

Brain Sciences Carers Fund policy

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1. Background

Being able to work or study whilst dealing with parental and other caring responsibilities is essential for a healthy working culture, where everyone can achieve their full potential. UCL has identified a college-wide need to improve the consistency of support experienced by staff and students around childcare and caring responsibilities.

In response to this need, UCL created a COVID Carers Fund for 2020-21 which was supplemented by a COVID Carers Fund within the Faculty of Brain Sciences for PhD and Professional Doctoral students to support their caring responsibilities exacerbated due to the COVID pandemic (for example, covering childcare costs when schools closed).

For the 2021-2022 academic year and as part of the Faculty EDI strategy, we have revised the form and guidelines for this fund, to include all staff as well as PhD and Professional Doctoral students. **The fund will allow staff and PGR students to attend meetings, conferences, workshops and events outside normal working patterns.** This pilot will be evaluated at the beginning of September 2022.

Please, note that applicants having access to grant funding where caring expenses are allowed should use such grant funds in preference to this scheme. Please, see link below.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/policies-procedures/accordion-expenses/annex-5>

2. Eligibility

In order to be eligible for the FBS Caring Fund you need to:

2.1. be either a member of staff (academics, researcher assistants, teaching fellows, professional services and technical staff) or a PhD or Professional Doctoral student within the Faculty of Brain Sciences.

2.2 provide care for someone who is dependent on you (including children or other relatives)

2.3 be required to attend a work meeting outside your normal working pattern that will incur additional financial costs

3. Procedure

3.1. Complete the FBS Carers Fund application form via Microsoft Forms [here](#) and inform the EDI team when completed at fbs.edi@ucl.ac.uk at least three weeks before the event.

3.2. A Faculty-level panel will consider the applications on a “first-come-first-served” basis until the fund is exhausted in a given financial year (i.e. by end July 2022)

3.3 Successful applicants will be notified via email, and applicants should claim via [expenses](#). Please contact fbs.edi@ucl.ac.uk for the project code to charge expenses to.

4. Conditions

4.1. For the purposes of this fund, ‘Caring’ can mean childcare, care of elderly or any other family members or dependants requiring help.

4.2. Claims up to £500 will be considered per person, per year. In exceptional circumstances there will be scope for higher awards to be made, at the discretion of the panel. If in doubt, submit a request for the higher amount.

4.3. A brief report of max 200 words should be submitted to the fund (fbs.edi@ucl.ac.uk) within a month of the work activity.

4.4. Childcare or caring responsibility costs may only be claimed in association with work activities undertaken outside of normal working patterns (e.g., childcare or eldercare costs while the primary carer attends a conference, training or meeting requiring them to work outside usual contracted hours).

4.5. Some examples of how the grant could be used are: extended hours for a child-minder or a care worker to cover time when arriving home later than normal; babysitter costs; overnight care costs; travel expenses for friends or relatives to come to you to look after dependants; after school activities; clubs or play schemes.

4.6. There must be an auditable record such as conference attendance confirmation and receipts for the cost of the childcare or caring responsibility. These must be submitted in order for the claim to be processed. Applicants are advised to submit their claims with receipts as soon as possible once expenditure has been incurred.

4.7. Grants will be made on a “first-come-first-served” basis until the fund is exhausted in a given financial year (i.e. by end July 2022).

4.8. The allocation of awards will be decided by a small Faculty panel chaired by the FBS Vice- Dean (EDI). Priority will be given to applicants without alternative access to funds.

4.9. In the event of cancellation or non-attendance applicants should notify the Faculty EDI Team ASAP (fbs.edi@ucl.ac.uk) so that the funds can be redistributed.

4.10. The Fund and its conditions will be reviewed by the beginning of the academic year 2022- 2023.