



BMA

Scotland

Undergraduate and postgraduate medical students Finance guide 2023



Contents

Introduction	1
SAAS.....	2
EU nationals and their family members	2
Independent/dependent status	3
Studying in Scotland.....	3
Studying elsewhere in the UK	4
Studying from elsewhere in the UK and wish to study in Scotland.....	4
Tuition fees	6
Student loans.....	6
Repaying your loan.....	7
Postgraduate support.....	7
Postgraduate student loans.....	7
Grants and bursaries.....	8
Other sources of funding.....	11
Top tips	14
Contacts.....	15

Introduction

The Scottish medical students committee understands how complicated and confusing student finance can be and wants to help students access and understand the support available to them. We have put together this brief guide to highlight the support available to Scottish domiciled students studying medicine in the UK. It will cover loans, bursaries, grants and options for elective funding for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. We hope you find it useful.

The way your personal entitlement to funding is calculated depends on the country you live in (your place of domicile), where you study, any previous higher education and your household income. How each of these affect your application is explained in this guide.

The main funding options available are explained in the following pages however, should you need any more detail, have further questions on the information provided or need more facts on special grants and bursaries, our contacts page at the end of this guide will point you in the right direction. If you are a BMA member you can also contact us on **0300 123 1233** for further information.

SAAS

As a Scottish domiciled student, you will apply to the SAAS (Student Awards Agency for Scotland), no matter where in the UK you are studying. SAAS is a government agency and pays grants, loans and bursaries to Scottish domiciled students in higher education. You can apply to SAAS for your support online from April of the year that you will be studying.

The 'plus one' rule was introduced by SAAS in 2013 for students who change course or need to repeat a period of study. This will allow you to gain one extra year's funding to the minimum time you require to complete your programme of study. If you are eligible for the Care Experienced Students' Bursary, you are eligible to an additional 'plus one' year.

You can use the 'plus one' year to cover scenarios that include:

- Academic repeats
- Medical repeats
- Compassionate repeats
- Approved changes of course
- Intercalated years

Please remember that you must apply for support each year of your course and that if your personal circumstances change, it is important that you let SAAS know to ensure you continue to receive the correct support.

Eligibility

To be eligible for support you must meet the SAAS residence conditions and be on a course they support.

Generally, to qualify for support you must be:

- ordinarily resident in Scotland on the first day of the first academic year of the course
- ordinarily resident in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for three years
- immediately before the first day of the first academic year of the course
- settled in the UK as described by the Immigration Act 1971
- studying in full time higher education

The first day of the first academic year of the course, known as the 'relevant date', is 1 August, for those who start a course in the autumn term. If you don't meet the general residence conditions set out above, you may still be eligible for support. Visit the SAAS website for more advice (www.saas.gov.uk).

EU nationals and their family members

To be eligible to apply for full support (tuition fees, loan, bursary and living-costs grants), you must:

- be, on the relevant date, a EU national or the family member (visit section 10 for more information) of an EU national and you both have settled or pre-settled status through the EU Settlement Scheme; and
- have been ordinarily resident in the UK for the 3 years immediately prior to the relevant date; and
- be ordinarily resident in Scotland on the relevant date.

If you are claiming support as the family member of an EU national, both you and your

EU family member must meet all the conditions above.

If you do not meet the conditions above, you may be eligible for SAAS funding for tuition fees only, if you fulfil the conditions below.

To be eligible for a tuition fees only award you must meet the following conditions;

- You are, on the relevant date, an EU national or the family member (visit section 10 for more information) of, and you both have settled or pre-settled status through the EU Settlement Scheme; and
- You have been ordinarily resident in the UK, Islands, Gibraltar or EEA/Switzerland for 3 years prior to relevant date; and
- You were living in the UK prior to 31 December 2020*; and
- You are ordinarily resident in the UK on the relevant date; and
- You are taking a course of study in Scotland; and
- You do not already have a degree for which you received support from UK or EU public funds.

Independent/dependent status

Whether you are classed as dependent or independent is a key factor when determining how much support you will receive.

- Dependent students will have their parents' income, as well as their own, taken into account when SAAS are calculating their support entitlement.
- Independent students are those for which SAAS does not expect their parents to contribute to their loans or fees. Students must meet one of a number of conditions to be classed as independent:
 - the student is over 25 at the start of the academic year
 - they are married, in a civil partnership or living with a partner
 - their parents are no longer alive
 - they have a child of any age dependent on them at the start of the academic year
 - or they have supported themselves from earnings or benefits outside full-time education for any three years before the day of the first academic year of their course

If your circumstances change from one year to the next (i.e. you move in with a partner) you can change status from dependent to independent student. This change must occur before the start of the academic year – if you were to move in with a partner midway through the year, you would remain a dependent student for funding purposes until the next academic year, at which point you would be treated as independent by SAAS. Full details of these conditions can be found on the [SAAS website](#).

Studying in Scotland

If you study at a Scottish institution (except those studying medicine at St Andrews), you are eligible to apply for the normal full-support package available in all years of your course.

For those studying medicine at St Andrews, in the first three years of study you will receive the normal full support package available. If you transfer to an institution in England for your clinical years, you will have to pay tuition fees of up to £9,250 in your first year, which will be year four of your studies. You can apply to SAAS for a loan to pay all or some of this fee amount. In all other years, which will be your fifth and sixth year of study, you can apply for the same support package as you got in the first three years of your course; this includes payment of tuition fees, which will be paid for by the NHS. You may also be eligible to apply for a means-tested NHS bursary or supplementary grant, or a non means-tested loan as applicable.

For those students on the ScotGEM course your fees will be paid by SAAS. You can also apply for a 4 year 'return of service' bursary, a grant worth up to £16,000 in total (£4,000pa), in exchange for working in NHS Scotland for up to four years, which is administered by NES and can help with living costs.

If you are studying an accelerated medical degree at an institution in the rest of the UK, you can apply for a loan and living-costs grants for your years of study. You cannot receive a loan or bursary from SAAS to pay your tuition fees.

Studying elsewhere in the UK

No matter where you study in the UK, as a Scottish domiciled student you should apply to SAAS for funding and support. If you study a first degree at an institution in the rest of the UK, you are eligible to apply for the normal package of support from years one to four. In year five, SAAS will pay your tuition fees. You must remember to fill in an application for this to happen.

You may also wish to look at our England and Northern Ireland finance guides to see what other finance support you are eligible for on our [student finance webpage](#).

Students from elsewhere in the UK and wish to study in Scotland

England

Tuition fee loans: Universities in Scotland can charge English students the same rate of fees as those that apply in English universities. Tuition fee loans are available from Student Finance England to cover this cost. Terms and conditions associated with the loan for studying in Scotland are the same. Further details are available online:

www.gov.uk/get-undergraduate-student-loan

Maintenance loan: Students domiciled in England can apply to Student Finance England for a maintenance loan for your course in Scotland.

NHS bursary: The NHS bursary scheme will usually apply if you are domiciled in England but are studying at medical school in Scotland. However, the NHS Business Services Authority will assess your application and confirm with you individually. Further details are available on their website: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/student-services

Bursaries and other financial support from universities and colleges:

There are various grants, bursaries and scholarships available from most universities, all of which are non-repayable, such as a travel support grant:

www.gov.uk/travel-grants-students-england.

English domiciled students may be entitled to these depending upon their circumstances. It is well worth checking with the university you are attending/applying about what support they may be able to offer you.

Northern Ireland

Tuition fee loans: The SLC pays your tuition fee loan directly to your university or college in three instalments on your behalf. In Scotland this is up to £9,250. Students attending a private institution, which is publicly validated, will be eligible to receive a maximum tuition fee loan of £4,710. If you decide to apply for a tuition fee loan, check with your university or college to confirm the tuition fee so that you can ask for the right amount when you apply.

Financial support package: Northern Ireland students studying for a first primary degree in Scotland can apply for the standard financial support package. If you intend to study in England, Scotland or Wales, you should contact the relevant funding body for further information on the support available (see contact details on **page 22**).

Maintenance loan: The maximum maintenance support you can get depends on your circumstances whether you are living with your parents: up to £5250, living away from home and studying outside London and not with parents: £6776 or living in London and not with parents: £9492 or living abroad for at least one term as part of course up to £8078. This entitlement may be made up of a loan and a grant depending on your living circumstances.

NHS bursary for fifth year tuition fees: A non-means tested; up to £1,000 awarded. However, the maintenance loan is reduced if the bursary put toward for tuition fees. www.gov.uk/nhs-bursaries/eligibility

Bursaries and other financial support from universities and colleges: For further details on what student finance you may be eligible for please visit the Student Finance Northern Ireland website: www.studentfinanceneni.co.uk

Graduate Entry Medical course: If you are attending a four year graduate-entry medical course (fast-track course) in Scotland, you will not be eligible for a DoH healthcare bursary, tuition fee support or maintenance grant. You will be required to pay your own fees to the university. You can, however, apply for a maintenance loan through your local SFNI office for the duration of the course.

Wales

Tuition fee loans: Up to £9,250 is provided as a tuition fee loan.

Maintenance support: The maximum maintenance support you can get depends on your circumstances whether you are living with your parents: £9,950, living away from home and studying outside London: £11720 or living away from home and studying in London: £14635. This entitlement is made up of a loan and a grant.

Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG): Up to £1,500, depending on household income.

Extra help: You can get extra student finance if you are disabled or have children or adults that are dependent on you financially. These grants do not need to be paid back.

NHS bursaries: Applications for NHS bursaries are managed by the Student Awards Services in Wales. Once you've been offered an NHS-commissioned training place, Student Awards Services will write to tell you how to apply. Further details are available on their website: [Student Awards Services - NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership](#)

Bursaries and other financial support from universities and colleges: Some universities or colleges may offer discretionary bursaries or scholarships in addition to your maintenance loan and grants. The amount you qualify for is determined by your university/college. Contact the student support service at each university to see what additional financial help may be available to you.

Student Finance Wales also has support for travel grants, cost of medical insurance, visa costs and vaccinations.

For further details on what student finance you may be eligible for please visit the Student Finance Wales website: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Tuition fees

Scottish domiciled students studying in Scotland do not need to pay tuition fees for their first degree, these are paid by SAAS. You must apply to SAAS for payment of fees and these will be sent directly to your university. Details of how and when to apply are available on the [SAAS website](#). If you are studying elsewhere in the UK, you may be eligible to pay tuition fees but SAAS may be able to provide you a loan to help cover the cost of this.

If medicine is your second degree (whether you are on a 4-year accelerated course or a standard, longer course) you will not normally be eligible to apply for help with tuition fees, regardless of whether you received public funds previously. However, you can still apply to SAAS to pay tuition for your fifth year of study and onwards, this includes if you take an intercalated year. ScotGEM students with Home fee status will have their tuition fees paid for by Scottish Government and will not need to apply to SAAS. In addition, students may be able to apply for a means-tested maintenance loans from SAAS for the duration of the course. More information on this can be found on the [SAAS website](#).

Student loans

You do not have to take out a student loan, however they tend to make up the majority of most students' funding and student loans are cheaper than other types of finance, e.g. bank loans, overdrafts, credit cards etc. Student loans are the main source of support towards living costs and you should apply to SAAS for these. The amount of student loan you can get varies depending on your circumstances. SAAS will look at how much you and/or your parents/partner earn and decide how much you or your parents/partner are expected to pay and how much SAAS will give you.

SAAS produce an annual funding guide as well as a guide to student support; both outline the value of loans available for that academic year as well as the thresholds for parental/partner contributions. There is also a loan available to all students, regardless of household income; you can choose how much of this loan you want to take.

Some general information to be aware of when applying for a loan is outlined below. If you are a dependent student SAAS will use the following to work out your parental contribution:

- If your parents live together, it will use both of their incomes;
- If your parents are separated, divorced or no longer live together, it will use the income of the parent that you normally live with;
- If your parent lives with a partner or you have a step-parent, it will use their income as well as your parent.

If there are other dependent children in your household your parents' assessed contribution may be reduced. If you have siblings who are also receiving support from SAAS the parental contribution will only be expected to be made once, split across the siblings. SAAS will reduce the parental contribution for each sibling and split the balance equally between the students receiving support.

Previous study does not affect your entitlement to a student loan or to appropriate supplementary grants. You can apply for this help even if you have received previous support for a full-time higher education course. However, previous study does affect your entitlement to the Young Students' Bursary (YSB) and additional loans.

Repaying your loan

If you take out a student loan you will be expected to pay this back from the April after you graduate or leave your course, via the SLC (student loans company). The amount you repay each month depends on your earnings; the SLC works with HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) to collect payments straight from your salary. You can make extra voluntary payments straight to SLC to pay off your loan more quickly.

Although they are not commercial loans, you do pay interest on your student loan, although this is at a subsidised rate. Interest on the amount you owe is linked to inflation so the value of the amount you pay back will be the same in real terms as the value of the amount you borrowed. This will apply for as long as the loan lasts and will include any time when you are not studying or repaying the loan, as well as when you are repaying the loan.

Please contact the SLC to find out more:

[Student Loans Company – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

Postgraduate support

Eligibility

Postgraduate courses will be eligible for support if they are a taught postgraduate diploma or Masters programme delivered at a publicly funded institution (including eligible courses delivered by distance-learning). In addition, you must meet the following criteria:

- You must have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for the three years immediately before the first day of the first academic year of the course (the relevant date). For the majority of students who start their course in the autumn term, the relevant date is 1st August.
- You must also be ordinarily resident in Scotland on the relevant date.
- If you are not a UK national, you must also have 'settled status' in the UK (as set out in the Immigration Act 1971) on the relevant date. If you have

You will not be eligible for help with the cost of your tuition fees if you have already received support from UK public funds for a course of postgraduate study. However, if you have received support for a course of postgraduate study and did not receive a qualification you may still be eligible for support.

You may still be eligible if your previous postgraduate study was for advanced research of two years or more. Further information on full eligibility rules is available online:

www.saas.gov.uk/full-time

Postgraduate student loans

Living cost loans

Eligible full-time postgraduate students can apply for a living-cost loan up to £4,500. To be eligible for the living-cost loan, in addition to meeting the eligibility conditions, you must:

- Be under 60 on the first day of the first academic year of your course (normally 1 August). If you change course and are aged 60 or over on the relevant date of your second course, you will not be entitled to a student loan for your second course.

The living-cost loan is not available to part-time postgraduate students or EU nationals coming to Scotland to study.

Tuition fee loans

This funding available for postgraduates is a loan to help you pay some of your tuition fees up to a maximum of 7000 for full-time courses. The loan will be in the same terms as a student loan for living costs.

If you withdraw from your course, you may not be eligible for a loan to help with the cost of your fees. However, your university may still charge you fees for the time you have been on the course.

For the majority of students who start their course in the autumn term, the relevant date is 1 August.

You will not be eligible for help with the cost of your tuition fees if you have already received support from UK public funds for a course of postgraduate study.

Grants and bursaries

Young Students' Bursary

If you are classed as a 'young dependent student', e.g. a school-leaver, you may be eligible for the YSB (Young Students' Bursary). This does not need to be repaid and can be used for general living costs whilst you study. The value of the YSB changes depending on household income. Please contact SAAS for current bursary values and income thresholds.

Independent Student' Bursary

If you are an 'independent student', e.g. you're married, over 25 or living with a partner, you may be eligible for the ISB (Independent Student Bursary). This works similarly to the YSB as an amount of your loan which does not need to be paid back. The value of the bursary is dependent on household income. Please contact SAAS for current bursary values and income thresholds.

Care Experienced Students' Bursary

If you have been looked after by a UK local authority; before the age of 18 and you are under the age of 26 on the first day of the first academic year of your course, you will be eligible to claim a bursary of £8,100. This bursary replaces the current income-assessed living cost loan and bursary package. As such, if you apply for and meet the criteria to receive the CESB, you will not be eligible to apply for a student loan.

Black Heart Foundation Scholarship

The Scholarship Programme awards several annual bursaries to qualified candidates with their educational endeavours primarily in the UK and US but is open to considering work in other education resource-limited geographies. The demand for scholarships is high and therefore submissions that are closely aligned to the aims of the Foundation have the highest chance of success.

[SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME – The Black Heart Foundation](#)

Akindolie Medical Scholarship

This privately-funded scholarship is specifically aimed at supporting UK medical students from a minority ethnic background, a group that is under-represented within UK medical schools.

The scholarship comprises of one bursary of £1,500 together with a year's leadership mentoring and support. In exceptional circumstances, more than one scholarship award may be made, the amount of any additional award being discretionary.

[Medical Scholarship \(funkeabimbola.com\)](https://www.funkeabimbola.com)

ScotGEM (Scottish Graduate Entry Medicine)

A 'return-of-service' bursary worth up to £16,000 in total is available for ScotGEM students in exchange for working in the NHS in Scotland for up to four years.

The scheme, administered by NHS Education for Scotland, will offer ScotGEM students a bursary of £4,000 per student per annum in return for a year of service up to a maximum of four bursaries and four equivalent years of service.

For students opting to participate, the 'return of service' arrangement will become effective at the beginning of year 1 of their Foundation Training. Further information is available via: [Scottish Graduate Entry Medicine \(ScotGEM\) \(nhs.scot\)](https://nhs.scot)

Supplementary grants

There are supplementary grants to help with living costs for both dependent and independent students. The extra support you can get depends on your personal circumstances. You do not have to pay back the supplementary grants unless you lose your entitlement to them. Supplementary grants include:

- Dependents' Grant
- Lone Parents' Grant
- Disabled Students Allowance

For further information on these grants please visit the [SAAS website](#).

Students who are permanently resident in England are eligible for a travel grant to cover the cost of travel to clinical placements.

www.gov.uk/travel-grants-students-england/eligibility

Institutional level support

If you have applied for all the support you are entitled to from SAAS but are still finding it difficult to meet your costs, you can apply to your university for help. Each university will have its own finance office, usually run by the local student union,, who will be able to provide you with support and further help.

Discretionary fund

Students who are studying in Scotland and have financial difficulties can apply to their university's discretionary or hardship fund. This is a fund given to each university by the Scottish Government to help students who are in financial difficulty. Your university will take into consideration your individual circumstances to determine your eligibility. You can apply if you are short of funding from other sources for essential living costs, for an unexpected financial crisis, or if you are considering leaving your course due to financial difficulties.

Usually specific groups of students are considered a priority to accessing funds including: students with children, independent students, students with low income families, final year students or disabled students. However, universities encourage any students facing financial difficulty to apply.

Childcare fund

Funding is given to each Scottish university by the Scottish Government to help students toward the cost of registered or formal childcare providers, including childminders, after-school clubs, day care, sitter services and providers of preschool and education. Your university is responsible for deciding which students should receive payments and what the value of these should be.

Local bursaries/scholarships

Many universities also offer a number of local bursaries/scholarships of varying values. These usually have specific restrictions that apply. You should visit your university website for further information.

Your university may ask SAAS for information related to your application for student support. SAAS can only share this information with your consent. Your parents or husband, wife, civil partner or partner will also need to agree to let SAAS share their information if it was used to assess your student support.

Approved absence

If you have to temporarily suspend your studies due to illness or because you have to care for someone, you can continue to receive support up to the end of the academic year that you suspended. After recovering or ending your caring duties, you may have to wait until the next academic year to re-join your course. If that happens, you may be able to claim Jobseeker's Allowance and Housing Benefit, for no more than a year, until the day before you re-join your course of study. If you need to suspend your studies for an entire academic session you will not be able to get support from SAAS during this time. Instead you may wish to contact the Department of Work and Pensions as you may be able to claim **Employment Support Allowance**. With the rollout of Universal Credit still ongoing across the UK, your specific circumstances may be affected by where you live. Consult your local authority website for up-to-date and locally-relevant information.

Reassess your support

If your or your household's income changes during the academic year, then you could be entitled to more support. SAAS will reassess cases where the household income has reduced by 15% or more since the last tax year.

You'll need to complete an estimate of income form and SAAS will reassess your award to check if you are entitled to more support. It will also reassess your support if your parent or husband, wife, civil partner or partner dies, if their income had been used to assess your support.

Funding electives

Many students choose to go on an elective placement abroad towards the end of their degree. There are many organisations which help support medical students, either by helping them plan their placement (for example **[Work the World | Healthcare Elective Placements Abroad](#)**), or to help cover associated costs including fees, travel, accommodation and health insurance.

The Royal Medical Benevolent Fund has a good list of charities and trusts which offer funding specifically for electives: **[Bursaries and grants for your elective - Royal Medical Benevolent Fund \(rmbf.org\)](#)**

Other sources of funding

Overdrafts

Most student accounts offer an interest-free overdraft. This is a useful source of extra money while you're studying. The amount you can borrow usually increases with each year of study and doesn't cost you anything while you're a student. However, once you graduate the banks will start charging you interest on the amount you still have outstanding. If you think you need an overdraft, it is worthwhile shopping around for one that gives you a year or more interest free after you graduate, to allow you to pay it off from your wages without incurring extra costs. It is also very important to be aware of the limits of your overdraft and stay within these – hefty fees can quickly build up if you don't.

Professional studies loan

A few high street banks offer these (the number has reduced due to the economic climate). However, it is usually a requirement that you hold a student account with them in order to take advantage. It is worth shopping around to see who is offering the best deal and switching your current account, as this could save you a lot of money in the long term. Interest rates, fees and eligibility vary for each bank.

They will usually allow you to borrow up to around £15,000-£20,000 to fund the cost of your course and your cost of living. The interest rate is usually lower than other commercial loans. You will require an appointment with a specialist graduate manager to apply for one. You will also be required to sign up to a payment plan starting sometime after you graduate, to make sure you can afford the repayments. They are also more flexible with repayments than other loans, allowing you to pay back more if you have extra money. If you are sensible, they can be a very useful source of extra income while you are studying. Websites which compare bank accounts and credit cards (such as [Money Saving Expert](#)) are helpful when trying to find the best account or card to suit your needs. These sites can also offer you advice about mortgages, utility bills and commercial discounts (such as restaurants) helping you to save money!

Commercial loans

When deciding which bank to open your student account with make sure you shop around as many of them offer different deals and offers to attract new students. Please be aware that any commercial loans generally attract a high APR (annual percentage interest rate). This may be fixed or variable – remember that a variable rate can be lower than a fixed rate but is riskier as interest rates can rise. When considering taking out a commercial loan, check the repayment schedule as it can be inflexible and remember to make sure your repayments are affordable. Martin Lewis' Money Saving Expert is a good place to start to compare the pros and cons of different loans (moneysavingexpert.com).

DWP (Department of Work and Pensions)

The DWP assesses students' entitlements to income-related benefits. Full-time students are generally not eligible to claim benefits. But full-time students with dependants and students with disabilities may be eligible in certain circumstances. It is important to discuss this with your institution student advisor as well as with your local DWP advisors.

Tax credits

Students and their families could receive more money through tax credits. Students with children are entitled to claim Child Tax Credit which HM Revenue and Customs will pay to those who are responsible for at least one child, whether or not they are in paid work. Students who work more than 16 hours a week could also be eligible for Working Tax Credit. Extra help is also available to those who have a disability or who are caring for children with a disability.

You can find out more information by calling the HM Revenue and Customs helpline on **0845 300 3900** and via the [HMRC website](#)

Credit cards

Most banks will also offer you a student credit card, which may seem like a good idea at the time but should only be considered as a last resort. The interest charged on these is very high and it's easy to get carried away and spend more than you can afford to pay back. If you do find yourself with credit card debt remember you can always switch to a different brand offering a 0% interest rate for a period of time while you work out how to pay it off. Make sure you cancel your other card though. [Money Saving Expert](#) is again a good resource if you find yourself in this situation.

Charities

There are many charities which provide support to students. You may find it useful to check the Directory of Grant Making Trusts published by the DSC (Directory of Social Change), the Grants Register published by Palgrave Macmillan, or the Charities Digest. SAAS also maintains a [Register of Education Endowments](#) containing information on Scottish trusts that it knows about. You can only get help from a trust if you meet the eligibility conditions of that trust.

The conditions vary from trust to trust, and only the trustees can decide if you are eligible. For instance, conditions can relate to:

- where you live
- or were born
- what schools you went to
- your age
- the course you are taking
- and the college or university you go to

SAAS will search the register for you, if you fill in and send them an enquiry form. It will send you the names and addresses of any trusts to which you may be able to apply for help. You then apply directly to the trusts.

You may also want to visit the website at www.postgraduatesearch.com/funding to look at the database of undergraduate scholarship awards that academic institutions, commercial organisations and charitable trusts offer. The following is a non-exhaustive list of charities which provide help to medical students and which may be able to provide you with extra sources of funding, depending on your individual circumstances:

BMA Charities Trust Fund

Provides grants to medical students who are taking medicine as a second degree and are not eligible for statutory funding.

<https://bmacharities.org.uk/>

The Carnegie Trust

Funding for both undergraduate (fee assistance, vacation scholarships and undergraduate expeditions) and postgraduate students. Applicants must be attending Scottish universities, and be Scottish by birth, descent or residence.

www.carnegie-trust.org

The Foulkes Foundation

Grants for science graduates taking medicine at PhD or equivalent level, with intention to contribute to medical research. Grants of up to £2,000 p.a., tenable for up to three years.

www.foulkes-foundation.org

Gilchrist Educational Trust

Will help those carrying out elective study as well as those facing financial difficulties and struggling to complete their degree in their final year.

www.gilchristgrants.org.uk/grants-to-individuals.html

Medical Women's Federation

Awards a variety of modest awards and prizes throughout the year to female medical students, particularly for electives. Please be aware you must be a member of MWF in order to apply for assistance.

www.medicalwomensfederation.org.uk

Professionals Aid Guild

Awards a one-off monetary gift to assist with living expenses to those who have degree level qualification or equivalent (please see link for additional criteria).

www.pcac.org.uk

Royal Medical Benevolent Fund

Offers interest-free loans to students facing financial hardship, and their dependents. You must be in your final two years of study to apply.

www.rmbf.org

Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust

Awards grants of £400-£1000 to medical students aged 24. If you are a postgraduate student, or applying for a place on a postgraduate degree course, you must hold a first- or strong 2:1 honours degree (at least 65%) from a UK institution (or its equivalent from a non-UK institution) or hold a Masters degree from a UK institution, or its overseas equivalent.

www.stapleytrust.org

Sidney Perry Foundation

Primarily helps first-degree students, offering grants of up to £1000.

www.the-sidney-perry-foundation.co.uk

Top tips

Almost every student will have some kind of financial difficulty during their time at university, so never feel like you are alone.

Here are some top tips:

- Contact SAAS to check your entitlement to support – the rules relating to support are complicated and students are often misinformed. Make sure you know what support you are eligible to receive. If you are in any doubt about your entitlement, contact SAAS
- Have your support reassessed if your parental income changes significantly
- Apply for support as early as possible – you can apply from April of the year that you want to study
- Be aware of the closing dates for applying for support – don't submit your application late or you may not receive any support. See the closing dates section on the SAAS website for more information
- Seek help early on – make sure you always seek help when you first notice things getting more difficult. Bad debts don't go away, no matter how hard you try to ignore them. It's better to confront the situation, be honest, get things sorted out and concentrate on your studies. Medical school is hard enough without extra financial pressures
- Speak to your faculty – it is important to let the faculty at your medical school know if you think your financial troubles are affecting your work or course performance. They are often very sympathetic and may be able to point you in the direction of funding available specifically at your medical school
- Investigate charities or local bursaries/scholarships you may be entitled to and apply early, all universities in Scotland have additional discretionary funding for students in hardship. See the list of university contact pages to apply for funding at your own university
- Shop around – shop around when deciding which bank account or credit card to open which mobile phone to buy or which utility company to use, as many companies offer different deals and offers to attract new customers

Check out online resources: www.rmbf.org is a website funded by the RMBF (Royal Medical Benevolent Fund), a charity which helps doctors who are experiencing financial difficulties. It offers advice on how to spend less and where further funding is available from. Another helpful resource is www.moneysavingexpert.com which offers practical tips and hints on a variety of subjects and has a dedicated section for students.

Keeping a close eye on where your money is going is important. Whilst external budgeting apps and online-only banks were early adopters, most accounts now offer a spending reports or money manager feature. Making use of merchant coding they can categorise spending which may help you and show a total money in and out per month. While this doesn't increase the funds available to you it can help identify patterns of spending you may not be aware of.

The same merchant codes can be used by some banks to block certain types of spending. Gambling companies based in the UK can, for example, be excluded with a 48-72 hour cool off period if you wish to remove the spending block. Not all banks have this feature, meaning you may have to switch provider if you want your account to be prevented from being used for such transactions.

If you are concerned about spending habits that seem out of control such as gambling, online purchases, or alcohol then support is available.

It may be that you have already encountered money problems because of these or other types of addictive spending. University support services and the NHS have become better at recognising these types of addiction and how best to help. The BMA advice helpline is also available for all medical students.

Contacts

For more detail on any information in this guide, the following contacts may be helpful.

BMA (British Medical Association)

BMA members can contact BMA Scotland on **0300 123 1233**
or visit [bma.org.uk](https://www.bma.org.uk).

SAAS (Student Awards Agency for Scotland)

Website: www.saas.gov.uk

Email queries: [Contact us - SAAS](#)

Telephone: 0300 555 0505

SLC (Student Loans Company)

Call **0141 306 2000** or visit www.slc.co.uk

University finance pages

University of Edinburgh

www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/fees-finance

Glasgow University

www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/registry/finance

Aberdeen University

www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/finance

Dundee University

www.dundee.ac.uk/student-services/student-funding

University of St Andrews

[Fees and funding - Study at St Andrews - University of St Andrews](#)

BMA Scotland

British Medical Association Scotland,
14 Queen St, Edinburgh EH2 1LL
bma.org.uk

REF: 20230383

© British Medical Association, 2023