International Student Emergency Bursary Policy

Policy Information

Oversight Body: Budget and Finance Committee
Date Passed by Council: September 24, 2020
Date of Next Review: September 2022
Title of Related Policies, Bylaws, Legislation: Financial Policy; Fee Agreement with Dalhousie University

Definitions

International Student: A member of the Dalhousie Student Union who is registered as an international student with Dalhousie University.

International Student Emergency Bursary: (“a Bursary”) An allocation distributed from the ISEBF through the process outlined in this policy.

International Student Emergency Bursary Committee: (“the ISEBC”) A standing committee of the Dalhousie Student Union established in accordance with this policy.

International Student Emergency Bursary Fund: (“the Fund”) A designated fund within the Union budget, collected in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between Dalhousie University and the Dalhousie Student Union regarding an International Student Health Insurance Plan.

Policy Year: The period between September 01 of a given year and August 31 of the following year, defined in line with the annual schedule for the Union’s International Student Health Plan.

Union: The Dalhousie Student Union

Purpose

This policy outlines the authority and process for the distribution of International Student Emergency Bursaries.

Scope
This policy applies to the distribution of funds from the International Student Emergency Bursary Fund.

**Policy Statement**

1. **International Student Emergency Bursary Fund (“the Fund”)**
   
   1.1. The Fund is established to provide one-time bursaries to international students in emergency financial need.
   
   1.2. Monies are collected and deposited into the Fund in accordance with agreements between the Union and Dalhousie University pertaining to student fees and the health insurance plan.
   
   1.3. Funds distributed from the ISEBF must be authorized in writing by the Vice President, Finance and Operations.

2. **International Student Emergency Bursary Committee (“the ISEBC”)**

   2.1. Committee Mandate
   
   2.1.1. The ISEBC is a standing committee of Union formed each year in accordance with this policy.
   
   2.1.2. The ISEBC will review applications for International Student Emergency Bursaries (“Bursaries”) and allocate funding in accordance with this policy.
   
   2.1.3. Meetings and minutes of the ISEBC are strictly confidential to protect information about members’ financial circumstances. All meeting minutes and other documents must be securely filed by the Director of Operations in accordance with Union policy.

   2.2. Membership
   
   2.2.1. The ISEBC will be formed by June 30 of each fiscal year and will contain the following members:
   
   2.2.1.1. The Vice President, Finance and Operations who will serve as chair and will not carry a vote except in the case of a tie;
   
   2.2.1.2. One other Executive Officer to be determined by the Executive Committee each year;
   
   2.2.1.3. The International Students’ Community Representative or, should they refuse the seat, another Community Representative on Council to be appointed by the Executive Committee;
   
   2.2.1.4. One international student who is not a Councillor or Executive Officer of the Union, to be appointed by Council;
2.2.2. The Director of Operations will be a non-voting advisory member of the ISEBC.

3. Application Process

3.1. Applications for Bursaries will be submitted to the Vice President, Finance and Operations using a standardized online form.

3.2. The application must include:

3.2.1. The applicant’s full name, student number, year of study, and Dalhousie email address;

3.2.2. An explanation of the circumstance causing emergency financial need;

3.2.3. The amount of the applicant’s current financial need;

3.2.4. The amount of funding sought through the Bursary;

3.2.5. The applicant’s personal budget and/or living expenses;

3.2.6. The applicant’s current income and/or other sources of financial aid;

3.2.7. Proof of full-time enrollment at Dalhousie University;

3.2.8. Documentation of the applicant’s international student status, for example, copy of a student visa.

3.3. The Vice President, Finance and Operations and the Director of Operations will review and update the application form on a yearly basis and ensure that it is published on the Union’s website.

3.4. The Vice President, Finance and Operations will work with the communications team and relevant student societies to ensure adequate promotion and advertisement of the Bursaries.

4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1. Only applications submitted by international students will be accepted.

4.2. The Bursary must be requested for a situation of one-time emergency financial need.

4.3. Bursaries may not be used to pay academic or non-academic fees to Dalhousie University or any other post-secondary institution. For further clarity and without restricting the generality of this statement, Bursaries may not be used towards the payment of a student’s tuition, ancillary, or auxiliary fees.

5. Assessment Process

5.1. The ISEBC will meet at least once every four (4) weeks and will review applications submitted up to one (1) business day prior to the meeting. Submission deadlines will be published on the Union’s website at the outset of each semester.
5.2. In the interest of countering the potential effects of unconscious bias or conflict of interest, the chair must remove all names and identifying information from applications before circulating them to the ISEBC. For accounting purposes, only the chair of the ISEBC will be able to view applicants’ names and identifying information.

5.3. Applications will be reviewed in the order that they were received.

5.4. In the event that the ISEBC is unable to review all applications submitted up to the most recent submission deadline within one meeting, the Vice President, Finance and Operations will schedule a follow-up meeting within two (2) weeks to review any remaining applications.

5.5. The Vice President, Finance and Operations will update each applicant on the status of their funding within five (5) weeks of the date that their application was submitted.

5.6. The ISEBC will make decisions about the distribution of Bursaries based on the amount and urgency of the applicant’s financial need and the availability of ISEBF funds.

5.7. Priority will be given to first-time applicants.

5.8. Priority will be given to applicants who have attempted to access or exhausted other sources of funding.

5.9. The ISEBC will assess applications in relation to a cost-of-living framework to be developed by the ISEBC. This will be developed in consultation with international students to ensure that the framework is reasonable and realistic.

5.9.1. The framework will lay out average international student costs for rent & utilities; food; transportation; and phone and internet.

5.9.2. These cost-of-living framework will be set and updated each year in line with the most up-to-date statistics and consultation available on cost of living and typical costs for rent, food and services for international students in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), as well as the HRM’s rate of inflation.

5.9.3. Applicants will be provided space and encouraged to elaborate on costs which have been created by family circumstances, access needs, dietary needs, or other individual concerns.

5.9.4. A potential applicant may ask the chair of ISEBC for information on the cost-of-living framework being used to review applications.

5.10. The ISEBC may deprioritize or reject applications in the event an applicant did not provide enough information or did not thoroughly convey their circumstances and emergency financial need. The applicant is welcomed to reapply and may be prioritized upon second submission.
5.10.1. The ISEBC chair will inform applicants whose applications are rejected of the reason(s) for said rejection.

5.11. The ISEBC may award the full amount of the Bursary requested or a part thereof.

6. Funding Limits and Restrictions

6.1. Bursaries may be awarded in amounts of up to two thousand dollars ($2000.00).

6.2. A member may be awarded multiple Bursaries within the same fiscal year, provided:
   6.2.1. A separate application is completed for each Bursary requested;
   6.2.2. In each instance, the financial need meets the criteria laid out in this policy and is assessed according to this policy;
   6.2.3. The total amount of Bursary funding awarded to the member throughout the policy year does not exceed two thousand dollars ($2000.00).

6.3. Bursaries awarded by the International Student Emergency Bursary Fund will not impact the applicant’s eligibility for other DSU bursaries, including DSU Member Grants, DSU Accessibility Bursaries, or bursaries awarded by the DSU’s levy offices.