequent applications may incur a cap on mortgage payments.
Travel	For students using the bus for transport, local travel is included at the local bus pass rate: • Leamington Bus Pass (Stagecoach Unirider) - **£199 per term.** • Coventry Travel Bus Pass (National Express Coventry) - **£165 per term**. • West Midlands Travel Buss Pass (National Express West Midlands) - **£220 per term**. Students with dependents who use a car for day-to-day transport, will have a **£30 a week** car cap/allowance applied. This cap/allowance includes a contribution towards road tax, car insurance and maintenance.
Other Costs:	• **Course Related Costs** ○ Examples include books, stationary, specialist clothing and specialist equipment.

Important Points to Note about ISCF:
Awards will normally only be granted for childcare sessions during **university term time and 10 weeks of the summer vacation**. • If a student reduces the number of childcare sessions that their child attends and are subsequently liable to pay for fewer sessions, their award will be amended accordingly. • Additional sessions may be considered at the end of the academic year if there is remaining budget. • If you wish to be considered for this additional funding, you will need to contact the Student Funding Team directly towards the end of the academic year.
Awards will **not exceed half of the actual cost** of the childcare provision taken each 10-week term/10-week summer vacation period.
Awards are only considered for **one child in the first instance** (the child with the highest childcare costs). • Additional children may be considered at the end of the academic year if there is remaining budget. • If you wish to be considered for this additional funding, you will need to contact the Student Funding Team directly towards the end of the academic year.
Preschool children of 3-4 years old become eligible for up to 15 hours of free early years childcare provision a week in the term after their 3rd birthday. • Any entitlement to free nursery education for children aged 3- 4 years old will be considered when an application is made to ISCF and the amount awarded for these children will be less. • For more information, please see the gov.uk website: 15 hours free childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds.
ISCF **cannot be used to pay for the cost of any informal childcare** (e.g., that provided by family or friends). Any form of childcare used needs to be with an approved childcare provider.
If you undergo a change in circumstance during the assessment process or during the academic year, you should inform the Student Funding Team as soon as possible, as this can impact your award.

ISEF/ISCF Appeals Procedure

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your ISEF/ISCF assessment, please see our Hardship Fund Appeals Procedure for further information on the next steps available to you.

The ISEF process:

Step 1: Student submits an Expression of Interest Form.

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Step 2: The Student Funding Team checks the students' eligibility to attend a triage appointment.

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Step 3: If the student is eligible to attend a triage appointment, the student will receive a link via email to book this themselves.

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Step 4: The student attends a 10–15-minute triage appointment with a Student Funding Adviser. During this appointment, the student will be advised whether an application to the ISEF is appropriate.

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Step 5: Students who are invited to apply to the ISEF will be sent an application form to complete. They will need to also submit the required evidence discussed at their triage appointment/outlined in their form.

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Step 6: The Student Funding Team process the student's application form and evidence. If the student has submitted their evidence correctly, they will be a sent a ISEF appointment availability form.

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Step 7: Once the Student Funding Team has received the student appointment availability form, they will book the student an ISEF appointment.

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Step 8: The student attends a 30–60-minute ISEF appointment, if no further information is required, an assessment and recommendation will be made. This is submitted to the Student Funding Manager for approval.

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Step 9: Students will be notified via email regarding the outcome of their application and assessment. If a student is eligible for an award, their outcome email will outline how this will be paid/credited.

**** Please note that applications to the ISEF are means tested and assessed on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, there is no guarantee that a student will be eligible for an award ****

The ISCF process:

Step 1: Student submits a Hardship Fund Application Form. The student will also need to submit all required evidence outlined in the form.

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Step 2: The Student Funding Team checks the students' eligibility to attend an ISCF appointment.

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Step 3: If the student has submitted their evidence correctly, they will be a sent a ISCF appointment availability form.

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Step 4: Once the Student Funding Team has received the student appointment availability form, they will book the student an ISCF appointment.

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Step 5: The student attends a 30–60-minute ISCF appointment, if no further information is required, an assessment and recommendation will be made. This is submitted to the Student Funding Manager for approval.

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Step 9: Students will be notified via email regarding the outcome of their application and assessment. If a student is eligible for an award, their outcome email will outline how this will be paid/credited.

Students whose child attends an external childcare provider, will need to pay the fees themselves. The provider will need to submit 'Childcare Attendance Sheets', along with any associated invoices/receipts at the end of each term. Once we have received the evidence/ forms, the student will receive payment directly into their bank account.	Students whose child attends the University Nursery will have their award credited to their student account near the start of each term.

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