
Bristol School of Acting

Hardship Fund Policy

Adopted September 2021

Updated 14 January 2026

Review Date: 1 year

The Hardship Fund is there to assist students who, due to unforeseen circumstances, find themselves in temporary financial hardship.

The Panel considers hardship to be where a student does not have sufficient funds to cover basic living costs such as food and rent in the immediate future and has no recourse to other funds.

The Committee Panel:

The committee is chaired by the Head of School, and comprises:

- Head of School (Stuart Wood)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (Lisa Wellsford)
- Appropriate Course Leader (Matthew Humphreys/Joe Salisbury/Emily Greenslade/Becky Vowles/Clara Marullo)
- Admissions and Student Services Manager (Lorin Henderson)

The Panel will meet as often as necessary for the timely consideration of applications, usually once or twice a term. It will also consider emergency applications when necessary.

Eligibility:

Applicants must be fully-enrolled students of the School registered on a validated higher education programme in an undergraduate capacity.

These funds are not available to “visiting students” or participants on other courses offered by the School.

Priority Groups:

The priority groups for the Fund are:

- Lone Parents
- Disabled students
- Care leavers
- Estranged students
- Carers

Application process:

The panel is empowered to make small cash awards in emergency situations (up to £500).

All applicants must send an email to their Course Leader or Course Manager outlining their situation and provide supporting evidence of hardship including recent bank statements showing current balance, Student Loan Company documentation, and other sources of income. See below for notes on how each application is assessed.

A student may be expected to meet with a member of the panel (or nominee) either in advance of applying or as part of confirmation of an award.

Application consideration:

Each application will be considered on its merits.

The Committee will consider:

- The circumstances surrounding a student's hardship
- A student's income and expenditure
- Bank statements showing balance(s) at time of application and other savings and other investments
- Any outstanding tuition fees owed
- Any hardship fund support previously awarded and any expectations set out when that award was made (e.g. seeking budgeting help, seeking paid employment etc)
- Any disability needs not covered by DSA.

The Hardship Fund will not provide awards for:

- Travel to home address (UK or abroad) except in extraordinary circumstances (e.g. serious illness of a relative, or death in a family)
- Competition fees or travel to competitions or similar
- Headshot photography
- Health & Welfare services that are already provided by the School
- Legal fees
- Non-essential items

Awards will be capped at £500 per application. There is no standard award amount and an award to one student does not set a precedent in respect of an award to another student.

Decision:

The offer of an award is entirely at the discretion of the Panel and the Panel's decision is final. However, an unsuccessful applicant may resubmit an application with new or additional information at any time.

Data Usage:

Data collected on the application form will be used solely for the purpose of assessing applications and for statistical, monitoring, and audit purposes. However, information provided in a statement that indicates a potential student welfare issue will prompt the Designated Safeguarding Lead to contact the student concerned. Supporting financial documentation will not be kept after a final decision on a student's application has been made and will be deleted at

the end of each academic year.

Anonymised case studies of applications may be used for information and advice purposes to students, or for applying to external sources for the Hardship Fund.