**Guidance for the COLA Applications**

1. **Personal Statement –** You should write something meaningful (at least one paragraph) that outlines why you need help from the scheme. Writing one line and not relating it to your supporting documents makes it difficult to assess your application and may result in a rejection. Do not use AI (e.g. ChatGPT) to write the statement for you.

1. We need proper documents**, NOT** Screenshots – screenshots of bank statements etc makes it very difficult to assess applications and will delay the process and might lead to rejection.
2. **Bank Details –** Please check over your designated/preferred bank account for the payment to be sent into. Make it clear as possible as if you provide the incorrect information, the payment will be delayed.
3. **Evidence** - Try to provide enough evidence to support your applications.

**How is my application assessed?**

The application is assessed by our team. They will examine one rental agreement and two bank statements. They will also check to see if you are paying rent or any other everyday expenditures. We will take note of it if you are not paying any rent. To help us with the application procedure, it would be appropriate to draw attention to any problems you may be having or to specify whether you are currently not paying rent.

If your application is incomplete, unclear or does not contain all the requested documentation, it will delay our decision. Please note that we reserve the right to request additional information if it would help with assessing your application.

If you are missing any evidence, please contact the [ofsgrant@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:ofsgrant@westminster.ac.uk).

**How will I be notified and paid?**

We aim to provide a written decision within 4 weeks of your application being submitted, although at busy times this may not always be possible.

You will receive an email telling you of our decision and if successful, the expected payment date and when it should be arriving in your account.

Your feedback will help support our efforts in persuading other donors to support these financial support schemes. Please provide a testimonial of how this scheme will help and we would want to gather student information how well the scheme went. You can let us know on our email [ofsgrant@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:ofsgrant@westminster.ac.uk) .

**How do I apply?**

Please submit the application on our online form. We do not accept applications through our emails.

The supporting evidence required is determined by your circumstances and is listed on the application form. However, as a minimum, all students will need to provide:

* 2 months bank statements for **all** accounts held by you (pdf’s, not screenshots)
* A supporting/personal statement
* An accommodation contract or tenancy agreement/mortgage agreement (again no screenshots)

Delays in the assessment of your application may occur if information is provided in another format. Photos and screenshots are not always clear, and we may not be able to open zip files for example.