

Open Futures Creative Writing Scholarship

The Open University is a leading distance learning provider. Our flexible, innovative teaching fits around the lives of students who otherwise could not attend a campus-based university.

The Open Futures Creative Writing Scholarship will generously provide full fee waivers for the Open University MA in Creative Writing (F71) to three UK-resident students from a Black background, whose personal annual income is not more than £25,000, or who are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

Terms & Conditions

These conditions contain the terms of the Open Futures Creative Writing Scholarship. They set out the rights and responsibilities of each party which will apply in relation to your application for the scheme and, for successful applicants only, whilst you are a registered student. Please read these conditions carefully before you apply and make sure that you understand them.

A. Eligibility

1. In order to qualify for a scholarship, you must meet **all** the following criteria:
 - Identify as being from a Black background (see [Appendix 1](#) for full details)
 - Be ordinarily resident in the UK and eligible for a UK fee

- Have a personal annual income of not more than £25,000 or be in receipt of a qualifying benefit (see [Appendix 2](#) for a list of qualifying benefits)
- Fulfil the [entry requirements](#) for the MA in Creative Writing (F71)
- Be able to demonstrate your experience of, and passion for, creative writing

B. Supporting Evidence

2. You will need to provide evidence of your personal annual income or a qualifying benefit (see [Appendix 2](#) and [Appendix 3](#) for further information).
3. You will also be asked to outline your previous experience of creative writing to support your application. This might include creative writing higher education study, short courses or workshops you have completed, or details of any publications your work has been featured in.
4. Application forms and supporting evidence submitted by email must be sent as file attachments (for example a PDF file, Word document, JPEG image). For security reasons we cannot accept evidence that has been sent as a clickable hyperlink requiring the opening and downloading of data (for example Google Drive or OneDrive links).

C. Scholarship Awards

5. The scholarship award will offer full fee waivers for up to 180 credits of study across the duration of the MA in Creative Writing (F71). Fee waiver

amounts will be calculated based on the fee amounts for which you are directly liable.

6. Study breaks of up to two academic years are permitted. If you take a study break of two academic years and return in the following year, you will remain eligible for your scholarship funding. Study breaks of longer than two academic years will terminate your eligibility for the scholarship, after which a request for exceptional reinstatement will be required. Requests for reinstatement should be submitted directly to fees-fs-bursaries-scholarships@open.ac.uk.
7. In circumstances where you are required to repeat, defer or withdraw from a module, consideration will be given to the circumstances which led to the repeat, deferral or withdrawal and an exceptional award of additional waivers or a Discretionary Fee Credit may be approved.
8. Decisions on exceptional awards will be made by the Senior Manager, Policy & Controls, Academic Services, or their delegated authority in line with the eligibility criteria for Discretionary Fee Credits defined by the University Senate and detailed in the applicable [Fee Rules 2026/27](#).
9. Any awards made by The Open University as a result of inaccurate or false information submitted by the applicant will be recovered from the applicant.
10. Cash alternatives will not be available.

D. Applications

11. Applications can be submitted by email to

fees-fs-bursaries-scholarships@open.ac.uk or by post to:

Student Fees

The Open University

PO Box 6055

Milton Keynes

MK10 1NH

12. The deadline for applications is midday on 29 July 2026. No further applications will be accepted after this date.

13. It is your responsibility to provide all supporting evidence for your application by the advertised deadline. We reserve the right to request additional evidence from you. Failure to submit all required evidence may cause a processing delay and could lead to your application being declined.

14. Only one application per person. In the instance that more eligible applications are received than scholarships available, a specialist panel will review the supporting evidence accompanying each of these applications to determine which applicants are awarded a scholarship.

15. Applications from students who have previously been awarded an Open University scholarship will not be considered.

16. Applications on behalf of another person will not be accepted.

17. If you would like a Welsh version of the application form or terms and conditions, you can request this by emailing Student Fees at fees-fs-bursaries-scholarships@open.ac.uk. Any forms submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than those submitted in English.

Os hoffech fersiwn Gymraeg o'r ffurflen gais neu y telerau ac amodau, gallwch ofyn am hyn drwy e-bostio Ffioedd Myfyrwyr: fees-fs-bursaries-scholarships@open.ac.uk. Ni fydd ffurflenni a gyflwynir yn Gymraeg yn cael eu trin yn llai ffafriol na'r rhai a gyflwynir yn Saesneg.

18. Successful applicants will be notified by email on or before 14 August 2026.

19. No further applications will be required. Once a scholarship is approved, fee waivers will be allocated automatically subject to satisfactory participation in study for the previous academic year.

20. The Open University accepts no responsibility for applications that are lost, delayed, misdirected, incomplete or cannot be delivered.

21. For you to be certain your application has been received you should send it using a signed for delivery service such as special or recorded delivery. Proof of postage using an unrecorded delivery service cannot be considered proof of delivery to The Open University. Applications must be received by midday on 29 July 2026. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

22. If an applicant rejects the scholarship, fails to complete their registration for study for which the award was made or the application is in breach of these terms and conditions, the award will be forfeited, and The Open University shall be entitled to select another recipient.
23. To support efforts to publicly promote the Open Futures Creative Writing Scholarship, The Open University would appreciate the support of successful applicants in providing information about the impact of receiving the scholarship and in working with the University to shape this content into promotional campaigns. Related to this, successful applicants may be offered the opportunity to take part in fundraising events, forums or other promotional activities.
24. The Open University shall use and take care of any personal information supplied to it as described in its [Privacy Notice](#), a copy of which is available on request, in accordance with data protection legislation.
25. By submitting your application, you agree to the collection, retention, usage and distribution of your personal information in order to process your application and contact you.
26. The Open University accepts no responsibility for any disappointment incurred by the applicant as a result of entering the application process. The fund is discretionary, and the outcome following the selection panel is final.
27. The Open University will take all reasonable steps to continue the services offered as part of this scheme. There may be circumstances outside of

our control where we are unable to provide those services in full or in part for reasons such as fire, flood, pandemic, terrorist acts or industrial disputes. Where those, or similar, circumstances arise we will minimise disruption so far as we are reasonably able to.

28. Promoter: The Open University, Walton Hall, Kents Hill, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.

E. Frequently Asked Questions

How were the eligibility criteria decided?

The aim of the scholarship is to open higher education to underrepresented groups and ensure that these students receive the support they need to succeed in their studies. The eligibility criteria were designed to encourage individuals from specific target groups to study the MA in Creative Writing with The Open University.

Why do the entry criteria positively discriminate when The Open University claims to be "open to all"?

We value all our students, and we want to do our best to ensure that the OU reflects the whole of our society. Our analysis indicates that currently we have a shortfall in the numbers of students we would like to attract from some groups of UK society. Widening access to and success in higher education is at the heart of the OU's mission. We aim to support students whatever their backgrounds, to reach their potential and fulfil their ambitions.

Why isn't the scholarship open to all students?

Scholarship funds are limited, it is therefore not possible to open the scheme up to all students. This limit on funds was considered when determining who the scholarship would be available to. The eligibility criteria are in place to maximise the benefits of the scheme and ensure it reaches those who will benefit from it most.

Appendix 1 – Ethnicity

Applicants must have one of the following ethnicities:

- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Black Other
- Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed – White and Black African
- Other mixed background (to include Black African, Black Caribbean or Black Other)

Appendix 2 – Qualifying Benefits

Qualifying Benefits

- Income Support
- Housing Benefit (including Local Housing Allowance)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Universal Credit
- A reduction under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (*students in Wales only*)

Appendix 3 – Personal Income

Types of income and evidence

Types of income and supporting evidence required for yourself.

Employment income

One of:

- Copy of P60 or P45
- Copy of pay slip from tax month 12 or tax week 52 showing 'total paid to date'

Self-employment income

(estimate for 2025/26 if you are not sure, you must provide evidence of 2024/25 income)

One of:

- Copy of letter from accountant confirming income from self-employment
- Copy of HMRC tax calculation
- Copy of your P60, P11D or confirmation of earnings from chartered or certified accountant

Retirement or disability pension

- Copy of proof of amount and how often it is paid

Benefits income

- Copy of letter from Jobcentre Plus confirming amount and type of benefit (see the sections below on benefits to include/not to include as income)

Unearned investment income

(e.g. interest from bank or building society accounts, ISAs, shares)

- Copy of letter or statement from bank, building society or investment company

Unearned income from property rental or lodgers

- Rental income: Copy of tax calculation showing total property rental income
- Lodger income: Copy of signed letter from lodger confirming total amount of rent paid

Other income

(e.g. loans, bursaries, maintenance payments, redundancy payments)

- Copy of proof of other income including amount and date received

Benefits to include as part of personal income

- Contribution-based JSA/ESA
- Incapacity Benefit
- Maternity Allowance
- Statutory Sick Pay
- Carer's Allowance
- Retirement Pension

Benefits NOT to include as part of personal income

- Disability Living Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Industrial Injuries Benefit
- Child Benefit
- Guardian's Allowance
- Working or Child Tax Credits
- Higher Education Bursary paid to care leavers
- Personal Independence Payments
- Armed Forces Independence Payments