

Money Matters for Future & Prospective Students

This sheet offers a brief and general information guideline for prospective students of UTS applying for admission in 2024. The information is based on Centrelink guidelines and the Social Security Act.

Disclaimer: The information in these pages was deemed correct at the time of publication in August 2023.

Services Australia (formerly called Centrelink) Benefits

Centrelink – also now referred to as “Services Australia” - information can now be accessed via the [Services Australia](#) website

For a quick and easy online guide to Centrelink, head to [‘Student Income Support’](#).

1. YOUTH ALLOWANCE (YA)

YA is for **eligible** full-time enrolled students:

- **Completing 18-24 credit points per session/semester or a minimum 36 credit points per year (with subject Census dates within a calendar year, be it over a bimester or trimester calendar);**
- And for students who enrolled in the approved course (award courses such as a Bachelor’s Degree Masters, Graduate Certificate/Diploma, etc.) between the ages of 18-25 years;
- And who are a citizen; permanent resident (PR) pre-Jan 2019 of >2 years, PR post-Jan 2019 of > 4 years; or a permanent humanitarian resident visa.

Here are the different types of YA benefits:

1.1. YA DEPENDENT

The ‘dependent’ YA is for eligible students **under 22 years of age** who are enrolling in a new course and are living at (parent/s’) home.

Current rate per fortnight (p/f) for new full-time students	
single student with no children, over 18 years AND living at home	\$429.40 p/f
single student with no children, under 18 years and living at home	\$372.90 p/f

(For more detailed figures on [benefit payments and Centrelink benefit types](#))

Parental Income Test & Centrelink \$\$\$

Am I eligible for the YA dependent benefit?

A student **may** still receive Youth Allowance even when the parent/s earns up to \$150 000 per annum in combined income/earnings - as Centrelink will take into account the number of other dependent children under the age of 22 years currently supported by parents. Maximum benefit rates are paid when combined PARENTAL gross income with one child is less than **\$58,108** (as per 2021-2022 Tax Year for 2023 assessments). Benefits reduce by 20 cents per \$1 over this threshold.

Where parental income fluctuates substantially (e.g. due to a redundancy pay-out or fluctuating income for a business proprietor) the Parental Income Test will be based on your parental income in the current tax year.

For a Services Australia [online 'estimation' of what you may receive](#) on the **dependant YA benefit**.

Further information about the Centrelink [“means and assets tests” on the UTS Financial help website](#).

1.2. YA Independent Rate

The Independent YA rate may apply to students between 18 and 24 years of age who fulfill the eligibility criteria below.

Rate per fortnight (p/f)

Single with no children, 18 years and over and not living at home	\$602.80* (p/f)
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* You may also be **eligible for additional Rent Assistance** - see para below.

How do I qualify to be deemed ‘independent’?

YA rate eligibility criteria include:

- You have worked for **30hrs p/w for 18 months** in the last 2-year period;
- Or;
- You are eligible for Dependent YA, but your parental home is too far away from Uni (more than 90 minutes travel each way, as assessed by Centrelink). You may then receive the **‘Living Away from Home YA’**, the same payment rate as the Independent YA, if you move out-of-home, closer to your place of study. This rate also applies to rural/regional/remote students.

Or;

- If you are **over 22 years of age**, you will automatically be assessed as independent. This means that the parental income test will not affect your Independent YA payments from your 22nd birthday.

[Full criteria listed on Services Australia website](#)

[Regional & remote students have alternate qualifying 'part-time work' conditions](#), which include if:

- You have worked part-time for at least 15 hours a week for at least two years since leaving school;
- You earned at least 75 percent of the maximum rate of pay under Wage Level A of the National Training Wage Schedule (**75% = \$30,517 from 1 July 2023 to the present day**) included in a modern award in an 18-month period since leaving school.

1.3. YA _ Living Away from Home

This is to help students from regional/remote or students with a commute of over (over 90 minutes) to settle in closer to their studies. This is only for students who qualify under the parental income 'Dependent' YA, and it will provide a higher 'Independent' YA fortnightly payment, with the additional option of possible Rent Assistance.

Rate per fortnight for YA 'Living Away from Home' (p/f)

single with no children, 18 years and over and not living at home	\$602.80* (p/f)
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1.4. Rent Assistance (RA) - 15% plus CPI increases

RA may be paid when living away from the parental home. Minimum rents apply in order to be eligible, and leases/landlord letters are required. Students on Independent YA rate, Austudy, Abstudy or other eligible Centrelink benefits may apply. You will need to provide evidence of your rental property/room.

The two types of RA are for **shared** accommodation, and for those who are the only name on the lease, the **not shared** accommodation. UTS Housing attracts the 'not sharing' rate of RA.

[Rent Assistance details, and how much can I get](#) in my specific circumstance?

Family situation	Maximum RA payment per fortnight is (p/f)	You are eligible for max RA if your fortnightly rent is more than	Or: receive <u>part payment</u> if your rent is above this min fortnightly rent
Single, not sharing	\$184.80	\$389.80	\$143.40
Single, no children, & sharing	\$123.20	\$307.67	\$143.40

1.5. Personal Income/Earnings & Centrelink \$\$\$

As a student on YA, Austudy or Abstudy who is >18years and must live away from home to study:

- you can earn **up to \$480 before tax per fortnight** before your Centrelink payment is affected

How will my earnings affect my YA, Austudy or Abstudy payments?

- income over \$480 and up to \$575 reduces your YA payment by 50 cents in the dollar earned from \$452 to \$524 per fortnight
- earnings of over \$575 per fortnight reduce your YA payment by \$47.50 plus 60 cents in the dollar earned over \$575, with the following maximums reducing your claim to \$0.

Student's status/ max earnings examples	To continue to receive full Allowance (pf) –with no deductions from CL payments, you may earn before tax:	To receive a part Allowance (pf) in 2023/2024 you must earn, before tax:
Single, aged under 18, at home	up to \$480 gross p/f	less than \$1,123
Single, aged over 18, at home	up to \$480 gross p/f	Less than \$1,219
Single, over 18, living away from home, no children	Up to \$480 gross p/f	less than \$1,512

[View further age and income scenarios are listed on Services Australia](#)

2. AUSTUDY

Paid to eligible full-time [students if starting new studies when 25 or older](#) in a recognised course.

Rate per fortnight (p/f) for Austudy in 2023; increase in rate from 20 Sept 23.

Single or partnered	\$602.80* (p/f)
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* You may be eligible for additional Rent Assistance - see above section 1.4

3. ABSTUDY

Sample rates per fortnight (pf) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students:

18 – 21 year student living at home	\$429.40(pf)
18 – 21 Year old living away from home, no children or partner	\$602.80 (pf)
22 and older - living away from home, or at home, no children or partner	\$749.20 (pf)

More on payment rates on: [Services Australia](#)

Abstudy and the Residential Costs Option

The **residential costs option** covers your rent at UTS Housing and meals. [See if you are eligible](#) on Services Australia website

Please consult with the [UTS Jumbunna](#) Institute for further assistance with all Abstudy payment applications

4. SERVICES AUSTRALIA (CENTRELINK) LOANS & SCHOLARSHIPS

4.1. The Start-Up Loan

The Start Up loan is optional. Students on a Youth Allowance/Austudy/Abstudy who wish to receive the loan must apply online through My Centrelink.

It is interest free. The loan debt is added to your HECS/FEE HELP Loan and will incur CPI. The loan is intended for study material or other discretionary expenses and to help with cost of living cash flow.

Students in receipt of any other type of Centrelink Benefit will are not eligible for the Start Up Loan.

2024

The Start Up Loan offers 2 annual payments of \$1,201 each between:
 1 Jan to 30 June and
 1 July to 31 December.
 The Loan debt you incur will be **added to your HECS HELP Loan**

[Additional information on Services Australia](#)

4.2. Relocation Scholarship

Recipients of Dependent YA (upgraded to Living Away from Home YA) or Abstudy Allowance who are under 25 years and from regional/remote areas and **have to** live away from the home to study may be eligible. **The Relocation Scholarship excludes previous support to students from a city/metro area, and those who are moving within or between major cities to study. It applies only to Regional/Remote Areas.**

First year payments are \$5,080 reducing to \$2,541 for second & third year studies on a city campus.

[Further details on the Relocation Scholarship on Services Australia](#)

4.3. Tertiary Access Payment (TAP)

The Tertiary Access Payment is additional assistance for rural & remote student 22 years or younger with parental income <\$250,000.

[See link for eligibility and application at UTS](#)

Tips on Centrelink

- Apply **early** for Youth Allowance/Austudy/Abstudy.
Lodge your claim early January or 13 weeks before your course begins.
- You can apply **BEFORE** your course offer is confirmed.
- **Orientation weeks** also qualify for payment if you receive YA/Austudy/Abstudy.
- If you are deemed eligible for YA/Aus/Abstudy, you will **receive back pay** to the date you applied starting earliest at Orientation.
- **Prepare (and save \$\$) for Centrelink processing delays**, as it may take 3months before your application is processed...and you receive your benefit plus back-pay.
- **If you have cash-flow problems while waiting for YA; Austudy; Abstudy, let us know at UTS Financial Assistance. Call us on 9514 1177.**
- **On the admin side of things:**

Once on Centrelink, always keep them informed of your enrolment (subject load) and your earnings. Report your earnings every two weeks.

To do this: [use the Centrelink Online Services and Express Plus Centrelink mobile app to report your fortnightly income.](#)

- **Avoid Centrelink debts:**
If you have a debt, please talk to Centrelink, immediately. Repayment plans may require \$30 p/f repayments with up to 15% of income per fortnight if you cannot make the full repayment immediately.
- **Going overseas:**
Your YA payment stops when you leave the country, unless you are completing credit point studies overseas, in which case you will need a letter from UTS. Check details at Centrelink: see Portability rules.

5. WHAT TO DO IF I AM IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY?

5.1. UTS Financial help

If you are having budgetary problems or ongoing financial hardship, we encourage you to speak to us at the **UTS Financial Assistance Service**. All discussions are confidential. Tel: 02 9514 1177

We provide you with:

- **Guidance and advice on:**
 - Centrelink student support payments.
 - Free tax return assistance for PAYG incomes of <60K.
 - Wide-range assistance and referrals regarding; budgeting and planning; debt oversight and free financial counsellor referrals; money scams and ASIC; minimum wage and Fair Work and Welfare Rights guidelines; Industry ombudsmen.
- **Financial help through:**
 - **UTS Equity Scholarship/Equal Access Scholarship and Financial Support Grant programs** for students in receipt of a Centrelink benefit and on a low income, and students living with additional disadvantages such as sole parent students; remote and or Indigenous students; carers; students of a refugee background and students living with a disability. See separate section under paragraph 5.2 below.
 - **[Financial Assistance Programs at UTS:](#)**
 - No-cost loans (zero % interest with max value \$3,000) for cash flow problems

- Grants which do not need to be repaid, to help local students with costs relating to course requirements, such as completing practicals, clinicals, internships, studios and for project materials
- Grant support towards essential living costs and high medical costs, unexpected life and family/sponsor occurrences on considered disadvantaged grounds.
- Providing eligible domestic students with access to course-related devices, laptops, software and mobile internet as well as textbook assistance and UTS Housing Rental Subsidy

Call to see us: 02 9514 1177 (City Campus) for an appointment.

Or call-in at Student Services located at Building 1, level 6

Further information on the UTS Financial help website

5.2. UTS Equal Access Scholarship (aka: Diversity Access Scholarships and Equity Scholarship)

This scholarship is administered by UAC and the UTS Scholarships Office.

The UTS Equal Access Scholarship is for **local** students in **financial hardship, who may have additional disadvantages** (such as: students who are carers, single parents, Indigenous, from rural or remote regions, or with ongoing disabilities which affect their studies).

Applications can be accessed from January to June for the current year, and from August to December for the following year. 2024 applications are now open at: www.uac.edu.au

View the [UTS Scholarships website](#) for other scholarship for:

School Leavers; TAFE Diplomas; Academic and Merit Scholarships; Indigenous Scholarships; Scholarships for Women; Disability Scholarships; Faculty Scholarships and more.

5.3. Non- Governmental Loans and Financial Instruments

Students seeking loans on the commercial market will find comprehensive current comparative loan rate information and costs of loans for students on www.mozo.com.au or www.ratecity.com.au or www.canstar.com.au

Some institutions may offer **deferrable loans** – with loan repayments only starting after 3 years or more. Check out the Mozo Student Room and their comparisons on the cheapest credit cards, bank accounts, car loans etc. and home loans.

5.4. Accommodation

View the [UTS Housing \(UTS student accommodation\) & off-campus \(private listings\)](#).
Also look for “share accommodation” options on the internet.

6. TUITION FEES & GOVERNMENT LOANS

6.1. UTS Tuition Fee Structure/Student Contributions

To calculate your tuition fee course cost, see the [UTS Tuition 'Fees Search'](#)

6.2. HECS-HELP; FEE-HELP; SA-HELP: OS-HELP and Commonwealth Supported Position

If you are enrolled in an **Undergraduate or Postgraduate award course**, and are:

- an Australian citizen, or
- a holder of an Australian permanent humanitarian visa (but not TPV or TEV);

you are likely **eligible** to apply for a **Combined HELP** loan limit for 2023 (being HECS and FEE HELP @ \$113,028) (except for medicine, dentistry, vet science @ max \$162,336).

This applies to CSP course students and fee-paying students in award courses

- **SA HELP** (for student amenities fees) and
- **OS HELP** (for accredited subject-studies abroad)

See all details on: [Study Assist](#) website.

The HELP LOANS will give an enrolled student the option to **defer** payment of their tuition and Student Amenities fees. [Compulsory repayments start at 1% of your salary when you earn >\\$51,550 in 2023-2024](#). Deductions from your salary will increase as your salary/income increases.

6.3. How to apply for a HELP LOAN

- Enrol in your subjects;
- Ensure you have your TFN (Tax file number); and
- Complete a request for Commonwealth Assistance form (eCAF) before census date, online at UTS 'My Student Admin' or at the UTS Student Centre and ensure you defer all fee types you wish to: i.e. for tuition and for SSAF (Amenities fees)

FAQ'S ON HELP LOANS:

- Combined HELP (HECS HELP and FEE HELP) = is for CSP courses at undergraduate level and for selected postgraduate course-work studies. Most postgraduate courses are Full-Fee (non CSP)
- SA HELP = is only for Student Services Amenities Fees (SSAF)
- Overseas HELP = is for living expenses when completing credit points abroad which are recognised as part of Aus degree. Must still have min 1 subject to complete in Aus Uni on return
- Fee Help loan cost of 20% applies only for undergraduate studies at private colleges and non-CSP courses, not post graduate courses at Uni
- HECS-HELP upfront payment discount was cancelled by the Commonwealth from 1 January 2022.
- HELP loans are repayable even if you are living & earning overseas
- No-interest is charged on HELP loans, but indexation using CPI increases is added to your total loan. 2021 was 0.6%; 2022 was 3.9%; 2023 was 7.1%

7. HOW MUCH \$\$ DO I REALLY NEED?

A resource to help with planning a budget:

Actual costs depend on your individual lifestyles, with **rent** being the primary cost. Here are a few rent & essential cost scenarios for students living out-of-home

Rent scenario comparisons (June 2023):

Here are various rent & essential cost scenarios for students living out-of-home.

Essentials (weekly costs)	Shared Room/House/Unit	Studio/1 Bedroom Unit in Sydney	UTS Housing (Self-catered) on campus
Weekly Rent	\$250-\$350	\$450 - \$550	\$330 - \$430
Groceries / self-catering	\$110	\$110	\$110
Utilities (gas, electricity, phone)	\$25	\$30	n/a (included in rent)
Internet	\$15	\$15	n/a (included in rent)
Mobile phone	\$15	\$15	\$15
Transport (varies on distance from UTS & usage regularity)	\$40	\$40	n/a (included in rent)

Sports/gym/excursions	\$20	\$20	\$15
Incidentals/Personal items	\$30	\$30	\$30
Weekly total (approx.)	\$505 to \$605	\$710 to \$810	\$500 to \$600 studio
ANNUAL ESTIMATE OF ESSENTIALS	\$26K to \$31.5K	\$32K to \$ 38K	\$26K to \$31K

These estimates of what amount of money a student may need, excluding exceptional circumstance, range from 26K to 38K.

Personal choices may influence this further.

Additional cost items:

- text book/printing and materials costs for studies;
- medical and other circumstantial costs (children, caring etc.).
- entertainment including coffees, take-aways, eating out, movies, clubs and pubs.
- car/vehicle: a high-end budget item!

Contact the UTS Financial Assistance Service

UTS Building 1, Level 6, Room 001

T: 02 9514 1177

E: financial.assistance@uts.edu.au

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

