

University Student Trust Fund Report 2023-2024



We are extremely grateful to you and all of our donors for your generous financial support of the University Student Trust Fund this year

Your donations have been a lifeline for many of our students at a time of continued financial pressure. Rising living costs, coupled with static maintenance loans that fail to keep pace with inflation, have created significant challenges which have a disproportionate effect on students. Many students find it difficult to cover basic expenses such as rent, utility bills, and daily living costs, making your support more vital than ever.

Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to provide essential financial support to 301 students facing financial challenges in the last academic year. Your kindness has been a lifeline, enabling these students to return their focus to their academic goals without being held back by financial worries.

A recent Hertfordshire Students' Union survey revealed that 45% of students work part-time jobs for 16–20 hours per week, and 13% hold more than one job. Balancing a high number of working hours with academic responsibilities is extremely challenging, and international students face further restrictions due to visa rules which limit their ability to work additional hours to supplement their income.

Your contributions to this fund have enabled us to help more students. Thank you for supporting our students to continue their studies and achieve their ambitions.

The University Financial Assistance Fund

This year we supported 301 students through the University Financial Assistance Fund (UFAF), providing almost £556,000 in financial aid – an increase of £75,000 compared with the previous year. The average grant given was £1,848. Among these applicants:

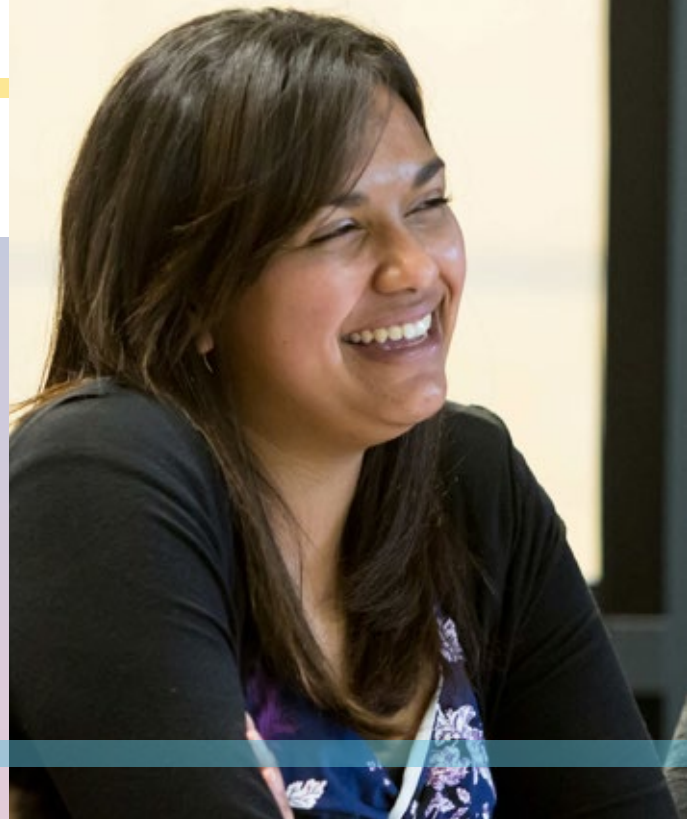
- 73% were undergraduate students (28% first-year, 36% second-year, 36% final-year students).
- 98% were full-time students.
- 59% lived in private accommodation and 36% in university halls.
- 6% were living in temporary accommodation or homeless: this is an increase on 2022-23, when 4% of applicants were living in these circumstances.

It made it possible for me to continue with my studies without worrying, I still have a year to go but the training has assisted me to budget and prepare my finances to 2025 and beyond, by being realistic and planning what income I have against what I will need to save for the future. Thank you for investing in me. It gave me the boost and encouragement I needed.

23/24 recipient

The Impact of Your Support

- A quarter of surveyed students indicated that without financial support, they would have been forced to consider withdrawing or deferring their studies.
- 86% of students who received funding in 2023-24 reported that it allowed them to refocus on their studies.
- 60% said the support they received improved their overall experience of university.
- Looking at longer-term outcomes, 60% of graduates who received support said it directly improved their graduate job prospects.



The grant made a huge difference in my life, it helped me to pay a few of my expenses. I used the money to pay off half of my rent that was pending.

I was overwhelmed and so happy to receive support from the university. It was a relief; it felt like all the heavy weight on my shoulders was removed, and I could focus back on my work.

It's the best feeling to know that this kind of support is available for students! Without it, I could have left my studies or ended up in a difficult financial situation.

2023/24 recipients

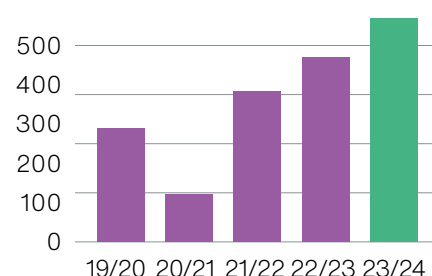
Emerging Trends and Challenges

Applications to the University Financial Assistance Fund continued to rise during 2023-24, reflecting a growing gap between statutory student funding and the actual cost of living. Increasingly, students are applying not for unexpected hardship but to cover essential expenses and make their studies viable.

While we strive to support all eligible students, rising demand for this fund means we simply cannot meet every request. To maximise the impact of available resources, priority is given to specific groups based on professional guidelines.

In addition to direct financial support, applicants receive tailored advice on financial management and budgeting. All applicants must complete online training modules before their application is assessed, ensuring they are equipped with tools to manage their finances more effectively.

Applications year on year



Supporting Postgraduate Research

As part of the University's Doctoral College, the University Student Trust Fund also contributed to supporting 40 postgraduate research students in 2023-24. This funding enabled participation in conferences, acquisition of data analysis tools, and access to relevant training or equipment to ensure their research remained impactful and effective.

Postgraduate research students face unique challenges. Funding opportunities are often limited, and disparities exist between disciplines, with STEM fields typically having more resources than arts, humanities, and social sciences. Rising inflation and the cost-of-living crisis have affected postgraduate research students significantly, particularly as part-time students lack specific grants to support their studies.



I am grateful for the generous support from the funding committee, which has allowed me to pursue my research endeavours in dance movement therapy. This financial assistance has played a vital role in propelling forward my research and has made a substantial contribution to the field of dance movement therapy.

Rashi Tandon
School of Law and Education

I used the funding to fully fund a trip to Dublin to visit the archives at Marsh's Library, where I gained experience in visiting archives and carrying out research, gaining experience in writing and presenting papers at two different conferences, and networking and sharing ideas with other academics with similar interests.

Jane Gill
Creative Arts

The funding proved to be important for my development and for my project as it allowed me to attend a prestigious conference which connected engineers and researchers from across the world and from various fields with a variety of perspectives and needs. This proved to be essential for my project as it allowed me to determine a new direction which the project should take.

Dawid Hnatyk
School of Physics, Engineering and
Computing Science






Our sincere thanks to everyone who helped support our students. You have been a crucial part of our students' success stories.



If you have any questions, please contact Hollie Rendall, Head of Development: h.rendall@herts.ac.uk

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