

NIAS STUDENT HARDSHIP RELIEF (SHR)

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1. ABOUT NIAS

Founded in 2000, the National institute for African studies (NIAS) is a non-profit think tank that advocates public policy initiatives and education schemes. The institute has grown into a research organisation with of offices in London, UK and Abuja, Nigeria.

NIAS works with government agencies, local authorities, government – regulated industries and private sector clients to provide innovative, sustainable and economical solutions across a broad spectrum of business activities. Our teams focus on a wide range of multidisciplinary issues providing professional services in spheres of academic, governmental and public agencies.

2. STUDENT HARDSHIP RELIEF (SHR)

2.1 Outline

The NIAS Student Hardship Relief (SHR) is a discretionary Relief provided by NIAS to help African students who are experiencing genuine and unavoidable financial difficulties and who are struggling with their living costs.

The main aim of the Relief is to provide some relief from financial hardship for African students and students who study African-related subjects and support these apprentices in continuing their hard work.

The SHR is a discretionary grant which offers financial support of up to £1,000 per academic year which does or does not need to be paid back, depending on the amount requested.

This Relief is intended to assist with general living and course-related costs.

All applications for the SHR are means-tested by NIAS and not all applications are successful.

2.2 Background and Aims

The SHR is funded entirely by voluntary donations as well as by any other individual or entity wanting to assist NIAS community members who have found themselves in financial difficulty through no fault of their own.

The Relief aims to cover 3 key areas:

- To supplement income during a course
- For financial assistance to finish a course
- Support students to manage existing finances more effectively

2.3 How can the Relief help?

You may receive help in the following circumstances:

- Hardship arising from genuine, unforeseen or unexpected circumstances for which you have not been able to plan
- Financial difficulties resulting from a genuine shortfall of income and essential expenditure
- Short term financial hardship (e.g. delays with Student Finance)

2.4 What does the Relief provide?

- Support to African students to ensure that they are able to complete their studies
- Interest-free loans
- Funds for basic living expenses
- Support with finding and securing accommodation
- Clothing and food
- *Paid employment at NIAS locations such as:*
 - Shop assistant
 - Cleaner
 - Research assistant
 - Social media assistant/ content creator
 - Events assistant

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Who can apply?

- Students currently studying in the UK
- Students who have already registered and who meet the following general criteria
- Students who are able to prove that they planned to have at least £174 per week available to cover general living costs
- Full-time undergraduates unable to receive statutory support
- Students who have had a change in their circumstances
- Students who have been assessed as at risk of discontinuing their studies due to financial difficulties
- African students who do not qualify for UK funding or emergency support

3.2 Criteria

Any applicant must:

- be registered as a student at the time of application
- be enrolled in a recognised degree or diploma programme of study
- have completed a minimum of ONE term of their current programme
- have paid their tuition fees in full or be up to date with the instalment payment plan
- be progressing at a minimum of 50% (60 credits) of a full-time degree course
- have already agreed overdraft measures in place with their bank

Those NOT eligible for award of funds include those:

- studying on a distance learning course
- who have insufficient arrangements to fund studies at point of entry
- requiring financial assistance with research and/or fieldwork which are expected components of the course
- needing assistance towards repaying debts

These lists are not exhaustive and all applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Note: NIAS reserves the right to request the return of funds if you have been found to make a fraudulent claim, have taken early withdrawal or have used an award for the purposes not intended. Any future instalments after your withdrawal will be cancelled.

4. GUIDANCE ON MAKING AN APPLICATION

4.1 How to apply

Once you are certain that you meet the relevant eligibility criteria, you must complete the application form below, sign the declaration then send along with all the necessary evidence specified on the form.

4.2 Evidence and supporting documents

Applicants must be able to show evidence of their previous and present financial situation and demonstrate why this has deteriorated. Please ensure that you include all documents requested within the application form to show income, expenditure and change of circumstances. We cannot process an application that is in any way incomplete. Such documents may include, but not be limited to:

- most recent 3 months' bank statements of all UK and EU bank accounts held, including a current balance
- confirmation of funding e.g. letter from Student Finance
- tenancy agreement if you are living in the private sector

4.3 Will my application be successful?

Submitting an application does not guarantee an award of funds, as funds are limited, though you will be notified of the outcome in any instance. Unsuccessful applications unfortunately cannot be appealed.

4.4 Can I apply more than once in a given academic year?

Yes, however should you need to reapply to the Relief it will only be considered if there has been a significant change in your circumstances and you will be asked to evidence these changes. When re-applying to the Relief you will need to complete the income and expenditure form again. You will also be required to evidence that you have been applying for work.

Sources:

1. [Endowment Fund](#)
2. Pearson College London (https://nationalinstitute.sharepoint.com/personal/andrej_africanstudies_org_uk/Documents/NIAS/Creative%20Campus/Application%20Pack%20-%20Hardship%20fund.pdf?CT=1601285900547&OR=ItemsView)
3. Royal Holloway - University of London
4. The Aberystwyth University