



ICAS Foundation

Welcome Guide for New Students

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Section 1: Welcome!

Congratulations on securing a place on the ICAS Foundation Programme! We are proud of what our graduates and current students have achieved so far, and we're delighted to welcome everyone who has successfully applied to join us for the new academic year.

Your place on the ICAS Foundation programme has been awarded for the period stated on your Award Letter. If you meet the conditions set out in your Award Letter and Letter of Conditions throughout your time at university, you will keep your place on the programme for that period of time. You do not have to re-apply on an annual basis for our support, but please remember that you do have to re-apply each year for your government-supported student funding.

This guide will provide information on what you can expect throughout your time supported by the Foundation and provides some more details on the requirements set out in your Letter of Conditions. We hope it enables you to plan ahead and manage your time, especially during busy periods in your academic calendar.

Section 2: Starting Out with the ICAS Foundation

As part of our commitment to supporting you through your university experience, it's important to us that you understand both the benefits that you gain from being part of the ICAS Foundation programme, and our expectations of you as one of our students.

The ICAS Foundation will provide you with:

- Support from our staff in relation to any areas relating to our programme
- Support from a volunteer mentor, who is either a qualified CA or someone with extensive relevant experience
- Regular updates about areas or events which may be of interest or benefit to you

As one of our students, you are an important ambassador for the Foundation, so we expect that you will:

- Meet the conditions of funding as detailed in your offer letter and the Letter of Conditions.
- Engage with us on a regular basis, including responding promptly and within deadlines to any emails or information requests we may send, and advising us as soon as possible of any changes to your circumstances or course.
- Engage proactively with your mentor, including attending meetings and responding promptly to communications.
- Behave appropriately at all times, treating our staff, volunteers and those working with us with respect.
- Achieve grades on track for at least a 2:1 (Upper Second-Class Honours) throughout your time at university.
- Participate in promotional activities and attend ICAS Foundation-arranged events.

Section 3: How the ICAS Foundation Supports You

Students who are invited to join the ICAS Foundation Programme receive different types of support at various stages of their university journey.

Bursary Payments

We provide financial support to our students - the exact bursary amount you are offered will depend on your household income and personal circumstances, and is confirmed in your offer letter.

Mentoring Support

Every student is matched with a volunteer mentor who is either a qualified Chartered Accountant or someone who has extensive relevant experience. Our mentors can share their experiences of learning about the world of accounting, studying for exams and how they have approached applications for internships and graduate roles. This is a great opportunity for you as a student, and we certainly recommend that you make the most of your mentor's enthusiasm, passion and real-life experience.

Work Experience, Internships and Graduate Jobs

We provide our students with support in finding relevant opportunities, including internships and graduate jobs.

Section 3: How the ICAS Foundation Supports You

Bursary Payments

Bursary payments are paid in 2 instalments each year, usually:

- early / mid October, after you have returned your annual confirmation of matriculation (in future years, you will also need to have returned your end of year report and exam results).
- early / mid February, after you have returned your half-year report and exam results, demonstrating that you are on track to meet our academic conditions.

Payments are only processed when we have all the information we've requested, so please ensure that you return your confirmation of matriculation, reports and exam results on time.

If your personal circumstances change, for example the income of your parent or guardian, or you decide to change your course, then please let us know as soon as possible.

Students with match funding agreements may receive payments at slightly different times or from a different source (please see Section 4).

Section 3: How the ICAS Foundation Supports You

Bursary Payments

Your bursary is designed to support your academic studies and your personal development as you think about your future career. Some examples of how some students have used their bursary include:

- Academic Studies: purchase of laptop, printer, stationary, textbooks and other study materials.
- Living Expenses: accommodation rent, bills, contribution to household expenses if living at home.
- Personal Development: additional paid courses or journal subscriptions, internship travel expenses, membership fee for relevant university societies or event costs.

This is not an exhaustive list, but provides an indication of what type of expenses you might incur during the year. We will ask you in your half-year report and your end of year report how you have used the bursary in each semester.

Your bursary is not intended to support other members of your family, to pay off any debts you may have, for use mainly on leisure activities, or for saving the full amount for future use.

Section 3: How the ICAS Foundation Supports You

Mentoring Support

Along with our financial bursaries, mentoring support is an important part of the Foundation programme and full participation in the mentoring programme is a condition of our funding. As a Foundation student, we expect you to fully engage with your assigned mentor, meeting or communicating with them on a regular (generally monthly) basis. Your mentor is required to return a quarterly log to us which gives us an overview of your meetings and what has been discussed (your mentor should also make this log available to you for reference).

Our mentors come from a range of backgrounds and work environments, including practice, industry, business and education. They willingly give their time to volunteer so that you can benefit from their experience of the world of accounting, studying for exams and applying for internships and graduate roles.

You are usually matched with your mentor at the start of the academic year after you join the Foundation programme, although we may delay matching you with a mentor if you are under 18 years old when you join the programme or where mentor recruitment is still underway in your geographical area. If you have any queries about university or the programme before you are matched with your mentor, you can contact the ICAS Foundation staff team for assistance.

Section 3: How the ICAS Foundation Supports You

Work Experience, Internships and Graduate Roles

We encourage students to apply for work experience and internships at relevant stages of their university studies. As applications for jobs after university become more competitive, having relevant experience before you start applying for graduate jobs has become much more important. Work experience and internships are an excellent way to 'try out' a particular area of work or a certain company you may be considering as part of your career aspirations. There is often a good track record of successful internships leading directly to graduate roles.

For students in their final year, we encourage applications to graduate CA roles, which include the opportunity to undertake ICAS exams and gain this prestigious accountancy qualification over the following three years – these roles are often advertised from September with recruitment from October onwards.

As part of our support, we will contact you directly with information on opportunities you can apply for, which may include opportunities not widely advertised or exclusive to the ICAS Foundation. Your mentor can also provide support with applications and interviews. In return, we ask you to let us know how your applications are progressing and inform us once you have confirmed plans for any work experience, internships or a graduate role.

Section 3: How the ICAS Foundation Supports You

Student Wellbeing and Safeguarding

The ICAS Foundation takes student wellbeing and safeguarding very seriously. We want to ensure that we have offered all appropriate support to help you succeed in your studies, while prioritising your personal wellbeing.

We have formal safeguarding policies in place, and we are registered to complete criminal record checks under the Scottish PVG Scheme, which help us to ensure that our volunteers are allowed to work with young people, particularly those under the age of 18 years. If you have a concern about your safety as part of the ICAS Foundation programme, please first contact the ICAS Foundation team at Enquiries@ICASFoundation.org.uk.

The ICAS Foundation team are not trained in areas such as mental health first aid, so if you have serious concerns regarding your personal wellbeing, we always recommend speaking to your university's student support services who are trained to help with the types of challenges faced by many university students. Both your university and the ICAS Foundation may also signpost you to appropriate organisations which specialise in particular types of support.

Section 4: During the Academic Year

There is certain information that you will need to provide at specific points during the academic year.

If we don't receive this information on time, your bursary and participation in the programme may be affected.

Month	Action Required
September	Confirmation of Matriculation
October	Confirmation of work experience, internship or graduate role applications
November	Match-Funded students: confirmation of university payment
January	Half Year Report and Semester 1 exam results
February	Update on work experience, internship or graduate role applications
March	Match-Funded students: confirmation of second university payment
June	End of Year Report and End of Year Exam Results
At any time	Updates to personal information

Section 4: During the Academic Year

Confirmation of Matriculation

Matriculation is the point at which you formally become a university student. Each university has a different method for providing confirmation of matriculation. (Please note that your acceptance email is not sufficient to prove you have started university.)

University	Evidence
University of Glasgow	Certificate of Student Status
University of Strathclyde	Student Status Letter
Glasgow Caledonian University	Confirmation of Registration and Student Status
University of the West of Scotland	Confirmation of Student Status letter
University of Aberdeen	Student Certificate
Robert Gordon University	Confirmation of Registration and Student Status
University of Stirling	Certificate of Enrolment
University of Dundee	Confirmation of Matriculation
Abertay University	Self-Service Status Letter
University of Edinburgh	Certificate of Matriculation
Heriot-Watt University	Enrolment for Academic Year [x] letter
Lancaster University	Certificate of Registration and Student Status

If your university is not listed, then you should provide an official document showing:

- Your name, the university name and the title of the course you are attending
- The current academic year (i.e. 2023-24) and year of study you have commenced i.e. 1st yr, 2nd yr
- The date you started university and commenced on their course

Some universities provide these documents as downloads from your student portal.

At other universities, you will need to consult the relevant Student Services Support team.

This could be a letter or email from student services, your lecturer or course administrator, or a screenshot from the university portal.

Section 4: During the Academic Year

Half-Year / End of Year Reports and Exam Results

In January and June each year, we ask all students to provide a report describing their experience at university.

We will provide a template at the time detailing the information to be covered – this generally includes:

- The highlights of your semester or academic year
- Any challenges you have faced at university
- Your feedback on the mentoring support you have received
- An overview of how you have made use of your bursary funding
- Personal challenges that may have impacted on your performance at university

Your report should provide us with enough detail to assess how you are progressing with your studies, so if your report is too short, we will ask you to add more information before we can process your report.

You will also need to provide official confirmation of your most recent exam results either with the report or, if your results have not been returned by the report deadline, as soon as they become available. This can be a transcript for your university, or a screenshot from your university portal.

The report and your available exam results must be returned before we will release your next bursary payment.

Section 4: During the Academic Year

Half-Year / End of Year Reports and Exam Results - Example

Student Name	AN Other	Report Date	20 January 2023	University	University of Everywhere	Course Title	Accounting and Finance
Highlights of Semester 1, including any relevant career events attended							
During Semester 1, my highlights have been:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My Accounting 1 course, where I learnt about new aspects of accounting I found really interesting. I was really pleased to achieve 65% in the exams for this course and plan to take the follow up course next year.• Joining the university Accounting society and meeting new people from different years							
How have you used the ICAS Foundation bursary in Semester 1?							
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I purchased a laptop and printer so that I can complete my assignments in my accommodation, rather than having to use the library facilities• I used some of the funds to pay for my annual membership and event costs for the Accounting society, as I think this will help my personal development• I used the remainder of the bursary for my accommodation costs							
Have you faced any personal or academic challenges which have impacted on your studies?							
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I found it difficult to settle in at university, as I was used to how I learned at school and the assistance I received from teachers, so having to adapt to lectures and tutorials has been quite different. The Finance 1 course was particularly challenging for this, so next semester I plan to ask for help from my lecturers much sooner• I found it challenging to be living away from home for the first time, so having a laptop to video call home was really helpful.							
If you have been allocated a mentor, please provide us with some feedback on your experience							
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My mentor has been really helpful at talking through my university work and learning style. We discussed some methods I could use to adapt my studying to the new way of learning at university, and I'm now trying one of these this semester.• My mentor has also shared their experience of university and a graduate CA training contract, so it's helpful to start thinking now about what interests me and what routes I can take into the profession.							

Section 4: During the Academic Year

Match-Funded Students

Students at some universities where we have match-funded agreements will be asked to provide us with written (email) confirmation that they have received a bursary payment from the university, including the date of payment and the amount paid into your bank account.

Example Statement:

I received a payment of £xxx from the University of Xxx on 15th October 2022.

If this applies to you, it will be noted in your Award Letter, issued when you first joined the programme.

Work Experience, Internships and Graduate Roles

At various points during the academic year, we will ask you to let us know how your applications are proceeding and what plans you have for your spring break, summer break or after graduation.

Section 4: During the Academic Year

Updates to Personal Information

If any of your personal information changes while you are a Foundation student, you should immediately notify us.

Example Personal Changes	Example Changes to Household Income / Additional Support
Address, email or mobile phone number	Parent / guardian has a change to their level of income (job / pension)
Change of bank details	Parent / guardian has a change to the benefit payments they receive
Change of university course	Parent / guardian changes their personal circumstances (marriage etc)
Considering leaving / have left university	You receive an offer to have accommodation expenses paid for one or more years
Change to level of household income	You are offered a one-off / ongoing scholarship from university / external company
Any additional funding or external support	You undertake a full year paid placement during your penultimate year of studies

This list is not exhaustive, so if you have any queries about whether you need to inform us, please get in touch as soon as possible. The ICAS Foundation will review your change in circumstances and let you know the outcome of this review.

Section 5: Communication

The ICAS Foundation sends regular email updates to all its current students, which can include:

- Information circulated from partner organisations
- Information about internships and graduate roles
- Information about events and other opportunities

We also encourage you to engage with our social media channels, as we often post quick updates on these channels for events, news and opportunities which may become available.

- Facebook www.facebook.com/ICASFoundation
- Twitter twitter.com/ICASFoundation
- LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/icasfoundation

We welcome constructive feedback from our students on how we can improve our programme and what they would value from the Foundation. We may request formal feedback on occasion through surveys and other methods, or you can contact us with any queries or suggestions.

Section 6: If You're Having Difficulties

If you are having any serious difficulties with your studies, we encourage you to inform your university tutor or director of studies as soon as possible.

Your lecturers and tutors are there to help you. We encourage you to speak to them if you have any queries about your coursework, or if you are unsure about how your coursework or exam results have been calculated. This is particularly true if you are assigned any grades lower than you anticipated – understanding at an early stage if you need to improve your coursework research or your exam technique will help you attain the best grades possible throughout your time at university.

We understand that you may face challenges with your studying or in your personal life, and we want to ensure you always have the best opportunity to achieve.

Your mentor and the team at the ICAS Foundation can provide support, although we are unable to assist you if we are unaware that you are facing challenges. We are happy to discuss any situation you may be experiencing and any options which your university may have suggested.

Section 6: If You're Having Difficulties

Additional University Support Services

Most universities have a specialised Student Support services team, who are there to help you with any queries or difficulties you may have. These facilities are provided by the university to help you, so we would encourage you to use these services if they might be of benefit.

These services can include:

- **Academic or Study Skills:** for example, they may provide group sessions on coursework styles, delivering presentations or effective exam revision, or one-to-one support.
- **Careers Service:** These advisors can provide assistance with your CV or mock interview sessions.
- **Counselling Services:** If you are having challenges with anxiety or your mental health, these individuals are trained to provide confidential and effective assistance

Section 6: If You're Having Difficulties

Compared to school or college, university learning is very self-directed, so it's important that you take responsibility for your personal learning right from the start of your time at university.

One of the main challenges all university students have faced in recent years has been adapting to online or blended learning (where the majority of lectures and seminars are recorded or held online). You might find that some of your classes are still held online during this academic year, or have been recorded for playback at a convenient time – if so, here are some tips for making the best of this style of learning:

- Make sure you have a study plan, with regular slots blocked out for lectures, assignments and personal revision time. Review your plan halfway through your semester / term and, if it isn't working, make changes.
- Speak to your mentor and get their feedback on how they planned their studying as a student.
- Choose the right location for each type of study slot – if you are having difficulty focusing at home, check your access to university study spaces or any local facilities such as a council library. Remember, you may have access to other available study spaces outside your main university library or department study areas.
- Get familiar with your university's academic support or study skills facilities. This may include online resources to help you with planning your study, or you can often book a session with an advisor who can help you understand different styles of learning and what could work best for you.

Section 6: If You're Having Difficulties

Failure to Meet Bursary Conditions

If you believe that you are unable to meet any of the conditions of your Award Letter or Letter of Conditions, please inform us as soon as possible so that we can discuss what support may be available to assist you. Remember that we expect all of our students to be on track for at least Upper Second Class Honours (2:1, evaluated as an average of above 60% across your academic courses) throughout your time at university.

In some situations, ongoing failure to meet our bursary conditions may mean that you are unable to continue as part of the ICAS Foundation programme. This could include:

- If you don't return the two annual reports or exam results that we require, by any stated deadline.
- If you don't meet our grade requirements (on an ongoing basis).
- If you choose not to participate effectively in the mentoring programme.

Removing a student from the ICAS Foundation programme is a decision which is not taken lightly, and we will not take this step without having made every effort to understand your situation and, where possible, support you to resolve any challenges.

Section 7: After Graduation

Our ICAS Foundation graduates are important ambassadors for our programme, so as part of our ongoing work to promote the Foundation's work and encourage further support, we often ask our former students to assist us with promotional activities. This could include speaking at events, providing quotes for promotional campaigns or assisting current students. We expect all of our former students to help those who follow them, where this is feasible or where there are opportunities to provide this support.

We coordinate ongoing post-graduation participation through our Alumni Association, with activities including newsletters, events and surveys. Once you've graduated, please keep us up to date with what's happening in your career, as this is very helpful for us when looking for company contacts or future promotional assistance.

In return, we make a lifelong commitment to our alumni to provide ongoing development and networking opportunities, informal mentoring and notifications about future opportunities which may be of interest.

Section 8: The ICAS Foundation Staff team

Name	Job Title
Sanjay Singh	Director
Amy Drysdale	Operations and Engagement Manager

For all initial enquiries, please contact enquiries@icasfoundation.org.uk.

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