# CareTech Foundation PGR Carers Support Fund

## Guidance Notes

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.

Carers face disadvantages that may prevent them from pursuing the education that they need. Providing unpaid care for a friend or family member can place huge demands on the lives of carers. It can affect progress in a study journey, make sticking to a timetable difficult or require a career change to find employment that fits around caring.

The OU has received a generous donation from the CareTech Foundation over three years. Together we have launched the CareTech Foundation PGR Carers Support Fund (“PGR Carers Support Fund”) to offer students financial support of between £200 and £1000. The intention of this fund is to enable those who care on a frequent basis support for some protected study time. This might for example be towards respite care to attend a writing retreat, a conference or to block a period of dedicated study time that would not be possible without additional funding.

### Helpful resources

[Care Free](https://carefreespace.org/take-a-break/) is charity that encourages short breaks for unpaid carers by transforming vacant accommodation: [The importance of a break](https://carefreespace.org/take-a-break/).

[Carers Trust](https://carers.org/) provide information on services in your area.

### Terms and conditions

These conditions contain the terms of the PGR Carers Support Fund. 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.

### Eligibility criteria

A carer is defined as anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

In order to qualify for the scheme, you must meet **all** the following criteria:

• Be ordinarily resident in the UK

• Provide care for 5 or more hours per week

• Be able to demonstrate proof of your current caring responsibilities

• Be actively studying a postgraduate research degree at the Open University during the relevant academic year for which you are applying.

### Supporting evidence

You will need to provide evidence which confirms that you are providing unpaid care to one or more people. This could be a letter from your current GP, social worker or carer support organisation. Examples include copies of a:

• letter confirming Carer’s Allowance

• letter from your local carer support service

• letter from Social Services

• letter confirming your Attendance Allowance

• letter from your own GP

• letter from the GP/Consultant/Nurse of the person you care for

• current valid Carer’s Identity Card issued by a Local Authority.

### Fund administration

If your application is successful, a single payment of between £200 and £1000 will be paid directly into your nominated bank account.

There will be two application points each year: December and June.

You will only be entitled to one payment in each funded year (1 November–31 October). This is independent from any other additional funding you may receive through, for example, the Student Assistance Fund. The payment is subject to the availability of the limited funding.

It is your responsibility to evaluate the impact the payment may have on any benefits you receive.

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.

### Application

In your application you should clearly explain in Section 2, within the word limits shown, the reasons for your application. There will be a wide variety of circumstances that PGR carers are experiencing. Examples include increased or a change in caring responsibilities, pinch points within the research timeline requiring time away from study, or a need to take a study break for your own wellbeing.

You might want to include information such as:

* How long you have been a carer for
* How many people you care for, their full names, ages and relationship to you
* If you live with the person you care for
* On average, how many hours of care you provide a week
* The caring responsibilities you currently undertake and the impact these responsibilities have on your life
* What you would use the funding to do and what impact it would have on your doctoral experience and progress.

If you think it would be helpful for your application, you can supply documentary evidence in relation to the person you care for; this may include their condition(s) and any other relevant information that will assist us in understanding the impact caring has on your day-to-day life.

If you believe that you meet the eligibility criteria you should complete and sign the application form below and email it to the [Research Degrees Team](mailto:Research-Degrees-Office%20%3cresearch-degrees-office@open.ac.uk%3e) no later than **25 June 2025** for the June application point.

The Open University shall use and take care of any personal information supplied to it as described in its Privacy Policy in accordance with data protection legislation. If you’d like to see our Privacy Policy it can be found here: [Privacy at the OU | About The Open University](https://click.mailerlite.com/link/c/YT0yMTUyMzAzMzk0MTQ3MDEwNzM3JmM9YTF3MyZiPTEwODU1NDE3MTAmZD1iNWY2djNr.oy7y49E5UqDduwcUwUI3_k_HtHqDmYsqdUYuvp92FBM).

All funding requests will be considered and processed by a confidential panel consisting of the Graduate School Director and Faculty Directors of Research Degrees or equivalents. We aim to get in touch with applicants within one week of the panel meeting to tell you the decision and, if approved, request bank details for payment.

Please ensure you complete your application form in full and submit the required evidence no later than the closing date. Applications which are incomplete or do not include the required evidence willnot be considered.

Please note: The PGR Carers Fund is a limited fund aimed to help as many eligible students as possible, we therefore cannot confirm if your application or the amount requested has been successful until all applications have been considered.

# CareTech Foundation PGR Carers Support Fund Application

Please fully complete, sign and return this application form to [the Graduate School](mailto:graduate-school@open.ac.uk) no later than **25 June 2025** for the June application point. The information provided on this form will be securely stored and will not be circulated to any party other than those who are directly involved in the application process.

**Section 1: Postgraduate Research Student Details (to be completed by applicant)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Student Name:** |  |
| **PI (Student) No:** |  |
| **Faculty:** |  |
| **Mode of Attendance:** | Full Time  Part Time |
| **Funding being Requested (in Great British Pounds/£)** |  |

**Section 2: Reason(s) For Application (to be completed by applicant)**

|  |
| --- |
| **In no more than 400 words provide information about your funding request. Refer to the guidance notes provided.** |
|  |

**Please return your completed form and the necessary supporting documents to:** [the Graduate School](mailto:graduate-school@open.ac.uk)

**Section 3: Graduate School Approval (to be completed by the Graduate School)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| YES, the Graduate School supports this | | | |  |
| YES, the Graduate School supports this request for funding, but the funding amount should be changed to: | | | |  |
| NO, this application is not approved as it does not meet the eligibility criteria | | | |  |
| **Signature:** |  | **Date:** |  | |