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## **2009/2010 UCD STUDENT CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE FUND Guidelines**

The University recognises that some students with family responsibilities, particularly in relation to childcare cost, may face significant financial difficulties. In response to this need, the University has put in place a UCD Student Childcare Assistance Fund to assist those student parents most in need of financial assistance. The primary purpose of the Fund is to assist student parents for whom the funding is necessary to continue with their studies. The committee works with values of respect, fairness and good stewardship. The committee meets regularly and assesses each application individually and is empowered to act with discretion in exceptional applications. All information will be received with sensitivity. All expenditure through this Fund is subject to stringent eligibility guidelines and audit requirements. The requirements and criteria are as follows:

1. In applying for childcare assistance all students must be registered on a UCD programme of at least one year's duration leading to an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification. Under the European Social Fund guidelines, the programme must be at least Grade 8 under Higher Education Authority guidelines.
2. It is essential that the applicant is in 'good standing' with the University in regard to fees.
3. All applicants must provide a birth certificate of the relevant child highlighting that they are the parents. For the purposes of this fund the understanding of the word 'child' is a minor ie under 18 years of age.
4. All students are required to fill out the UCD Student Childcare Assistance Fund Application Form, with an outline of their budget for the academic year and essential supporting documentation and a letter outlining their case for support. Incomplete applications cannot be considered at committee meetings.
5. The UCD Student Childcare Assistance Fund Committee may seek further information and relevant documentation from applicants, if this is deemed necessary by the Committee to make an informed decision. Students should make the committee aware of any relevant changes to their financial circumstances. The committee may review its decision in the light of any new information that comes to its attention.

6. The status of the other parent in regard to childcare must be established, unless the student parent is in receipt of One Parent Family Payment from the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The committee must be informed of the contribution of the other parent to the care and financial support of the child/ren, including supporting documentation.
7. Applications should be accompanied by an invoice/receipt from the crèche or registered childminder, including details of cost and dates covered. Registration with the 'National Childminding Association' is acceptable. Monthly Invoices will be required and payments are made in arrears directly to the Childcare provider.
8. Allocation of funds will be on the basis of financial need. The most recent P21 or social welfare statement must be included. For example in the academic year 2008/2009 a gross joint parental income of €39,000 was the threshold, in line with Local Authority Grants. As most applicants can only supply a P21 for the previous year eg 2008 we make an assessment on this information. If an applicant has had a severe financial change eg other parent redundancy; and provides complete documentation the committee may be able to assist them in the current year.
9. There is a maximum payment, depending on the demand from available resources. Applicants receive half of their childcare costs or this maximum, whichever is lower. This may be subject to change from time to time. As a guideline in assessing the payment thresholds the committee is using the fees schedule of the Oakmount crèche. The maximum limit will be linked to the sum of half of the fees in Oakmount. (€488.5 euro or €455) Where a family has more than one child a maximum threshold will apply (€630 euro)
10. The UCD Student Childcare Assistance Fund Committee will process all applications.
11. Assistance will be paid for one complete academic year, including the revision week and the examination period. This is subject to the student remaining registered throughout the year with UCD.
12. The assistance may be paid from the start of September each year, applications received after November 1<sup>st</sup> will not be back-dated however.
13. The subsidy may be paid during the out-of-term weeks, if the student is working on a thesis, or doing laboratory work, or on work experience/clinical placement that is considered part of the degree requirement and unpaid or within the threshold set by the Fund.