

University Student Trust Fund Report 2024–2025

Thanks to your generosity and that of all our valued donors, the University Student Trust Fund has continued to step in and be a lifeline for students this year. At a time when the rising cost of living is placing unprecedented pressure on many in our communities, it is especially felt by students. Your support is helping them stay focused on what matters most: their education and future.



Across the UK, students are facing increasing hardship. National figures from the National Union of Students and the House of Commons Library show that 14–18% of students now rely on food banks; this is double the rate seen just two years ago. This sad picture has been reflected locally, with a rising number of student referral vouchers issued for the Hatfield Foodbank.

It was precisely because of this growing need that, with your support and funds from the hardship budget, we launched The Pantry pilot in 2024–25. Designed to provide immediate assistance, The Pantry offers simple, free access to essential food and hygiene products on campus, within a safe, discreet, and supportive setting.

Through this new initiative, we were able to provide targeted support to 250 of our most vulnerable students identified through our Widening Access and Student Support team. Each student was personally welcomed by a member of the Student Finance team, who assisted with choosing essential items, but also provided guidance and signposting for wider support services, reinforcing that they are not alone.

The Pantry embodies the University of Hertfordshire's values of compassion, community and student-focused care. It offers practical support at a time when it is most needed and gives students the stability to continue their studies.

Our goal is to ensure The Pantry becomes self-sustaining through staff and supporter donations, ensuring long-term help is available at critical moments.

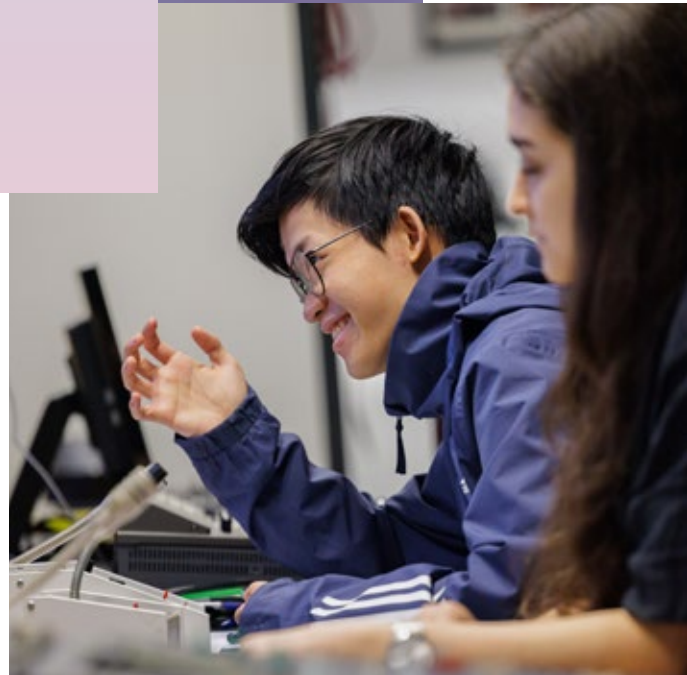


The University Financial Assistance Fund

In 2024–25, we supported 335 students through the University Financial Assistance Fund (UFAF), providing a total of £540,000 in financial support, with an average grant of £1,612.

The majority of applicants (97%) were full-time students, with 56% living in private accommodation, 39% in university halls, and 5% were in temporary accommodation or experiencing homelessness at the time of their application.

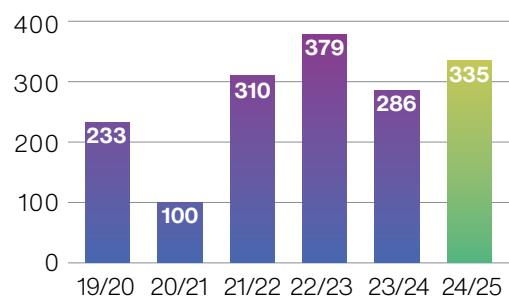
- 81% of applicants were undergraduate students
- 18% in their first year
- 39% continuing their studies
- 43% in their final year.



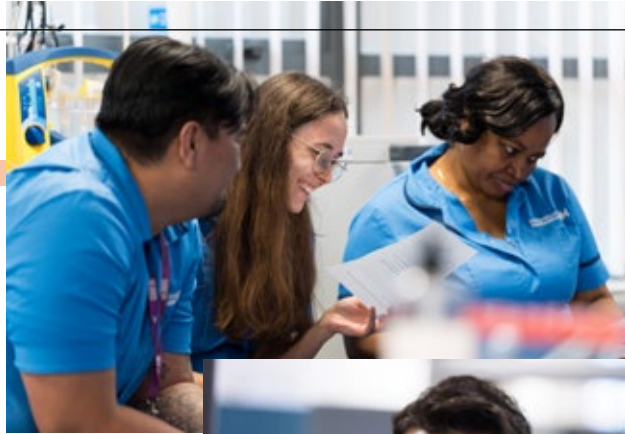
More students in their later years of study are now seeking help, showing that financial pressures can intensify as the demands of studying increase. Your generosity has allowed students to keep going when maintenance loans and part-time working income no longer stretch far enough. With demand growing year-on-year, ongoing support is essential to ensure these students can continue their journey to graduation.

Despite a 3% (£16,000) decrease in available funding following a reduction in Government funding, we took a flexible and impact-led approach to student support. By diversifying what we offered, including access to our Student Pantry to those in greatest need and adjusting the grant values, we were able to support a higher number of students compared to the year before.

Awards given year on year



The difference you have made



If I repair my laptop, then I don't have enough money to pay my rent, so the grant helped a lot. £200 to repair my laptop – thank you so much for the support.

After the award, I felt grateful and motivated to continue working hard towards my academic goals. This award greatly helped me cover expenses such as my weekly food bill and transport costs.

The financial support that I received helped me pay for the transport expense during my placement. Because of this, I could work fewer hours and had more time to study.



It gave me a sense of assurance that I wouldn't need to worry about finances for a while and I could study and focus on other things.

Receiving this award was tremendously helpful during a challenging time in my life. I was struggling financially and had no job or regular income to meet my daily needs. The award provided crucial financial support. This assistance kept me from becoming depressed and allowed me to focus on my studies without the constant stress of making ends meet.

Thanks for your support. I used this for paying bills and DBS check required for my course.

While we strive to support all eligible students, rising demand for this fund means we simply cannot meet every request. To maximise the impact of available resources, priority is given to specific groups based on clear guidelines.

Supporting Postgraduate Research

As part of the University's Doctoral College, the University Student Trust Fund also contributed to supporting 52 postgraduate research students in 2024-25. This funding enabled participation in conferences, acquisition of data analysis tools, and access to relevant training or equipment to ensure their research remained impactful and effective.

The writing retreat offered an opportunity to step away from daily professional demands and concentrate on my studies within a structured and distraction-free environment. This dedicated time allowed me to make meaningful progress with my writing, refine my research focus, and set achievable goals for the next stages of my doctoral journey. Overall, the writing retreat was instrumental in advancing my research progress and strengthening my academic resilience.

24-25 Health, Medical and Life Science
postgraduate research student



Thank you for your allowing us to step in at those critical moments for students






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