

Background

- LSE Strategy 2030's priority: "Support underrepresented groups to access and succeed at LSE" + Access and Participation Plan
- Anecdotal knowledge suggests that **many students eligible for financial support tend not to apply for it**
- This, in turn, affects their academic and mental well-being and further exacerbates inequalities through a cascading effect (Moore et al., 2021).

Research Questions

- RQ1:** Which factors are associated with further financial support applications in LSE Bursary recipients?
- RQ2:** What are some of the drivers and barriers to eligible LSE students applying for financial support?
- RQ3:** How can we encourage more eligible students to apply for financial support at LSE?

Mixed- Methods Approach

Quantitative Aspect

Data Source: **2017-2022 Records of LSE Bursary Recipients**

Statistical Techniques: **Logistic regressions** + 10-fold cross-validation (robustness check)

Key Variables: **In-course funding received (DV), academic year, bursary amount awarded, scholarship applications, scholarship received, scholarship amount**

Qualitative Aspect

Methods: **Interviews** with students about **their experience** applying for financial support at LSE

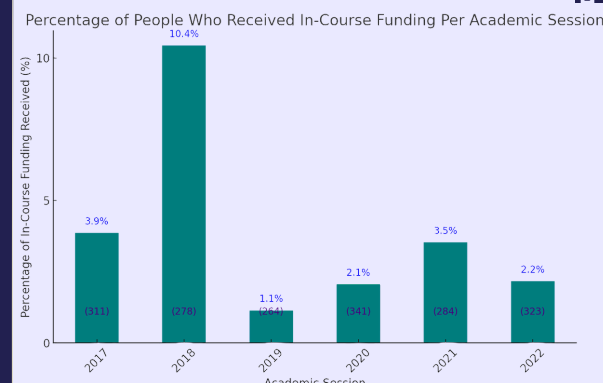
Participants: 10 participants, 8 Postgraduate and 2 Undergraduate students

Applications Accepted= 3, 2 were first rejected

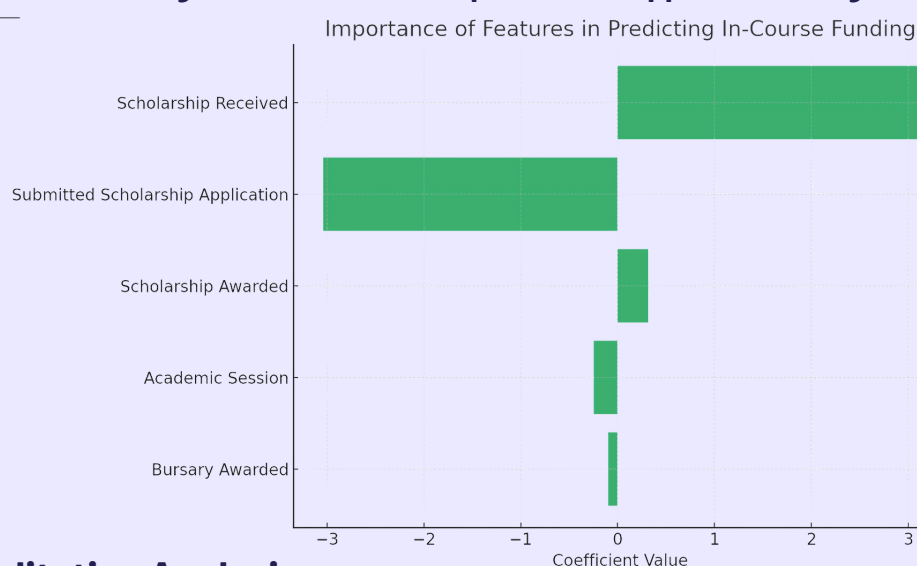
Applications Rejected= 6

Main Findings

Quantitative Analysis



- 1. Receiving a scholarship increases the odds of also receiving in-course funding by a substantial margin.**
→ Need not captured by bursary amount? Heightened awareness?
- 2. Students who apply for scholarships but perhaps do not receive them are less likely to receive in-course funding.**
→ Resource allocation bias? Highly competitive pool leaving those "not at the top" behind? Application fatigue?



Qualitative Analysis

Impact on Quality of Life:

Many students brought up their struggle with **"The cost of living crisis"**, this ranged from being **"frugal"** with personal spending to more basic needs: **"Every day and Every night I queue for homeless food ...I can barely survive"** (P3). This was particularly difficult during a long waiting time **"already started like making adjustments."** (P9)

Social Support:

While some students had family support during the process, most wished they could speak to a staff or **"classmates"** outside of email exchanges: **"I had the feeling that I was also talking with another robot or with another machine"** (P10)

"Luxury of Time" Accessibility and Time:

The majority found the application to be difficult and time-consuming with **"intimidating language"**. For international students **"Cultural Differences"** was also a struggle. Students also struggled with understanding eligibility criteria and guidelines.

"Absolute mental drain and Stress" Mental Health:

Students found themselves **"Vulnerable"** during the application process in addition to mental health struggles already experienced due to circumstances: **"It's running your energy... it's also kind of a failure mental health on top of your studies on top of your personal challenge"** (P10)

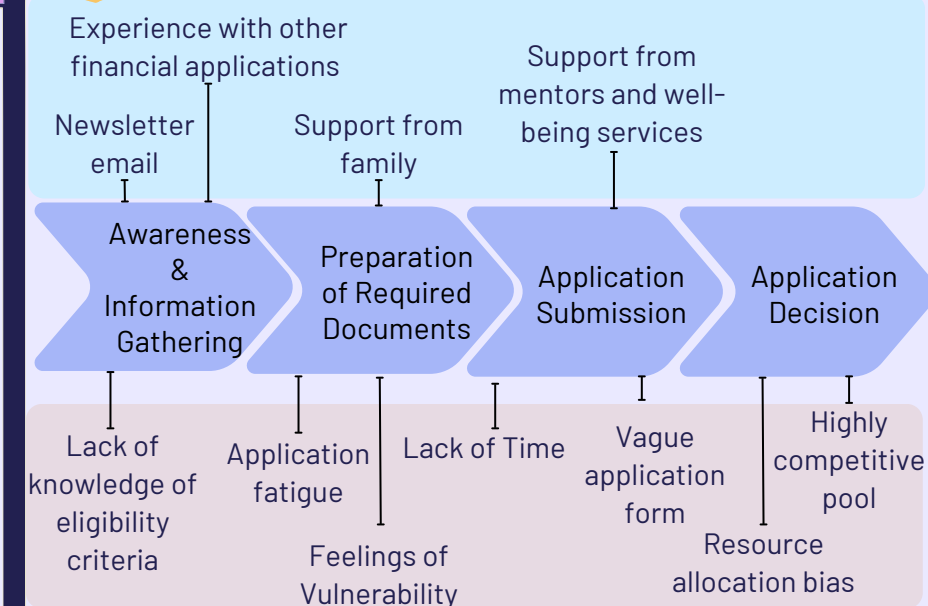
"If you're not from a certain financial bracket it's more of like survival consistently." (P2)

"It's very inhumane as well... You kind of just wanna talk to someone and you wanna explain." (P8)

"Having to write a motivation letter... It was an emotional experience. quite a painful process"

"it's the 1st time I've been asked... This happened like 4 years ago, but it's still really annoying me... I actually have held it against LSE for a long time..."

Facilitators & Barriers



Recommendations

Goals

- Integrate into the Access and Participation Plan
- Address compounding disadvantages for those who are marginally less competitive** in scholarship applications

Interventions

- Provide **examples of suitable evidence** for application
- "Making the website just have **language** which is more **empathetic**" (P2)
- "increase the **opportunities to direct communication [with] former applicants** and future applicants". (P3)
- Make **Financial Services and Well-being services** "a bit more **Joined Up**" (P9)
- Advertise **office hours and drop-in sessions** with a **"Neutral person"** (P5)
- Create **LSE Life workshop** recordings
- Utilise **academic mentors** as information delivery channels
- Email students at the **beginning of the year or near holidays**

References

Moore, A., Nguyen, A., Rivas, S., Bany-Mohammed, A., Majeika, J., & Martinez, L. (2021). A qualitative examination of the impacts of financial stress on college students' well-being: Insights from a large, private institution. SAGE Open Medicine, 9, 205031212110181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20503121211018122>