

Fair Access Fund Application Guidance, 2025/26

What is the Fair Access Fund (FAF)?

The Fair Access Fund (FAF) provides undergraduate students from a variety of under-represented groups with financial support. The FAF is designed to aid their transition to university and to improve equality of opportunity for all students.

The fund provides financial support directly to students either as a bursary, which will be paid across all years of study, or as an Access Award, which is paid once in your first year of study. These are not loans, and they do not need to be paid back.

There are some terms and conditions attached to the FAF, including a requirement that FAF recipients engage with their course. More details are given below.

What is the Fair Access Fund (FAF)?	1
Who is eligible for FAF?	1
Low-Income Household Bursary	1
Care Leavers/Care Experienced/Estranged Student Bursary	2
Access Awards	2
How do I apply for FAF?	3
What is the deadline to apply?	4
What if I am eligible in multiple ways?	4
What if I'm an international student?	5
What if I'm studying in Dublin or Berlin?	5
What if I'm Irish, but studying in the UK?	5
What if I am not a degree student (e.g. Diploma courses, short courses)?	6
Is my MetFilm course eligible?	6
What if I need the form in a different format?	6
What if I find the form inaccessible?	6

Will my classmates know that I have received a FAF payment?	6
What are the requirements for a FAF recipient?	7
What if I need to withdraw, intermit, defer, or repeat a year?.....	7
What if I'm in my second or third year?.....	8
How is the FAF paid?	8
When will I receive my payment(s)?	8
What if I have more questions?	9

Who is eligible for FAF?

ALL applicants to the Fair Access Fund must meet the following baseline criteria:

- You must have applied and **accepted an offer** to study at BIMM University in **2025**
- You must be enrolling on the **first year** of a BIMM University **undergraduate degree course** at our Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Essex, Leeds, London or Manchester campuses
- You must be a **UK resident** paying the Home fee rate
- You must have a **full tuition fee loan** in place

In addition, applicants must be eligible under at least one of the categories below.

Please note, you can be awarded *either* the Low-Income Household Bursary *or* the Care Leaver/Care Experienced/Estranged Student Bursary, but not both. Either Bursary can be combined with Access Award(s).

Low-Income Household Bursary

The Low-Income Household Bursary provides students with two payments per year and continues throughout your undergraduate degree programme. You do not need to reapply each year.

- We will normally assess your household income using your Student Finance application. The income threshold for 2025/26 will be confirmed when the application period opens.

Care Leavers/Care Experienced/Estranged Student Bursary

The Care Leavers/Care Experienced/Estranged Student Bursary provides three payments each year and continues throughout your undergraduate degree programme. You do not need to reapply each year.

- To be eligible for the care leaver/care experienced bursary, the student will need to have spent at least 13 weeks of the last 5 years in local authority care prior to the start of their course.
- To be eligible as estranged from their parents/guardians, the student should have had no contact with their parents/guardians for at least 12 months before the start of their course and be unlikely to have a relationship with them again.

Access Awards

Access Awards provide a one-time cash payment to students who meet any of the criteria below. You may be eligible for multiple Access Awards, and you can receive Access Awards and *either* the Low-Income Household Bursary *or* the Care Leavers/Care Experienced/Estranged Student Bursary.

The following students are eligible for Access Awards:

- **Global Majority students**
 - [Global Majority](#) is a collective term coined by Rosemary Cambell-Stephens MBE, to refer to ‘people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, or have been racialised as “ethnic minorities”’ ([Campbell-Stephens 2020](#)). These groups make up more than 80% of the world’s population.
- **Disabled students**
 - To be eligible to access the Disabled Students Access Fund, students must have a declared disability and have applied or be in the process of applying (where eligible) for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA).
- **Mature students**
 - A mature student is 21 years old or older at the start of their undergraduate course.

How do I apply for FAF?

All applications will be processed through Blackbullion, a platform that offers free personal finance courses as well as access to university funding schemes.

You must be enrolled on your course before you apply. You can sign up to receive an update when the application opens on our website.

What is the deadline to apply?

You can complete your application on Blackbullion any time after your enrolment is complete, until the first closing deadline of **3 October 2025**.

We will begin processing applications from 1 August 2025.

There will also be a second opening for late applications, from 12 January 2026. The same eligibility criteria will apply. Unfortunately, January applicants will not be eligible for Semester 1 bursary payments.

We encourage all students to start their applications early, as you may be required to provide evidence of your eligibility through official documentation, and you may be asked for additional documents.

Late applications cannot be accepted, except in extraordinary circumstances. If you think you are eligible for FAF and anticipate that you will not be able to submit your application on time, please email fairaccessfund@bimm.ac.uk as soon as possible.

What if I am eligible in multiple ways?

FAF provides different kinds of support, depending on how you qualify. Students from a low income household and students who are care leavers, care experienced, or estranged may qualify for a recurring bursary payment across the years of their degree course. Students of the Global Majority, disabled students, and mature students may qualify for a one-time Access Award at the beginning of their course.

Students may qualify for both a Low Income Household bursary and relevant Access Awards, **or** for both a Care Leaver/Experienced or Estranged bursary and relevant Access Awards.

Students may receive more than one Access Award, but they may not receive both the Low Income Household bursary *and* the Care Leaver/Care Experienced or Estranged bursary.

What if I'm an international student?

What if I'm studying in Dublin or Berlin?

The FAF is only available to students who are UK residents and studying on a BIMM University degree course at one of our UK campuses. This is because of where the funding for the FAF comes from.

Being a UK resident means that you normally live in the UK, you do not need a visa to study, and you will pay the Home fees rate.

Information for international students in the UK or the EU is available here: [Fees and finance for international students - BIMM Music Institute](#)

The FAF is not available for BIMM students who are studying at our Dublin or Berlin campuses. There are other forms of support available to you, which you can learn about on the relevant Fees and Finance page:

Dublin: [Fees and finance - BIMM Music Institute](#)

Berlin: [Fees and finance - BIMM University Berlin \(bimm-institute.de\)](#)

What if I'm Irish, but studying in the UK?

If you are an Irish citizen, but you are eligible for and receive a Student Finance loan from England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland, and you pay UK Home tuition fees, then you could be eligible for the FAF. [Generally speaking, an Irish citizen would need to be resident in the UK \(including NI\) for three years prior to their degree to qualify.](#)

If you're not sure whether you qualify for Student Finance, please contact our student finance team: financeenquiries@bimm.co.uk

What if I am not a degree student (e.g. Diploma courses, short courses)?

The FAF is only available to students undertaking an undergraduate degree course. Other forms of financial support, such as the Drama and Dance Award (DaDA) may be available to you.

Is my MetFilm course eligible?

The FAF is available to students on MetFilm undergraduate degree courses that are validated by BIMM University and are fee-capped, meaning that the tuition fee is £9,535 per year in 2025/26.

MetFilm degrees that are validated by the University of West London (UWL) are not eligible. There are bursaries available through UWL, which you can view at this link: [Undergraduate bursaries and scholarships | University of West London](#)

MetFilm degrees that are not subject to the fees cap are not eligible for the FAF.

What if I need the form in a different format?

What if I find the form inaccessible?

We are happy to work with you to make your application experience more accessible. Please contact fairaccessfund@bimm.ac.uk as soon as possible to discuss how we can support your access needs.

Will my classmates know that I have received a FAF payment?

No. Your receipt of the FAF will be kept confidential. No one in your cohort will know that you are receiving support, unless *you* choose to share that information with them.

However, academic support teams may be made aware that you are receiving the FAF so that they can support you throughout your degree course. This includes your campus Wellbeing Team and the Student Finance team, for example

What are the requirements for a FAF recipient?

You are expected to have a reasonable level of attendance and engagement on their course in order to receive their funding. What is 'reasonable' will be determined on a case-by-case basis in conversation with your local Wellbeing Team.

BIMM University recognizes that many factors can affect attendance, and for that reason, the university operates an authorized absence system. You are responsible for informing your local Wellbeing Team and Course Leader if you are unable to attend scheduled classes. Wellbeing Teams are available to offer support for issues affecting your university experience, and you are encouraged to come forward to discuss any concerns you may have about your studies or ability to attend classes.

The university will monitor attendance levels prior to making any payments, and we will contact you to discuss concerns and support options to help you re-engage if necessary. Students not deemed to have acceptable engagement levels may be refused a scheduled bursary payment, but this does not preclude them from any future payments.

What if I need to withdraw, intermit, defer, or repeat a year?

Withdrawing – If you withdraw from your course, you will not receive any more funding from the FAF after your date of withdrawal.

Intermitting – If you intermit (interrupt) your studies for a period of time, you will not receive FAF during your intermission. However, you will remain eligible for further payments when you re-enrol or continue with your course. You do not need to repay FAF payments made before your intermission begins.

Deferring – If you defer a year of study *after* beginning your course, you will not receive funding during your year of deferment. Payments will resume for the remainder of your course after you return.

If you defer your acceptance *before* you enrol for your course, you will need to make a new application to the FAF in the year that you begin your studies.

Repeating – If you repeat a year of study, you will continue to be eligible for any previously-approved FAF payments.

Please note, however, that bursaries are normally available for a maximum number of years equal to the maximum period of public funding available to you. This is usually the normal length of the programme, plus one academic year, but this is subject to changing government regulations.

What if I'm in my second or third year?

Students who received the Low Income Household or Care Leaver/Experienced or Estranged bursary in their first year will continue to receive that bursary at the same rate throughout their degree (up to a maximum number of years equal to the maximum period of public funding). You do not need to re-apply each year.

If you should have been eligible in your first year, but you missed the opportunity to apply, we may consider a late application. Please email fairaccessfund@bimm.ac.uk. It is helpful if you can provide a statement from your local Wellbeing team in support.

How is the FAF paid?

All FAF bursaries are provided as a cash payment directly to the recipient's personal bank account, subject to satisfactory attendance as outlined above.

You must therefore have a UK bank account in your own name to receive a FAF payment.

It is your responsibility to provide correct bank details at the application stage. BIMM University will contact FAF recipients prior to the start of each new academic year to reconfirm bank details. However, it is your responsibility to inform the university of any changes to your bank details that may affect payments.

When will I receive my payment(s)?

Access Awards (for students of the Global Majority, disabled students, and mature students) will normally be paid in Semester 1 once the enrolment period has ended.

Low Income Household bursaries will normally be paid in two parts: the first in Semester 1, and the second in Semester 2.

Care Leaver/Care Experienced and Estranged Student bursaries will normally be paid in three parts: the first in Semester 1, the second in Semester 2, and the third near the end of the academic year.

Exact payment dates will be confirmed at the beginning of the academic year. Dates are subject to change.

What if I have more questions?

You can contact fairaccessfund@bimm.ac.uk, or the Student Finance Team on financeenquiries@bimm.ac.uk