Independent (Estranged) Student Bursary – Terms & Conditions

Bursary details

1. The Independent (Estranged) Student Bursary is a payment of £1,800 per year for undergraduate students aged 18-24 with a ‘Home’ fee status who have confirmed independent student status due to estrangement.

2. At the University of Hertfordshire, we use Stand Alone’s definition of an independent (estranged) student. This states that an independent student is "someone who has not had verbal or written contact with both of your biological, adoptive parents or your only living parent for a significant period of time and this will not change." A significant period of time is usually considered twelve months or longer prior, although periods of less than twelve months will be considered in some circumstances.

3. Independent student status due to estrangement is confirmed through Student Finance England (or relevant awarding body) via the University of Hertfordshire’s Student Finance Team.

Eligibility

4. To be eligible for the bursary, students must be:
   a. under the age of 25 on the first day of the academic semester in which they start their programme of study, according to the dates published in the University of Hertfordshire’s published academic calendar;
   b. registered on a full-time University of Hertfordshire undergraduate course delivered directly by the University of Hertfordshire or one of its consortium colleges;
   c. actively studying (i.e. not in a period of dormancy and suspension);
   d. a ‘Home’ fee paying student as assessed by the University of Hertfordshire (find out more about your fee status here); and
   e. receiving the maximum Maintenance Loan as assessed by the Student Loans Company.

5. Students must have confirmed independent student status due to estrangement through Student Finance England (find out more about how independent student status is assessed here).

6. Students will not be eligible if:
   a. they are studying an initial or foundation year prior to their undergraduate degree. They will be eligible for the bursary (subject to the above conditions) once they have completed their initial year or year zero programme and have progressed to year one of their undergraduate degree;
   b. they are studying a distance learning course/programme;
   c. they are undertaking a degree apprenticeship; or
   d. they are studying part-time.

Application process

7. Students will need to provide proof of confirmed independent student status due to estrangement. This must be in the form of a confirmation letter or email from Student Finance England. Students will need to have confirmed independent student status due to estrangement for each year that they receive the bursary. This means that if they have this status for their current academic year only, they will need to reapply for this in subsequent years in order to continue receiving the bursary.
8. Students will also need to provide a copy of their 2022/23 Student Finance England Notification of Entitlement letter.

9. All students who meet the eligibility criteria and provide the evidenced detailed above will be considered for the bursary. All applications will be considered on an individual basis and awarded subject to the availability of funding.

Payment process

10. The bursary will typically be paid in three instalments of £600 in each year of an undergraduate degree programme.

11. For students starting their course in September and with confirmed independent student status due to estrangement at this point, this will typically be:
   a. 1st payment – October
   b. 2nd payment – January
   c. 3rd payment - April

12. The payment date and bursary amount may vary depending on when a student has received confirmation of their status:
   a. If a student receives their confirmed status between September and December, they will receive the full bursary of £1,800 in three instalments as outlined above.
   b. If a student receives their confirmed status between January and March, they will receive the second and third instalments only. Therefore, a total of £1,200 will be received.
   c. If a student receives their confirmed status in April, they will receive only the third instalment of £600.
   d. If a student receives their confirmed status after April, they will not be eligible for the bursary during that academic cycle. However, discretionary financial support may be provided on a case-by-case basis.

13. Payment in subsequent years will only be made if the student progresses to the next level of study.

14. Returning students who received the bursary in the previous academic year will be contacted in September to confirm their ongoing eligibility and to ask them to update their bank details. Students who are no longer eligible (for example if they were granted independent student status by estrangement for the previous academic year only) will be informed of the process for re-confirming their independent student status through Student Finance England.

15. Other students who have self-identified as independent but do not yet have confirmed independent status through Student Finance England will also be contacted and informed of the process for confirming their status.

16. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure the bank details they provide to the University of Hertfordshire are correct. Incorrect bank details may cause delays in payment.

17. Bursary payments cannot be claimed retrospectively for previous academic years.

Change of circumstances
18. Students will be able to receive an award for the duration of their undergraduate course, usually for a maximum of 3 years.

19. An extra year of funding may be provided to cover exceptional circumstances, such as a repeat year. Any such additional funding will be at the discretion of the University of Hertfordshire and subject to availability of funds.

20. **Dormancy:** Students who take a period of dormancy (a voluntary suspension of studies) and are in receipt of the bursary; would not receive any further payments whilst dormant.

21. **Placements or study abroad:** Students will continue to receive the bursary if they undertake a placement or study abroad as part of their degree subject to confirmation by the programme lead or equivalent that the student is undertaking a placement or study abroad as part of their degree programme.

22. **Mode of study:** Students who change mode of study from full-time to part-time or to distance learning when then their bursary will no longer be eligible for the bursary.

23. **Suspension of study:** Should a student be suspended for any reason; bursary payments will usually be withdrawn for the period of suspension. Reinstatement of payments will be dependent on the student returning to active study status. Students will not receive any payments that were withheld during the period of suspension.

24. **Withdrawal from study:** Students who withdraw from their programme at any stage prior to completion will no longer receive further bursary payments.

25. **Transfer of course:** Students who transfer to a different programme of study will continue to receive the bursary for the duration of their undergraduate degree up to a maximum of four years. For example, a student who completes Year 1 of a degree programme and then transfers to a different programme, will receive the bursary for a maximum of a further three years. A student who completes Year 1 and Year 2 of a programme and then transfers would be eligible to receive the bursary for a further two years.

**Other bursaries**

26. Students cannot be considered for the Independent (Estranged) Student Bursary if they are eligible for the Care Leaver Bursary.

27. Students awarded the Independent (Estranged) Students Bursary may also be eligible for the UH Bursary. They may also be eligible to apply for University of Hertfordshire scholarships.

28. **Complaints:** Complaints will be dealt with according to the University of Hertfordshire’s complaints procedure. In the first stage informal complaints should be

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1 Bursaries usually refer to a one off annual or termly payment, to help with living costs, awarded on the basis of student background or personal circumstances. Scholarships can be either to support with living costs or to cover tuition fees and are usually awarded via application on the basis of achievement. Details of all of the bursaries and scholarships available at the University of Hertfordshire are available here: [https://www.herts.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/financial-support/scholarships-grants-bursaries](https://www.herts.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/financial-support/scholarships-grants-bursaries)
made to Widening Access and Student Success via studentsuccess@herts.ac.uk. Every reasonable effort will be made to respond to the issue raised and reach an informal resolution. If a resolution is not reached at this stage, a formal complaint can be made using the process detailed in the University of Hertfordshire’s complaints procedure.

**Further information and contacts**
For further information about the Independent (Estranged) Student Bursary, or to discuss your eligibility, please contact studentsuccess@herts.ac.uk.