



BURSARY POLICY 2023/24

Wac Arts provides an accessible, affordable Arts Programme for both children and young, engaging those who face the greatest physical and socio-economic barriers to participation. In practice two principles are used to inform our decision-making:

1. Classes and activities are priced at levels to ensure they are affordable for lower income households.
2. In our class fee structure, equity is paramount as everyone is charged the same rate, irrespective of their financial background or capacity to contribute more.

Following a period of research, we are making a commitment that our standard class fees (Weekend and Evening classes only) for Drama, Dance, Singing, Songwriting, Percussion, Filmmaking, Animation and Art & Design will be capped against income earned for 30 minutes of work, at the National Living Wage. For example, since April 2023 this has been £10.42 per hour, being £5.21 per 30 minutes. Therefore, we are setting a policy that our standard class fee will not exceed this amount. To be clear we are not increasing fees to this level, but committing the organisation to a policy of capping fees against the yardstick of National Living Wage, to ensure it remains affordable for generations to come. We recognise however that for some people, even this may represent a barrier to entry. This policy sets out the financial support available to people with specific circumstances and the eligibility criteria for a Wac Arts bursary.

Introduction

1. Wac Arts endeavours to optimise the use of the Bursary Fund to provide meaningful support to prospective and current members facing financial barriers which hinder engagement with activities.
2. The bursary fund is reviewed annually by the organisation and is set on multiple factors, including the financial performance of the charity and the success of its fundraising activities.
3. All bursaries are awarded on a discretionary basis and Wac Arts is free to determine which applicants receive bursary funding and the amount they receive. While the organisation shall do its best to ensure the selection of applications is fair, the final decision of the successful applicant and amount offered is up to the organisation's discretion.
4. Wac Arts accepts bursary applications for the following:
 - Term-time classes delivered on Saturdays, Sundays and Tuesdays
 - Holiday Clubs/Holiday Projects/Summer School
5. Wac Nites has been priced at a universally subsidised fee for all participants and is not eligible for further bursary support.

Terminology

6. *'The Recipient'* is the person who is participating in the classes such as the child, ward or student.
7. *'The Applicant'* is the person making the application on behalf of the child, ward or student such as a parent, guardian or care giver.
8. The recipient and the applicant may be the same person.
9. Where an applicant has multiple recipients who attend Wac Arts, they make one application for all their children/ wards.

Bursary Fund Management

10. The Bursary Fund is overseen by the Chief Executive Officer with support from the Head of Learning and Participation and the Finance Manager.
11. The management team reserve the right to amend the bursary application process and the criteria for eligibility at any time.



12. Bursary eligibility criteria and the application process is reviewed annually by the Programmes Team and any recommendations for changes are submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for approval.

Conditions

13. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
14. The applicant/recipient must be able to prove eligibility in order to be awarded a bursary.
15. Evidence of eligibility criteria such as an official letter confirming status and or entitlement, evidence of universal credit in written form from, a supporting reference letter from a working professional, who knows the recipient well and who is able to verify the applicant's personal circumstances truthfully and accurately.
16. Bursary awards for Weekend and Evening classes are only valid for one academic year, and applicants must reapply at the start of each year.
17. Bursary awards for Holiday Club/Holiday Projects/Summer School are only valid for one week/the project only. Applicants must reapply for each project they wish to participate in.
18. Depending on the eligibility status of the applicant/recipient, the bursary award for holiday and summer School will be 33% per week of activity.
19. Depending on the eligibility status of the applicant/recipient, the bursary award can be up to 50% of the class fees for weekend/evening classes.
20. Bursaries are awarded on a first come first served basis
21. The bursary fund will close and a waiting list will operate if and when the fund has been allocated.
22. From October 2023 onwards, new applicants will have their bursary funding capped at £60 per recipient per term. Any classes enrolled in above this cap will be payable at full price.
23. From October 2023 onwards, all recipients who have bursary funding awarded in current academic year (2023/24) will have their bursary funding capped at the rate awarded for the Autumn term. Any classes enrolled in above this cap will be payable at full price.

The Application Process

24. Applications are primarily accepted through the online application form, although alternative options can be made available for those with barriers to access.
25. The applicant must supply evidence of their financial hardship to support their application.
26. Where the applicant is unable to supply evidence of financial hardship, due to exceptional personal circumstances, a supporting letter from a working professional, who knows the applicant well and who is able to verify the recipient's personal circumstances truthfully and accurately will be considered.
27. The letter must contain official contact details, job title of the referee and state the relationship to the applicant.
28. The writer of the supporting letter should not be related to the recipient and should be a person of good standing in the applicant's community, or work in (or be retired from) a recognised profession.
29. Wac Arts does not require a character reference at any point during the bursary application process.
30. Wac Arts does not make decisions based on the quality of a person's contribution to our programme and recognises that such qualitative references are subjective
31. It is the responsibility of the applicant or applicants' representative to notify referees that they may be contacted by Wac Arts representatives, in order to verify the recipient's circumstances.

The Review Process

32. Bursary applications are reviewed on a first come first served basis.
33. Bursary applications undergo a review process.
34. First Stage Review is conducted by the Head of Learning and Participation.



35. Where the evidence submitted requires further review or provides a more complex case, a second stage peer review is conducted to determine the award of funds.
36. Where there is a discrepancy between the first and second review, the CEO will make the final decision as to the bursary award.

Bursary Outcomes

37. Applicants are notified of their bursary outcome within 10 working days of Wac Arts' receipt of the application.
38. Bursary outcomes are sent via email to the address provided with the application.
39. Applicants receive the outcome of their bursary application only.
40. Bursary Outcomes are as follows:
 - Bursary funding awarded
 - No bursary funding awarded
 - Additional or alternative evidence requested
41. Applicants will be asked to accept their bursary allocation within 3 working days of the award outcome being received. Alternatively, applicants will have the option to appeal.

Appeals

42. Applicants are entitled to appeal their bursary outcome for the following reasons:
 - A significant change of circumstances since the submission of the application
 - If they are now able to provide evidence requested by the Wac Arts Bursary Panel
43. Appeals should be submitted by email to admin@wacarts.co.uk with the subject '*Bursary Appeal*'.
44. Appeals involving a change of circumstances undergo a review by a member of Wac Arts Management Team, who was not on the original review panel, and their recommendation is made to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
45. Applicants are notified of the outcome of their review within 5 working days.
46. Outcomes of appeal decisions are final.
47. Applicants may only appeal a bursary award once per academic year.

Prohibitions

48. Applicants who are found to have made false statements or submitted fabricated evidence on their application form will be barred from all future bursary funding and may have their place on the Wac Arts Programme revoked.
49. Applicants who attempt to influence the bursary application process through bribery, bullying, blackmail, coercion or extortion will have their place on the programme revoked and will be barred from all future engagement with Wac Arts.