

La Trobe College Australia (COVID-19) Hardship Fund

Overview

La Trobe College Australia recognises that many international students have been directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and require financial assistance. A limited number of **Hardship (COVID-19) Grants** to the value of up to \$1,000 are now available to support eligible international students short term and are aimed to provide temporary help for unforeseen circumstances. Students are only eligible for one (1) **Hardship (COVID-19) Grant** payment.

International students can apply for a **Hardship (COVID-19) Grant** for one or more of the following criteria:

- Inability to pay rent/board.
- Inability to pay utility bills.
- Inability to buy food.
- Repatriation.
- Medical expenses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic that cannot be recovered through a personal health insurance policy.

Hardship (COVID-19) Grants are only available for international students currently studying in Australia.

Who Can Apply?

To be eligible to apply for the Hardship (COVID-19) Grant, you must:

- be currently enrolled at La Trobe College Australia and in Australia
- be able to demonstrate that you are experiencing severe financial hardship directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- demonstrate that you are currently enrolled, are attending class and engaged in your course and intend to complete your program.

What We Can Help With

You can use the Grant for:

- rent or bond
- general living expenses
- utility bills (e.g. electricity, gas, water, internet, telephone)
- public transport
- required study-related equipment

- medical expenses, including medicine, hospital treatment and specialist appointments (e.g. X-ray, CT scan, emergency dental)
- emergency relief (e.g. for family illness or theft)
- relocation costs due to crisis (e.g. fire, domestic violence or unsafe living conditions)
- unforeseen school and childcare costs.

You cannot use the Grant for:

- tuition fees
- speeding and parking fines
- holidays or non-essential spending
- student visa fees and charges
- Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)
- costs or debts you had before you started studying
- costs incurred outside of Australia.

How to apply

Step 1: Submit an Application

To apply, you need to email Jodi McDonald on Jodi.McDonald@latrobe.edu.au, with the subject line “Hardship”, you will then be emailed the information on how to proceed. From there, you will submit the Request for Hardship (COVID-19) Grant application form, you must email the following supporting documents to the hardship team:

- **Current identification:** your student ID (if available), plus one of either your passport, or driver’s license;
- **Bank statements:** ALL current official bank account statements (not screenshots of your bank account) for the past three months immediately prior to your application
- **A personal statement:** up to 300 words in length addressing the criteria for the Grant
- **Proof of severe hardship:** tenancy agreements, written report or reference and other material that demonstrates that the grant criteria are met. We recommend providing official notification of:
 - a reduction of hours or loss of job where possible. This may include a screen shot of correspondence between you and your employer.
 - Correspondence between you and a real estate agent or landlord regarding rent payment issues
 - Overdue bills
 - Bank statements showing your reduction in income/current financial situation

You can outline your situation in your personal statement and need to include bank statements from all your bank accounts.

Step 2: Interview with a La Trobe College Australia staff member or selection panel

After you submit your application, applicants may be required to attend a Zoom interview and may be asked to provide additional documentation. This requirement will be at the

discretion of the selection panel. You may also be asked to provide more documentation before an interview is scheduled.

What Happens Next

Applications will be managed in order of receipt and then prioritised according to the severity of the hardship so students applying at the same time may receive notification at different times. We will endeavour to provide outcomes to applicants as soon as possible of a fully completed application.

The Hardship (COVID-19) Grant will be awarded by a selection panel on the basis of:

- A fully completed application including all supporting evidence
- Demonstrated severe financial hardship directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Evidence of no or limited access to other sources of financial support (e.g. other grants, community resources)
- Successful academic progress
- Evidence that a grant will address or mitigate hardship and its impact on study and living requirements in the short-term.

The amount awarded to applicants and whether a schedule of payments is required will be at the discretion of the selection panel. The panel's decision will be final.

Applications will open on 20 April 2020 and remain open until further notice. The selection panel will meet regularly and assess eligible applications on a rolling basis.

Meeting the eligibility criteria doesn't guarantee that you'll receive a grant. The grant is designed to provide financial relief to those students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. An application for a reduction or waiver of tuition fees will not be considered.

If you are in need of urgent assistance, please contact Jodi McDonald on Jodi.McDonald@latrobemelbourne.edu.au you will be emailed on your student email, the details to proceed.

Further to the above, the Victorian Government has also announced financial assistance for international students. For more information regarding this please click on **[International Student Emergency Relief Fund](#)**