

Welfare benefits for disabled students

Information for UK undergraduates

If you are currently in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and you will be starting a full-time course of study this information will help you prepare financially for the transition.

1. Apply for your student funding through Student Finance England or regional funding body and/or NHS Bursaries. Visit www.essex.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/ for information about what is available and how to apply. If you will be funded by Student Finance England or regional funding body, when you apply for your funding send a copy of your benefit award letter (DLA or PIP).
2. Notify your benefit provider of your change in circumstances (you will be a full-time student) and any change in income. Your disability benefit (DLA or PIP) should not be affected.
3. As a disabled student in receipt of DLA or PIP you can apply for housing benefit if you are paying rent, including if you live in University accommodation. Information is here: <https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit> but you will apply directly to your local council, in Colchester you can apply online: <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/benefits>.

You will be asked to give details of your income; include any student funding. Some of this will be taken into account in the benefit calculation. Your student funding is for the academic year only so apply for reassessment each summer vacation and again at the start of each academic year.

Note: Universal Credit (UC) will replace housing benefit and some other benefits; the rollout dates may vary from place to place and vary for different groups of claimants. Once UC is fully rolled out, as a full-time student you will only be entitled to apply if you are assessed as having 'limited capability for work' or have a child or children living with you. You can find the latest information online at: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>.

4. Once you have registered on your course, if you will be living off campus apply for your council tax exemption or discount at <https://www.essex.ac.uk/studentdocs/>.

You may be able to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances for course-related support, contact our Disability Team for more information: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/disability/funding.aspx>.

For help with benefit applications contact the Disability Rights UK helpline for students on 0800 328 5050 (open Tuesdays 11.30am–1.30pm and Thursdays 1.30pm–3.30pm) or email: students@disabilityrightsuk.org.