

Student Guide to Applying for a Bursary

Academic Year: 2020-21

Introduction:

This document is intended to offer support to two main groups. Firstly, it is intended to provide existing students with a guide to how they can access funding from an abundance of sources within the college and across the University. Secondly though, it is also intended to reassure prospective applicants and their families, especially those from lower income backgrounds, that help is available at Robinson and that this help does not require students to jump through a ridiculous number of hoops. The University estimates that home students should allow for £9,670 in living costs for the 2020-21 academic year and £11,230 for overseas students. Many might feel that University (or Cambridge in particular) is not for them because they can't afford it. For potential applicants, it is the RCSA's hope that this guide will reassure you that money need not be an issue when considering Robinson College.

This guide aims to provide a detailed explanation of the application process to attempt to demystify it.

As a first port of call your tutor or members of the RCSA welfare committee will be happy to offer some advice on most issues but for financial matters in particular the following people within college are best placed to help:

- **Financial Tutor:** Wing Commander Peter Milloy (pdgm2)
- **Senior Tutor:** Dr D A Woodman (daw45)
- **Senior Tutor's Assistant:** Keisha Sharp (ks610)
- **Finance Assistant:** Jane Hall (jh814) - especially for Student Loan Company issues

In addition to this, many departments offer prizes for examination results or competitions which have not been covered while the University compiles its own database of funding which can be found on the University website.

Please remember there are a number of people you can reach out to if you need financial help and that support is available if you need it! Don't suffer in silence if you feel you may face financial pressures, you certainly will not be considered a burden!

The Process:

1. The website is refreshed over the summer vacation period.
2. An application form for the current/upcoming academic year is uploaded to the website before the start of Michaelmas term.
3. Tutors are briefed at the first Tutors' Meeting (first week of term) about the bursary application process.

4. Early in term the Senior Tutor's Assistant sends out an email to all students explaining the possibility of a bursary, gives information pointing to the website and suggests those who have needs to discuss with their tutor. **Please remember you are free to discuss issues with *any* tutor if for any reason you do not feel comfortable talking to your assigned tutor.**
5. Forms are completed as word documents with drop-down menus and guidance of what is required.
6. Closing date is usually the last day of Michaelmas term/around this time.
7. Students discuss their situation with their tutor and hopefully gain tutorial support. If this proves difficult, students are welcome to come to the RCSA to share their concerns about getting this support.
8. Forms with tutor's signature are forwarded to Senior Tutor's Assistant for registration.
9. The financial tutor reads the applications they come in and arrange to interview *all* applicants. These interviews in the 20-21 academic year took place over zoom but are usually conducted in person.
10. The Awards Committee is chaired by the Deputy Warden and members include the Senior Tutor, a Graduate Tutor and the Financial Tutor. It meets a couple of weeks later/after the end of Michaelmas term. (e.g. 15th of December in 2020).
11. The decisions of the Committee are passed to all applicants within a day or two and shared with the Finance Manager in the College Office.
12. Applicants who have been given a monetary award are asked to get in contact with a specific member of the College Office staff to tell her whether they want a credit on their Lent term bill or a payment to their bank account.
13. Awards also may also include free vacation accommodation and the details are passed to the College office for them to action.
14. Some awards are made from specific funds/for specific subjects (for example The Mathers Science grants) and the sponsoring companies wish to communicate directly with awardees (usually to offer some sort of visit/seminar/work experience)
15. The Development Office sometimes wishes to contact selected awardees to provide some words to pass to our donors so they can see their donations are making a real difference.

In addition to this, members of college who have applied or are thinking of applying for a bursary are welcome to reach out to a member of the RCSA for help/advice or come to the RCSA with any issues they may be having.

Extra Information:

- While the majority of the application process occurs during/directly after Michaelmas term, tutors have been reminded that if a student is facing financial hardship in Lent or Easter term then financial support can still be provided.
- Requests for subsidised or free vacation accommodation can also be submitted at any point during the academic year in response to financial hardship.

- Alongside bursaries, there is also funds which aim to help students receive the full university experience which are also visible on the RCSA Funding document
- The Cambridge Bursary is also available for students from low-income backgrounds which is a non-repayable grant of up to £3500 (more information about this can be found on the University-wide funding page which is linked below)

Useful Links:

- <https://www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/college-life/academic-life/student-finance>
- <https://www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/college-life/staff-list>
- <https://www.rcsa.co.uk/docs>
- <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/fees-and-finance/financial-support/cambridge-financial-support>