



ECU Student Guild

STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT POLICY

POLICY TYPE	Operational
POLICY SUBTYPE	Guild Advisory Service
POLICY TITLE	Student Financial Support Policy
POLICY OWNER	Operations Manager

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1. INTENT

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the terms by which Edith Cowan University Student Guild provides financial supports to its members through the Guild Advisory Service.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Edith Cowan University Student Guild Members inclusive of Casual staff who are also Edith Cowan University Students.
- 2.2. This policy will not apply to Associate Members of the Guild, Edith Cowan College Students, UniPrep Students or Operational Staff members who are also ECU Students.
- 2.3. This policy will not apply to Edith Cowan University Student Guild Senate Members unless expressly stated within the administration details of this policy for each grant or support type and only where there has been a referral to the Guild Advisory Officer by the Operations Manager.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. The singular includes the plural and vice-versa.
- 3.2. A reference to:
- 3.2.1. A person includes a corporation and government or statutory body or authority;
- 3.2.2. A person includes the legal personal representatives, successors, and permitted assigns of that person; and
- 3.2.3. A statute, ordinance, code or other law includes regulations and other statutory instruments under it and consolidations, amendments, re-enactments or replacements of any of them by any legislative authority.
- 3.3. The word “including” and similar expressions are not words of limitation.
- 3.4. The word “under” includes by and by virtue of; as well as, pursuant to and in accordance with.
- 3.5. **CIDC** means the Continuous Improvement and Development Committee.
- 3.6. **Facilitated Referral** means supporting a student to access external services or supports and can include:
- 3.6.1. Making an appointment on behalf of a student;
- 3.6.2. Contacting a service to check the student’s eligibility or to check the availability of the service;

- 3.7. **Financial Hardship or Financial Crisis** means difficulty paying loans, other bills and reasonable general living expenses as a result of some unanticipated circumstance.
- 3.8. **Guild Advisory Officer (GAO)** means the Guild Advisory Officer who is the employed Operational Staff Member whose responsibility it is to advocate and support students.
- 3.9. **Guild Advisory Service Coordinator** means the supervisor of the Guild Advisory Service.
- 3.10. **The Guild** means Edith Cowan University Student Guild.
- 3.11. **Guild Member or Member** means a student who has elected to be a member of the Guild as evidenced in the Guild Membership Register.
- 3.12. **Per Annum** means every 12 months.
- 3.13. **SSAF** means the Student Services and Amenities Fee being the fund used to support the provision of financial support to students.
- 3.14. **Senate** means the governing body of the Guild.
- 3.15. **Unfacilitated Referral** means providing contact details of a service of support for the student to contact independently.

4. OVERVIEW

- 4.1. All Guild policies are approved, amended or repealed by the Senate in accordance with the Guild's Policy Framework and compliance with relevant governance instruments, following consultation with CIDC.
- 4.2. The Guild shall maintain a policy manual of all current policies in a manner which is easily accessible to members, Senate, staff and other stakeholders where appropriate.
- 4.3. All Guild policies will be reviewed annually.

5. POLICY

5.1. Types of Financial Supports

5.1.1. Edith Cowan University Student Guild supports members who are experiencing financial crisis in a variety of ways.

5.1.2. Financial Supports may be direct or indirect and may include but may not be limited to:

- 5.1.2.1. Discretionary Grants;
- 5.1.2.2. Grocery Vouchers;
- 5.1.2.3. Practicum Support Grants;

- 5.1.2.4. Smart Rider Top Ups;
- 5.1.2.5. Foodbank WA Referral;
- 5.1.2.6. Referral to Financial Counselling Services;
- 5.1.2.7. Referral to other external grant schemes as available from time to time such as the Bond Assist Scheme or WA No Interest Loan Scheme;
- 5.1.2.8. Referral to Edith Cowan University Financial supports such as Equity Grants or Scholarships.

5.1.3. Guild Advisory Officers working in collaboration with the Guild Advisory Service Coordinator, and the Operations Manager as required, have absolute discretion over the allocation of internal supports or referral of students to external grant schemes or other supports.

5.1.4. A Guild Advisory Officer will present the support deemed most appropriate to the student based on the student's current financial situation. Not all support types may be offered or considered appropriate. The Guild Advisory Officer's assessment as to appropriate support is absolute and a student is not able to elect the type of support that they would prefer.

5.1.5. Financial support is only available to Guild Members, verified using the University's Guild Membership Register. Financial Support is not available to the following types of non-SSAF paying students:

- 5.1.5.1. Edith Cowan College Students;
- 5.1.5.2. University Preparation Students;
- 5.1.5.3. Undergraduate Certificate of Higher Education; or
- 5.1.5.4. Guild Senators, unless expressly stated in the terms of this policy.

5.2. Discretionary Grants

5.2.1. Discretionary Grants are available to students who present in financial crisis and require grant support to assist them in managing such crises.

5.2.2. Discretionary Grants will not be considered appropriate where a student's long term situation is not anticipated to improve despite a grant being allocated. In these cases a GAO may recommend other types of longer terms supports or services such as Financial Counselling.

5.2.3. Administration

- 5.2.3.1. The annual funding allocation for the Discretionary Grant Program will be determined annually by the Operations Manager in consultation with the

Finance & Business Manager as part of the budget allocation for GAO services for the year.

- 5.2.3.2. Discretionary Grants are capped to a maximum of \$500 per student.
- 5.2.3.3. Only one Discretionary Grant will be awarded per student, regardless of whether the amount initially allocated was less than the \$500 maximum permitted.
- 5.2.3.4. Maximum values for Discretionary Grants may be altered from time to time as budgets and business needs dictate, however, shall not exceed \$500 unless agreed by Senate Motion.
- 5.2.3.5. Discretionary Grants are not loans and will not be required to be repaid to the Guild.
- 5.2.3.6. Discretionary Grants will not be paid as a cash sum to students. All grants allocated will be paid directly to service providers on production of an approved invoice and only at the amounts agreed at application.
- 5.2.3.7. Guild Members applying for a Discretionary Grant will not be eligible for a Practicum Support Grant in the same year of application.
- 5.2.3.8. Guild Members may apply for all other GAO financial support not referred to in 5.2.3.7 and be referred for other services in addition to the Discretionary Grant. I.e. Grocery vouchers.
- 5.2.3.9. Discretionary Grants will only be submitted for approval where the approved Discretionary Grant Application Form is submitted with full and relevant supporting evidence and only where there has been consultation with a GAO who will assess the student's personal circumstances.
- 5.2.3.10. Consultation does not included correspondence by email. All students are required to have met with a Guild Advisory Officer either face to face, or via telehealth or telephone.
- 5.2.3.11. GAOs reserve the right to recommend other types of support or referrals and not make a recommendation for a Discretionary Grant at their total discretion.
- 5.2.3.12. Discretionary Grants are not time bound. Applications will be accepted at any time throughout the calendar year.
- 5.2.3.13. Discretionary Grants will only be assessed where the application is supported by full and complete evidence as requested in the application form, including but not limited to:
 - 5.2.3.13.1. 3 months of bank statements for **all** accounts held, demonstrating financial commitments and pattern of spending.

5.2.3.13.2. Copy of Confirmation of Enrolment; and

5.2.3.13.3. Copy of the Student ID Card.

5.2.3.14. Discretionary Grants will only be awarded where the application is supported by the relevant GAO and approved by the Guild Advisory Service Coordinator. Where the Guild Advisory Service Coordinator is unavailable and the Discretionary Grant is time critical, the Operations Manager may provide approval.

5.2.3.15. As per Section 5.1.5, ECU Guild Senate members, Operational Staff members, UniPrep, Undergraduate Certificate of Higher Education and Edith Cowan College Students are not eligible for Discretionary Grants.

5.2.3.16. Where Senate members refer students to the GAOs for consideration of a Discretionary Grant the Senate Member will be required to disclose the referral as a conflict of interest to the Operations Manager.

5.2.4. Eligibility Criteria

5.2.4.1. Students must meet **all** of the following criteria to be eligible for a Discretionary Grant:

5.2.4.1.1. The Student must be in financial crisis and able to evidence financial crisis in the requested documents.

5.2.4.1.2. The Student, in collaboration with the GAO, must have explored alternative options for financial support including, but not limited to, ECU Student Loans, ECU Scholarships, Emergency relief, Centrelink and financial counselling and found these options to be unsuitable or insufficient to addressing the student's financial crisis.

5.2.4.1.3. The Student must be enrolled in an ECU course and must also be a Guild Member. Students who present in a crisis and are not Guild Members can change their membership status retrospectively, however, a Discretionary Grant will not be supported until such time that membership is confirmed in the Guild Membership Register.

5.2.4.1.4. The Student must not have a current Academic Status of 'Excluded', 'Suspended', or 'Expelled' or record of substantiated Academic Misconduct.

5.2.4.1.5. The Student must not have an excess of funds in their bank account without clear reason as to why these funds cannot be used to meet their financial obligations. The need to pay tuition fees will **not** be considered acceptable reasoning.

- 5.2.4.1.6. The Student must show clear financial judgement in their spending habits or be able to provide clear reasoning why available funds had been spent on luxury items prior to submission of the discretionary grant application. Students in these situations will be referred to financial counselling services.
- 5.2.4.2. Students who do not meet all of the criteria as set out in section 5.2.4.1 will not be awarded a Discretionary Grant under any circumstances.
- 5.2.4.3. The Student must provide GAOs with the following evidence to demonstrate financial hardship for their application to be considered:
- 5.2.4.3.1. A statement of fortnightly income and expenditure.
 - 5.2.4.3.2. Proof of enrolment.
 - 5.2.4.3.3. Photo identification (Student ID Card)
 - 5.2.4.3.4. Evidence of income (Centrelink Statement, Scholarship, Payslip (the most recent payslips must be provided), etc.)
 - 5.2.4.3.5. Bank Statement showing transactions for the preceding 3 months as a minimum period of time for all accounts held.
 - 5.2.4.3.6. Invoices or quotes for all expenses for which the Discretionary Grant is to be applied. Copies of text message/social media post or notes not written on official company letter head documents will **not** be accepted.
 - 5.2.4.3.7. A completed Discretionary Grant Application Form.
- 5.2.4.4. Students may only apply for a Discretionary Grant for the following expenses:
- 5.2.4.4.1. Study related essentials including uniforms, textbooks, equipment or any other course related material required to complete a unit. This includes books from the Guild's second hand bookstore.
 - 5.2.4.4.2. Bills for an essential service that is at risk of being terminated. Essential services include electricity, gas, water, internet and phone access. Note that repayment of a device will not be considered when making payment towards a mobile telephone bill or similar.
 - 5.2.4.4.3. Travel related to study requirement that cannot be covered by fuel vouchers and/or Smart-rider top ups. This includes car/licence registration costs where a student cannot appropriately travel by public transport.

- 5.2.4.4.3.1. Registration costs will only be met where the student is the registered owner of the vehicle (as evidenced by the Registration Renewal Document) and for a maximum of 3 months only unless there is sufficient evidence that the student would be placed in further hardship at the end of three months when the Registration costs become due again.
- 5.2.4.4.4. Housing related payments including bond payments, strata rates, rental payments or temporary accommodation related to studies.
- 5.2.4.4.5. Other exceptional needs identified by the GAO essential to the student's enrolment at ECU. I.e. One-off childcare costs.
- 5.2.4.5. Students cannot apply for a Discretionary Grant for the following expenses:
 - 5.2.4.5.1. Recreational purposes.
 - 5.2.4.5.2. Repayment of existing loans or credit card payments.
 - 5.2.4.5.3. ECU Tuition Fees.
 - 5.2.4.5.4. HECS-HELP.
 - 5.2.4.5.5. Fines.
 - 5.2.4.5.6. Any other expense that does not meet the criteria listed that falls outside of exceptional needs described in clause 5.2.4.4.5.
- 5.2.4.6. Students must show that they are making appropriate adjustments to expenditure to manage their finances in the long term.
- 5.2.4.7. Guild Advisory Officers must, in their Cliniko notes, provide sound reasoning for their support of a Discretionary Grant Application, including reference to any referrals made to external organisations or additional support provided to the student.

5.3. Practicum Support Grants

- 5.3.1. Practicum Support Grants are available to students who require additional support for living expenses when undertaking a practicum placement.

5.3.2. Administration

- 5.3.2.1. The annual funding allocation for the Practicum Support Grant Program will be determined annually by the Operations Manager in consultation with the Finance & Business Manager as part of the budget allocation for GAO services for the year.

- 5.3.2.2. Practicum Support Grants are awarded as a \$500 Vasco Pay Card.

- 5.3.2.3. Practicum Support Grants are to be used to support the additional costs borne by a student in attending a placement such as:
- 5.3.2.3.1. Cost of transportation to/from placements, inclusive of parking costs;
 - 5.3.2.3.2. Costs of flights to regional placements;
 - 5.3.2.3.3. Accommodation costs;
 - 5.3.2.3.4. Cost of food whilst on placement;
 - 5.3.2.3.5. Any required Uniform and/or equipment.
- 5.3.2.4. A Practicum Support Grant is not to be used to purchase any non-practicum related costs.
- 5.3.2.5. Only one Practicum Support Grant will be awarded per student regardless of the number of practicums they are required to complete throughout their degree course.
- 5.3.2.6. Practicum Support Grants are not loans and will not be required to be repaid to the Guild.
- 5.3.2.7. Practicum Support Grants will not be paid as a cash sum to students. All grants allocated will be provided as a pre-paid Visa card.
- 5.3.2.8. Students are not permitted to withdraw cash from the pre-paid visa card.
- 5.3.2.9. ECU Guild Members applying for a Practicum Support Grant will not be eligible for a Discretionary Grant in the same year of application.
- 5.3.2.10. ECU Guild Members may apply for all other GAO financial support not referred to in 5.3.2.9 and be referred for other services in addition to the Practicum Support Grant. I.e. Grocery vouchers.
- 5.3.2.11. Practicum Support Grants will only be submitted for approval where the required evidence listed in clause 5.3.3.3 is submitted and only where there has been consultation with a GAO who will assess the student's personal circumstances.
- 5.3.2.12. Consultation does not include correspondence by email. All students are required to have met with a Guild Advisory Officer either face to face, or via telehealth or telephone.
- 5.3.2.13. GAOs reserve the right to recommend other types of support or referrals and not make a recommendation for a Practicum Support Grant at their total discretion.

- 5.3.2.14. Practicum Support Grants will only be awarded where the application is supported by the relevant GAO and approved by the Guild Advisory Service Coordinator. Where the Guild Advisory Service Coordinator is unavailable and the Practicum Support Grant is time critical, the Operations Manager may provide approval.
- 5.3.2.15. As per Section 2.2, ECU Guild Senate members, Operational Staff members, UniPrep, Undergraduate Certificate of Higher Education and Edith Cowan College Students are not eligible for Practicum Support Grants.
- 5.3.2.16. Where Senate members refer students to the GAO for Practicum Support Grant consideration the Senate Member will be required to disclose the referral as a conflict of interest to the Operations Manager.
- 5.3.2.17. Guild Senators may be considered for a Practicum Support Grant where approved by the Operations Manager. Senators are required to seek approval from the Operations Manager prior to speaking with a Guild Advisory Officer. All Senate applications will be considered on merit and under the stipulations of this policy. Senators will not receive more favourable consideration by warrant of their position within the Guild.

5.3.3. Eligibility Criteria

- 5.3.3.1. Students must meet **all** of the following criteria to be eligible for a Practicum Support Grant:
 - 5.3.3.1.1. The Student must be able to evidence that they cannot manage the financial commitments required when undertaking a practicum in the requested evidence documents.
 - 5.3.3.1.2. Students are required to provide evidence of placements at the time of application. A grant will not be allocated where a student has not provided sufficient evidence or where the placement commencement date is not within six weeks of the application.
 - 5.3.3.1.3. Students must be a Guild Member. Students who are not Guild Members can change their membership status retrospectively, however, a Practicum Support Grant will not be supported until such time that membership is confirmed on the Guild Membership Register.
 - 5.3.3.1.4. The Student must not have a current Academic Status of 'Excluded', 'Suspended', or 'Expelled' or record of substantiated Academic Misconduct.
 - 5.3.3.1.5. The Student must not have an excess of funds in their bank account without clear reason as to why these funds cannot be used to meet the

additional costs of a placement. The need to pay tuition fees will not be considered acceptable reasoning.

5.3.3.1.6. The Student must show clear financial judgement in their spending habits or be able to provide clear reasoning why available funds had been spent on luxury items prior to submission of the Practicum Support Grant application. Students in these situations will be referred to financial counselling services.

5.3.3.2. Students who do not meet all of the criteria as set out in section 5.3.3.1 will not be awarded a Practicum Support Grant under any circumstances.

5.3.3.3. The Student must provide GAOs with the following evidence for their application to be considered:

5.3.3.3.1. Proof of enrolment.

5.3.3.3.2. Proof of Practicum (Must evidence the practicum commences within 6 weeks of the application)

5.3.3.3.3. Photo identification (Student ID card).

5.3.3.3.4. Evidence of income (Centrelink Statement, Scholarship, Payslip (the most recent payslips must be provided), etc.)

5.3.3.3.5. Bank Statement showing transactions for the preceding 3 months as a minimum period of time.

5.3.3.3.6. A personal statement as to why the grant is required.

5.3.3.4. Students cannot apply for a Practicum Support Grant for the following expenses:

5.3.3.4.1. Recreational purposes.

5.3.3.4.2. Repayment of existing loans or credit card payments.

5.3.3.4.3. ECU Tuition Fees

5.3.3.4.4. HECS-HELP.

5.3.3.4.5. Fines.

5.3.3.4.6. Any other expense that does not meet the criteria listed or support the student with the additional costs of attending a placement.

5.3.3.5. Guild Advisory Officers must, in their Cliniko notes, provide sound reasoning for their support of a Practicum Support Grant Application, including reference to

any referrals made to external organisations or additional support provided to the student.

5.4. Grocery Voucher

5.4.1. Grocery Vouchers can be provided to students at a GAOs discretion where the officer concludes that a student requires immediate assistance with affording grocery, fuel or other essential items due to financial crises.

5.4.2. Administration

- 5.4.2.1. Grocery vouchers are provided at a value of \$25 per voucher.
- 5.4.2.2. Grocery Vouchers to the maximum of \$100 value may be awarded to a student per annum.
- 5.4.2.3. The maximum permitted amount of Grocery Vouchers per annum may be allocated to a student in one transaction.
- 5.4.2.4. Where a student presents in subsequent years requesting additional support, the GAO Officer will make an assessment as to the student's needs and may recommend a referral to financial counselling as an alternative.
- 5.4.2.5. A student will not receive more than \$300 of Grocery Support over the course of their studies with ECU.
- 5.4.2.6. Grocery Vouchers may be allocated as a physical or electronic voucher.
- 5.4.2.7. The Guild Advisory Officer will make a determination as to whether a physical or electronic voucher is allocated. Their determination is final.
- 5.4.2.8. Guild Advisory Officers must complete the GAS Voucher Allocation Form on behalf of the student.
- 5.4.2.9. **Physical Vouchers**
 - 5.4.2.9.1. The barcodes of the physical vouchers distributed to students will be recorded on the GSA Voucher Allocation Form along with a photocopy of the vouchers.
 - 5.4.2.9.2. Students receiving physical vouchers will be required to sign the allocation form to confirm receipt of vouchers.
- 5.4.2.10. **Electronic Vouchers**
 - 5.4.2.10.1. Electronic vouchers will be processed within 2 business days of the voucher being allocated.

5.4.2.10.2. The Financial Controller will facilitate the purchase and distribution of the allocated vouchers to the student.

5.4.2.11. **Lost Vouchers**

5.4.2.11.1. Where a student reports that a physical voucher has been lost or where a student reports that an electronic voucher has not been received to their designated email address, the Finance & Business Manager will undertake an investigation.

5.4.2.11.2. The investigation will include contacting the voucher distributor to cancel the lost voucher.

5.4.2.11.3. Where a voucher is reported by the distributor to have been used the voucher will not be replaced by the Guild, however, the student will be referred to other supports such as FoodBank WA.

5.5. **SmartRider Top Up**

5.5.1. SmartRider Top Ups can be provided to students at a GAO's discretion where the officer concludes that a student requires assistance with travelling to or from University due to financial crises.

5.5.2. **Administration**

5.5.2.1. SmartRider Top Ups are provided at a maximum value of \$50.

5.5.2.2. Only two top ups (Maximum \$100 value) may be awarded to a student per annum.

5.5.2.3. SmartRider Top Ups of the maximum annual value are not to be allocated in one top up transaction. That is to say, the maximum value of top up per occasion will be \$50.

5.5.2.4. Where a student presents in subsequent years requesting additional support, the Guild Advisory Officer will make an assessment as to the student's needs and may recommend a referral to financial counselling as an alternative.

5.5.2.5. A student will not receive more than \$300 of SmartRider top ups over the course of their studies with ECU.

5.5.2.6. SmartRider top ups will be processed within 2 business days of the voucher being allocated.

5.5.2.7. The Finance & Business Manager will facilitate the top up with TransPerth but only where the required Biller Code and Reference is provided in the GSA Voucher Allocation Form.

5.6. FoodBank WA Referral

5.6.1. FoodBank WA referrals can be made for students at a Guild Advisory Officer's discretion where the officer concludes that a student requires assistance to obtain food support due to financial crises.

5.6.2. Administration

- 5.6.2.1. FoodBank WA 6 Month Access Card is allocated to students where deemed appropriate by the GSA Officer.
- 5.6.2.2. A letter from ECU Student Guild requesting a 6 Month Access Card will be provided to the approved student to be presented to the administration at Foodbank WA .
- 5.6.2.3. The student will be advised of the Foodbank WA site opening hours and the conditions of entry and operational protocols.
- 5.6.2.4. The name of the authorising officer and the full name of the recipient must be written clearly on the letter.
- 5.6.2.5. Foodbank WA, upon receipt of this letter, will ask for proof of identity from the student, and will issue a 6 Month Access Card once clear identity is confirmed.
- 5.6.2.6. The 6 Month Access Card is not transferrable and must be presented to checkout staff at time of payment.
- 5.6.2.7. Payment for all products selected must be paid in full at time of withdrawal. Foodbank WA is a cashless operation and accepts card only.
- 5.6.2.8. Where a student presents requesting additional support, the Guild Advisory Officer will make an assessment as to the student's needs and may recommend another type of support or a referral to financial counselling as an alternative.

5.7. External Referrals

5.7.1. A Guild Advisory Officer may deem that a referral to an external support service may be suitable for a student.

5.7.2. Referrals may be made for students in combination with the application of internal supports where deemed necessary by a Guild Advisory Officer.

5.7.3. Referrals will be unfacilitated in the main, however, where deemed necessary a Guild Advisory Officer may provide a facilitated referral to support the student to access an external service or organisation, if it is deemed that a student will struggle to access the service or support independently.

5.8. Recording Supports

5.8.1. All types of support provided by the Guild will be recorded in the Clinical Management System, Cliniko, whether the student is successful or unsuccessful in any application.

5.8.2. A Guild Advisory Officer will review a student's notes when assessing appropriate financial support to ascertain where Guild Financial Support has been provided in the past to ensure that any additional support meets the requirements of this policy.

5.8.3. Referrals to external support services will also be recorded within the treatment notes of the Clinical Management System by the Guild Advisory Officer.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Related Policy	• Guild Advisory Service User Policy
Related Procedure	•
Other Related Documents	• Discretionary Grant Application Form (FormStack) • GSA Voucher Allocation Form (FormStack)
Related Legislation	•

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Policy Owner	Operations Manager
All Enquiries Contact	Lisa Dwyer
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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Policy Approved By	Senate
Date Policy First Approved	25/08/2020
Original Motion	SM2008/08
Revision History	001 – July 2021 – SM2111/03 002 – September 2022 – SM2212/09 003 – May 2024 - SCM2406/01

Revised by	Lisa Dwyer & Jo O'Donnell
Next Revision Date	May 2025