



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Higher Education Childcare Funds Guidance 23-24

If you have a child or children in childcare while you are studying at RCS, you can apply for a contribution towards your study-related childcare costs in an academic year. SAAS refers to these costs as “registered formal childcare expenses”. Childcare costs will only be met to cover the time when you are studying.

What are registered formal childcare expenses?

Registered formal childcare expenses are costs derived from placing your child or children with childcare providers such as nurseries, childminders, or after-school care organisations. Childcare providers, including childminders, must be registered with the Care Inspectorate, but nannies do not have to be. Students who use nannies that are recruited through agencies that are registered with the Care Inspectorate can apply for assistance from the Childcare Fund.

What is the HE Childcare Fund?

The HE Childcare Fund has two elements:

1. **The Lone Parents Childcare Grant (LPCG)** element which will be an entitlement payment of up to £1,215 per year to all eligible students who are lone parents and who have formal registered childcare expenses while studying. The LPCG is not income assessed.
2. The **Discretionary Childcare Funds** which all students may apply to for financial help with formal registered childcare expenses. Payments from the Discretionary Childcare funds will be made at the discretion of institutions and based on an assessment of need.

Full-time eligible students attending RCS will be able to apply for help for registered childcare costs from the Discretionary Childcare Fund, at the discretion of RCS. Full-time lone parent students will also be able to apply for additional help with registered childcare costs (over and above the Lone Parents Childcare Grant) from the Discretionary Childcare fund, at the discretion of RCS.

Students with both Childcare and Discretionary Fund needs will continue to be able to access support from the main Discretionary funds, as well as the Childcare Funds, at the discretion of RCS.

Eligibility

- All students must be on a full-time course and have taken out the full living cost loan/bursary that is available to them.
- Lone parents should also have claimed the Lone Parents Grant from SAAS and have claimed Child Tax Credits and free nursery places etc.



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

- Students must meet the eligibility criteria for tuition fees to be eligible for assistance from the Childcare Fund, apart from the Lone Parent Childcare Grant element.

Students must also be:

- ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man for the three years immediately before the relevant date (the first day of the first academic year of the course). AND
- If they are not a UK national, they must have 'settled status' in the UK (as set out in the Immigration Act 1971) on the relevant date, AND
- be ordinarily resident in Scotland on the relevant date.

EU nationals

EU nationals who are eligible for full living cost support will be eligible to apply to the fund.

Previous study and students who are part-time

Students must meet the eligibility criteria for tuition fees to be paid by SAAS in order to be eligible for assistance from the Childcare Funds. This means that if SAAS is not paying your tuition fee, due to previous study, you cannot apply for assistance from the Childcare fund. If you are a lone parent who is not getting their tuition funded by SAAS, RCS can still award you the Lone Parent Childcare Grant element.

If you are a part-time student with registered formal childcare expenses, you can apply to the Childcare fund, but if an award is made it will be made from the main Discretionary Fund. Full-time students with registered formal childcare costs take priority.

Attendance

RCS must be satisfied that a student is attending an appropriate course and that their attendance and progression is satisfactory.

Lone parents

Lone parent students who have to pay all or some of the cost of registered formal childcare expenses can receive up to £1215 a year from the RCS Childcare Fund, depending on the cost of childcare. This is known as the Lone Parents Childcare Grant (LPCG) element. If full childcare costs are paid from other sources a student should not apply for the LPCG.



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

The LPCG is not income assessed but a student must provide evidence that they are a lone parent with registered formal childcare expenses and details of funding for childcare from any other sources. If lone parents have childcare costs more than £1215, they can also apply for additional help with childcare costs to the Discretionary Childcare Fund. In such cases, lone parents would be assessed for Discretionary Childcare Funding in the same way as other students.

Priority groups

Mature students, lone parents, care-experienced students, student carers, and estranged students take priority over others (where it would not negatively impact on their ability to claim, or continue to be entitled to, income related benefits).

How to apply

Apply using the form on the Funding and Finance page of the [portal](#). It is your responsibility to identify the childcare you need using the form and you should discuss your childcare needs with your childcare provider before applying. SAAS does not impose a limit to what an institution can award each student from the Childcare Fund, but there is a limited budget which must be divided amongst students with childcare costs. Consequently, there will be a limit to the funding we can provide – it is very unlikely we will be able to fund your full costs.

Please apply from 1 July to allow funding to be finalised before your course start date. Payments will start once you have matriculated. Applications are means tested and require you to submit evidence.

Conservatoire holidays do not always align with school holiday periods, so you should talk through any extra care needed to cover school holidays with your childcare provider and include the details in your application.

Payment arrangements

Assistance from the Childcare Fund may be given in the form of a direct payment to you, or to a nominated third party, for example, your childcare provider. This will be discussed with you if an award is made.

If we choose to make direct payments to you, RCS has to make sure that you use the money for its intended purpose, and we may request receipts to show that the money has been paid to your childcare provider.

Refunds

Where there has been a change to childcare requirements and there is a surplus on your childcare provider's account, this should be returned to RCS. Should this be the case please ask your childcare provider to contact us.