

FOUNDATION FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Guidelines for Financial Assistance for Students at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta

Academic Year 2024-2025

1. Introduction

A financial assistance scheme is being established by the Foundation for Theological Studies for undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta in accordance with the following guidelines.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the financial assistance scheme are to:

- assist individuals to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate studies in theology and pastoral ministry;
- encourage research and development in these areas of study in Malta;
- prepare and empower persons for catechesis, professional ethics, pastoral and spiritual ministry in Malta.

3. Description

3.1 Ten (10) bursaries are being offered, this year, for the Academic Year 2024-2025 by the Foundation for Theological Studies in collaboration with other institutions and benefactors to undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta.

3.2 The postgraduate bursaries for the M.A. programmes are limited to 2000 euros given in three steps:

- 30% on the successful completion of the first academic year (600 euros)
- 30% on the successful completion of the second academic year (600 euros)
- 40% on the final submission of the dissertation (800 euros), in accordance with University regulations and bye-laws governing postgraduate degree courses.

3.3 The postgraduate bursaries for the Postgraduate Diploma in Pastoral Psychology are limited to 1200 euros given in two steps: 50% on the successful completion of each academic year (600 euros).

3.4 The undergraduate bursaries for the B.A. (Hons) Theology (Part-Time) degree are limited to 2000 euros given in five steps: 20% on the successful completion of each academic year (400 euros).

3.5 The undergraduate bursaries for the Diploma in Religious Studies are limited to 800 euros, given in two steps: 50% on the successful completion of each academic year (400 euros).

4. Eligibility

In order to apply for financial assistance, an applicant should be enrolling as a First-Year student in any one of the following fee-paying part-time courses in accordance with the respective University Regulations and Bye-laws:

- Diploma in Religious Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Theology
- Postgraduate Diploma in Pastoral Psychology
- Master of Arts in Environmental Ethics
- Master of Arts in Matrimonial Canon Law
- Master of Arts in Spiritual Companionship
- Master of Arts in Spirituality

5. Application

5.1 Applicants are to send the relevant documents to the Foundation for Theological Studies by email at bursaries.fts@maltadiocese.org. The subject line must bear the words 'Financial Assistance' and the applicant's ID number (or Passport number in the case of non-Maltese citizens).

5.2 A scanned copy of these documents must be uploaded with the application:

- the applicant's *curriculum vitae* (Europass)
- a letter of motivation (by the applicant)
- a letter of reference (by a leader of a church institution, entity or association)
- the names and email addresses of two referees (one from a church background and another from a different background)
- any relevant academic degree certificates
- any undergraduate or postgraduate dissertation/s (if applicable)

5.3 Applications should be received by **8 October 2024 at noon** (local time).

5.4 It is the responsibility of the applicants to ensure that their application is successfully submitted and to keep a printed copy of it.

6. Evaluation and Selection

6.1 The Financial Assistance Board (FAB) is responsible for all matters concerning the evaluation of applications and selection of beneficiaries according to the pre-established criteria mentioned in art. 6.3.

6.2 The FAB is composed of five (5) members:

- the Director of the Foundation for Theological Studies (or his/her representative)
- the Dean of the Faculty of Theology (or his/her representative)
- the Director of the Pastoral Formation Institute (or his/her representative)
- a member of the Foundation for Theological Studies appointed by the same Foundation for a term of three years

- a member of the Faculty of Theology appointed by the same Faculty for a term of three years.

6.3 Applications are considered on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- academic ability and merit of the applicant
- quality and relevance of the letter of motivation
- performance during the interview (if this is deemed to be necessary by the FAB).

6.4 In the case of postgraduate applicants, preference will be given to applicants who have completed a bachelor degree in theology. Prior or on-going involvement in pastoral ministry is a further asset.

6.5 It is the sole prerogative of the FAB to:

- interview an applicant where necessary
- decide upon and award the financial assistance
- apply these Guidelines with discretion.

6.6 The FAB will notify all applicants of the decision by 30 October 2024. The beneficiaries shall be given an agreement that stipulates the terms and conditions of the financial assistance.

7. Terms and conditions

7.1 Throughout the course, beneficiaries are *expected* to:

- attend classes and taught activities
- show interest in the intellectual and cultural life of the Faculty of Theology
- notify the Course Coordinator if they are absent from classes for a period longer than two weeks.
- complete the set programme within the established time-frame.

7.2 Postgraduate beneficiaries are *expected* to collaborate in the organisational framework of seminars and conferences of the Faculty of Theology when invited by the Faculty.

7.3 On the completion of their degree, beneficiaries are *invited* to consider offering their services for a period of at least three years either in an institution which forms part of the Archdiocese of Malta or another local Church-related group. This service may be offered either on a voluntary basis or on a remunerated part-time basis, or, where applicable, on a remunerated full-time basis, following established recruitment practices. The beneficiary may ask the FAB to coordinate this service.

7.4 On the completion of their degree, postgraduate beneficiaries are *invited* to submit an article for peer-review for publication in *Melita Theologica*, the academic journal of the Faculty of Theology.

7.5 It is the prerogative of the FAB to monitor, if required, the above commitments of the beneficiary.

8. Termination

The financial assistance mentioned in par. 3 is terminated immediately if:

- new information reveals any condition which renders a beneficiary ineligible for the financial assistance
- beneficiaries do not comply with the stipulated terms and conditions and do not remedy the breach after having received a warning by the FAB
- beneficiaries formally discontinue their studies
- beneficiaries terminate the assistance at their own wish by notifying the FAB.

9. Criteria for non-utilised bursaries

9.1 If not all the bursaries are utilised, the FAB may decide to offer part or all of the non-utilised sum to candidates who were unsuccessful in obtaining a bursary in the previous year/s and who are still following the course they had applied for.

9.2 In cases contemplated in 9.1, the FAB is to contact the former candidates and enquire whether they are still interested in receiving financial assistance. In its deliberation on the use of non-utilised bursaries, the FAB will take into account the ranking order of the unsuccessful applicants in the previous year/s.

9.3 The amount offered to the candidates mentioned in par. 9.1 is limited to the amount received at the end of the particular year reached by a candidate in that course, and any remaining year/s of that course.

10. Information

For further queries and information please contact the Foundation for Theological Studies at bursaries.fts@maltadiocese.org.