

Student Assistance Fund (SAF) Privacy Notice 2026/27

October 2026

This notice explains how the Senior Tutor's Office uses your personal data when you apply to the Student Assistance Fund (SAF), the Hardship Fund or a College bursary or benefaction for 2026/27. It applies to both undergraduate and postgraduate applications.

Who we are

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, is the data controller for your application. The Senior Tutor's Office (STO) is responsible for the process, supported by the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Student Support Officers (SSOs) and Executive Officers (EOs).

- STO: senior.tutor@tcd.ie
- Data Protection Officer: dataprotection@tcd.ie

What this notice covers

The SAF is a means-tested fund that helps students in financial hardship. It is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) through the Higher Education Authority (HEA). A related Hardship Fund covers students who are not eligible for ESF+ support and the same application process is used for donor-funded bursaries and benefactions.

Applications are assessed by the STO on behalf of the Financial Assistance Committee (FAC), which oversees the Fund.

What personal data we collect

We collect only what we need to check your eligibility and work out an award. Most of it comes from you, through the online application form and the documents you upload.

Category	What we collect
Identity and registration	Student number, name, date of birth, email address and academic status (repeat year, off-books, repeat course, final year). Also whether you are TAP-funded and whether you are an EU citizen (yes, no or unsure).
Gender	Male, Female, Non-Binary or Prefer not to say. We ask everyone because some awards are restricted by gender and the HEA requires gender figures. You do not have to answer.
Household and dependents	Whether you are a parent or lone parent, number of children in childcare and siblings under 23 in full-time education. Where you are under 23,

Category	What we collect
	your parent's or guardian's statement of earnings.
Income and finances	SUSI or equivalent grant status, last year's income, your current statement of earnings, your last three months of bank statements (all banks) and your estimated monthly income and spending.
Accommodation and costs	Living arrangement, lease, electricity and gas bills where you claim them, commuting mode, Dublin Travel Zone, the town, station or bus stop you travel from, proof of travel costs, childcare costs and evidence of sibling education.
Health-related	Evidence of a medical expense, where you claim one. We only need the fact and amount of the cost.
Personal statement	A short free-text statement of your circumstances.
Our own records	Reviewers' ratings and reason codes for each document, need scores, the Senior Tutor's decision and rationale and payment details.

We do not collect your bank account details. You give and maintain those directly in my.tcd (the student portal). We also do not ask for ethnicity, disability registration status, or your course and we do not collect a home address or Eircode, although an address may appear on documents you upload.

Please help us protect your privacy

- Do not include health details in your personal statement unless they are directly relevant.
- Keep your personal statement anonymous: no name or other identifiers.
- You may black out diagnoses or other sensitive detail on medical receipts before uploading. We only need the amount and what it was for.
- Upload bank statements as PDFs.

Information about other people

Your documents may contain information about other people, such as parents or guardians, siblings, a co-tenant or landlord, or people named in a bank transaction. We use this only to assess your application. When you apply, you confirm that you have told those people that their information is being sent to the STO. Please share this notice with them.

Why we use your data and our legal basis

We use your data to decide whether you are eligible for funding and how much to award, to pay you and to meet our reporting duties to the HEA, the European Commission and University governance. We also use it for oversight and quality review of the Fund. We do not use it for any other purpose without telling you.

Data	Legal basis
All personal data	Article 6(1)(e) GDPR: a task carried out in the public interest, namely supporting access to and retention in higher education for students in financial hardship.
Health-related data (medical expense evidence)	Article 9(2)(g) GDPR: substantial public interest.

We do not rely on your consent for the application itself. This means you cannot withdraw consent, but you do have the right to object (see Your rights below).

If you do not provide the documents we ask for, we cannot assess your application and an incomplete application may be treated as null and void.

Donor-funded bursaries and benefactions

Bursaries and benefactions are funded by gifts to Trinity rather than by the HEA. Trinity Development & Alumni (TDA) receives only aggregated, anonymous reports on these awards. It is not told your name.

If a donor wants to meet or recognise recipients, for example at an award ceremony, we will ask for your separate, freely given consent after the award decision. Saying 'no' will never affect your award. Separately, you may be invited to share a testimonial with TDA. That is entirely optional and happens outside the application.

How we assess your application and our use of AI tools

A person makes every funding decision. AI is involved in part of the process but never decides an application and never rejects one.

Reporting

We report to the FAC, the HEA and European Commission and University committees using anonymous, aggregated figures only. Small groups are combined or hidden so that no one can be identified. Reports to the HEA under ESF+ include totals by expense type and recipient numbers by gender, never names or numbers.

Who we share your data with

Recipient	What they receive	Why
STO staff (Senior Tutor, SSOs, EOs)	Your full application and documents	To assess and decide your application
Financial Assistance Committee	Anonymous aggregate figures and an anonymised final payment sheet. For urgent non-standard or emergency cases, a memo identified by application number only.	Oversight of the Fund. Student representatives sit on the FAC; members are reminded of confidentiality and step aside if they know an applicant.
Academic Registry, Student Finance	Student number, award amount and source payment account. Never your bank details.	To pay your award
Trinity Access Programme (TAP)	Confirmation of your declared TAP-funded status	To make sure you are not funded twice
HEA / Department of Education, European Commission	Anonymous aggregate figures	Funder reporting
IT Services and Microsoft	Data held in the University's Microsoft 365 environment	Hosting and Copilot, as our processors

We do not sell your data or use it for marketing.

Transfers outside the EEA

Your data is held in the University's Microsoft 365 environment and student systems. We do not transfer it outside the EEA.

How long we keep your data

We keep your full application record for 10 years, whether or not your application succeeds. Funders require us to account for how each application was decided, including why an application was unsuccessful. After that period your records are securely destroyed. Anonymous aggregate statistics may be kept longer.

Your rights

Under data protection law you have the right to:

- ask for a copy of your personal data (access)
- ask us to correct inaccurate data (rectification)
- ask us to erase your data, or restrict how we use it, in some circumstances
- object to our processing of your data, because we rely on the public interest basis

- not be subject to a decision based solely on automated processing that significantly affects you.
We do not make such decisions: a person reviews the evidence and decides every application.

Some of these rights are limited where we must keep records to meet our funding obligations. We will explain if that applies to your request.

To use any of these rights, contact the Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@tcd.ie, or tell the STO and we will pass your request on straight away. We aim to respond within one month.

Questions about your outcome

If you want to know how your application was decided, or think a mistake was made, please contact the STO at senior.tutor@tcd.ie.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with how we have used your data, please contact the DPO first. You also have the right to complain to the Data Protection Commission (www.dataprotection.ie).

Changes to this notice

We will update this notice if our processing changes and tell applicants where the change is significant.

This version applies to the 2026/27 round.