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# MRC Financial Support Policy

## 2021-2025

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# 1. Introduction

This document describes the eligibility criteria and the student hardship assessment process to receive the students' financial support.

The College's website and enrolment literature will direct the students to the description of relevant fund eligibility criteria. Also, additional information and guidance will be available from the College's Welfare department.

## 2. Student Support Fund Allocation 2021-22

Based on the estimate, 10.4% of annual HFI (Higher fee income) amounts will be allocated as follows:

- Mature Student Hardship Fund- 73%
- Travelling Support Fund-4 %
- Emergency Financial Support Fund-23%

A total of 10.4% of HFI will be distributed to the students in financial support as part of the Access and Participation (APP) commitment:

- The Mature Student Hardship Fund will be fixed and available until exhausted. The College allocates 10.4% of HFI for the year and distributes it evenly during the year to allow all intakes (September, January and April) to benefit from the financial support. The College will not be able to exceed the allocated amount.
- Travelling Support Fund- Traveling fund is fixed and available until exhausted. The College allocates 4% of the fund to the students facing financial issues. If the fund is not exhausted for any reason (e.g. Pandemic), then the allocation will be transferred to the Mature Student Hardship Fund.
- Emergency Financial Support Fund- is fixed and available until exhausted. The allocation is set aside for urgent cases, which requires immediate attention. If

the fund is not exhausted for any reason, the remainder is transferred to the Mature Student Hardship Fund.

### **3. Financial Support Planning Process**

Mont Rose College will allocate the amount of money to different financial support funds on an annual basis. The purpose of the funds is to enhance students' success and progression in Higher Education. The College's Senior Staff Committee will evaluate the impact on student outcomes of financial support provided on an annual basis and apply any required improvements to the future financial support plans and budgets.

The College will be preparing the financial support plan on an annual basis. The planning process involves professionals from the Academic and Quality Assurance Board, Finance and General Committee. As part of decision making, the College will be consulting the Student Union (SU) and Access and Participation Group (APG) on an annual basis to determine the best financial support packages and identify the best allocation and distribution processes.

### **4. MRC Mature Students Hardship Fund**

#### **4.1 Fund opening dates:**

The fund opens mid-September and closes mid-July each academic year.

#### **4.2 Eligibility Criteria :**

It should not be assumed that the student will automatically receive the grant. The College's Finance team will invite a student for money management advice and guidance if they decide that a student will benefit more in this way.

The discretionary fund for students that meet the below criteria:

- The student is 25 or over on the first day of the academic year they enrol

- The student's household income is £25,000 or less as assessed by Student Finance England
- Students can demonstrate that they have exhausted all other financial support options, for example, student account overdrafts, student loans, grants, benefits, assistance from family, savings, and part-time earnings.
- Student Finance England should have approved the full student's loan for the applicable academic year (tuition and maintenance loan). The letter of approval should be provided as part of an application for financial support.
- Students must have received their first instalment of SFE funding.
- Not in receipt of sponsorship from their employer or other sources
- Minimum attendance requirement of 80%
- Successful completion of each term to continue receiving the awarded financial support
- Any financial support awarded will immediately cease if a student suspends/withdraws from the course.
- A student has to demonstrable a need for financial assistance due to *unforeseen* changes in their financial circumstances.
- Students must **not** have any outstanding tuition fees due to MRC when applying for the MRC Mature Students Hardship Fund. No financial support can be provided towards the payment of tuition fees under any circumstances.
- Students can apply only **once** during each academic year.
- Applicant must be UK/ Home student.
- All applicants must sign a declaration about the accuracy of the information they supply to support their application. Providing false and/ or withholding information will result in automatic disqualification from the fund and may result in disciplinary action.

### 4.3 Assessment: MANAGEMENT & SCIENCES

The fund is fixed for the academic year 2021-22. The priority is given to students having exceptional circumstances:

- Students coming from local authority care and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Carers with responsibility for caring for others and meeting the eligibility criteria

- Students with children (primary carers) and single parents and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Students with disabilities in receipt of Income support or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Universal Credit in place of Income Support or ESA and meeting the eligibility criteria.
- Students who became homeless during the course

MRC will email or text the applicant within 30 working days from applying to notify about the outcome (subject to all documents submitted on time enabling assessment).

#### 4.4 Evidence:

The student applying for financial support must provide all required evidence at the time of application.

- The College will need to see student's household income that SFE uses for the applicable academic year.
- Approval of student's loan
- Where applicable-proof that student left social care
- Where applicable-proof that student is a carer
- Where applicable- proof of being a single parent or student with children(main carer)
- Three months' payslips; (if applicable)
- Three months bank statements for all your bank accounts (online statements are acceptable but not excel spreadsheets), explaining all transactions over £100;
- Rent/tenancy contract, mortgage statement, parental confirmation of contribution to rent/mortgage;
- Council tax bill (if applicable);
- Priority bills, e.g. rent arrears, council tax arrears, overdue utility bills (if applicable);
- Partner/spouse income for three months, e.g. payslips or bank statements;
- Recent Housing Benefit entitlement letter (if applicable)

- Council Tax Benefit entitlement letter (if applicable)
- Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credits entitlement letters (if applicable);
- Universal Credit entitlement letter (if applicable)
- Childcare receipts (students with dependent children only)
- If your term-time address is outside London, please highlight your weekly/monthly travel expenses on your bank statements.
- Evidence relating to any special circumstances noted in your supporting statement

#### 4.5 The fund is not for

- Meeting the tuition fee costs
- Maintaining student's lifecycle
- Those showing Gambling/ betting habits
- Those showing excessive spending

#### 4.6 Awards

- Mature Students Support Fund will provide qualifying students £500-£2000 per academic year. The financial award will be split into six instalments, three at the start of each term and three at the successful completion of each term. The number of applications will be limited.
- The amount awarded to each student is at the discretion of the College's Financial Support Assessment Board, who will consider:
  - If a student is on the priority list
  - The total amount available to distribute
  - A number of applications submitted
  - Household income of each student
  - Student's circumstances
  - Students expenses
  - A student has to continuously demonstrate a minimum of 80% attendance and academic achievement to receive the award throughout the year.

- It is a student's responsibility to ensure that all measures were put in place to ensure that the same situations will not occur again.
- The payments awarded may have implications for student's entitlement to benefits. The student must approach the DWP for more information.

## 5. Travelling Support Fund

### 5.1 Fund opening dates

The fund opens mid-September and closes mid-July each academic year.

### 5.2 Eligibility Criteria

The students will be eligible to receive the reimbursement of travelling costs for all courses available at Mont Rose College if they meet the following criteria:

- The application is submitted for the term that applies.
- The student's household income is £25,000 or less as assessed by Student Finance England
- Student Finance England has suspended the student maintenance loans due to unforeseen circumstances, like a review of Income for migrant workers or exam of childcare payments to parents for the applicable academic year.
- The student can demonstrate that he is facing financial difficulties and cannot pay for his travelling to the College.
- Not in receipt of sponsorship from their employer or other sources
- Good previous track record required (attendance 80%, successful completion of prior terms( if applicable)
- Any financial support awarded will immediately cease if a student suspends/withdraws from the course.

## 5.3 Assessment

The allocation of the fund is fixed for each academic year. The priority will be given to students having special circumstances:

- Students coming from local authority care and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Students estranged from their families and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Carers with responsibility for caring for others and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Students with children and single parents and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Students with disabilities, in receipt of Income support or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Universal Credit in place of Income Support or ESA and meeting the eligibility criteria.
- All other students meeting the eligibility criteria
- The College will be working closely with students receiving social security benefits to arrive at the best possible combination of benefits and financial support income to benefit from financial support received from the College. The College will provide a written disregard statement explaining that the financial support given is for the cost of a course associated items rather than living costs. The students will be able to provide this letter to DWP to ensure that the financial support provided is not treated as "income" for benefits purposes.

MRC will email or text the applicant within 10 working days from applying to notify about the outcome (subject to all documents submitted on time enabling assessment).

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### 5.4 Evidence

The student applying for financial support must provide all required evidence at the time of application.

- Where applicable-proof that student left social care
- Where applicable-proof that student is a carer
- Where applicable-proof of benefits

- Where applicable- proof of being a single parent or student with children
- Where applicable-proof of Income and expenses
- Proof of financial hardship

## 5.5 Awards

- Travelling Support Fund will provide an emergency fund for students whose student loan payments are delayed and demonstrate that they experience financial difficulties and do not have the means to arrive at the College. The financial support application will be available on a term basis and payable at the beginning of the relevant term. The number of applications will be limited.
- The amount awarded to each student is at the discretion of the College's Financial Support Assessment Board, who will consider:
  - If a student is on a priority list
  - The funds available
  - The travelling amount
  - Household income/ expenses
  - The financial hardship evidence

## 6. Emergency Hardship Fund

### 6.1 Fund opening dates

The fund opens mid-September and closes mid-July each academic year.

### 6.2 Eligibility Criteria

Mont Rose College's Financial Support Assessment Board will apply discretion when assessing the student's circumstances that can negatively impact a student's education.

The following criteria will apply:

- The student needs to demonstrate that his/ her situation is urgent and emergency help is required. Otherwise, student needs to apply on an *MRC Mature Students Hardship Fund* form, which is available on our website.
  - The student is 25 or over on the first day of the academic year they enrol
  - The student's household income is £25,000 or less as assessed by Student Finance England
  - Student can demonstrate that they have exhausted all other options of financial support. For example, student account overdrafts, student loans, grants, benefits, assistance from family, savings and part-time earnings.
  - Student Finance England should have approved the full student's loan for the applicable academic year (tuition and maintenance loan). The letter of approval should be provided as part of an application for financial support.
  - Students must have received their first instalment of SFE funding.
  - Not in receipt of sponsorship from their employer or other sources
  - Minimum attendance requirement of 80%
  - Successful completion of each term to continue receiving the awarded financial support
  - Any financial support awarded will immediately cease if a student suspends/withdraws from the course.
  - A student has to demonstrable a need for financial assistance due to *unforeseen* changes in their financial circumstances.
  - Students must **not** have any outstanding tuition fees due to MRC when applying for the MRC Mature Students Hardship Fund. No financial support can be provided towards the payment of tuition fees under any circumstances.
  - Students can apply only **once** during each academic year.
  - Applicant must be UK/ Home student.
- 
- All applicants are required to sign a declaration about the accuracy of the information they supply to support their application. Providing false and/or withholding information will result in automatic disqualification from the fund and may result in disciplinary action.

## 6.3 Assessment

The allocation of the fund is fixed for each academic year and will be split into terms.

The priority will be given to students having special circumstances:

- Students coming from local authority care and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Students estranged from their families and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Carers with responsibility for caring for others and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Students with children and single parents and meeting the eligibility criteria
- Students with disabilities, in receipt of Income support or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Universal Credit in place of Income Support or ESA and meeting the eligibility criteria.
- All other students meeting the eligibility criteria

MRC will email or text the applicant within five working days from applying to notify about the outcome (subject to all documents submitted on time enabling assessment).

## 6.4 Evidence

The student applying for financial support must provide all required evidence at the time of application.

- The College will need to see the student's Income that SFE uses in their assessment for the applicable academic year.
- Approval of student's loan
- Where applicable-proof that student left social care
- Where applicable-proof that student is a carer
- Where applicable-proof of benefits
- Where applicable- proof of being a single parent or student with children
- Where applicable-proof of Income and expenses
- Proof of financial hardship

## 6.5 Awards

- Emergency Hardship Fund will provide emergency financial help to students who encounter financial difficulties during their studies. The monetary award will be assessed on a term basis and award split into two instalments, one paid at the start of the relevant term and another payment on the successful completion of a term. The number of applications will be limited;
- The amount awarded to each student is at the discretion of the College's Financial Support Assessment Board, who will consider:
  - The total amount available to distribute
  - A number of applications submitted
  - Household income of each student
  - Student's personal circumstances
  - Students expenses
  - Other relevant factors

## 7. Appeals

Suppose a student is dissatisfied with the decision of their application in regards to any of the funds provided by the College. In that case, they can request a review of the assessment within seven working days of receiving the decision. If the reviewed decision is not accepted, the student can appeal within seven working days of receiving the reviewed decision. The student has to submit a personal statement explaining why he/she believes that the decision was incorrect. No further evidence will be accepted. The assessment review will be actioned and communicated within seven working days. The appeal will be reviewed by the Review Panel and assessed within 20 working days of receiving the appeal. The student will be notified about the review/ appeal decision via email or text.

This document has been designed to be accessible to readers. However, should you require this document in an alternate format, please contact the Finance department at [nss@mrcollege.ac.uk](mailto:nss@mrcollege.ac.uk)