

University of Essex

Estranged Bursary 2025-26

We recognise that for students who are estranged from their parents/guardians, accessing financial support may be particularly challenging. This bursary is in place to support costs associated with university and is offered as part of our commitment to widening participation at university, making higher education more accessible.

If you are a new or continuing undergraduate or postgraduate student and Student Finance England (or other UK government funding provider) have verified you are an estranged student and you were under the age of 25 at the start of the 2025-26 academic year, you could be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,500.

The deadline to apply for this bursary is **Friday 17th July 2026**.

Definitions

Only students who meet the definition of '**Estranged**' outlined below will be eligible for this bursary.

Estranged

- A young person studying without the support and approval of either parent due to a breakdown in their relationship. This might be biological, step or adoptive parents, or possibly wider family members who have been involved in their care.
- A person who has not had verbal or written contact with both of their biological, adoptive parents or their 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 to the start of the course, but this can also depend on individual circumstances.

Students who fall within the following circumstances **are not** considered Estranged:

- Students who feel unsupported by their parents financially and/or emotionally
- Students whose parents/guardians have a low income
- Students who live separately from their parent/guardian
- Students who have recently fallen out with their parent/guardian.

We also offer a [Care Experienced Bursary](#). Being a care leaver or care experienced is different to estrangement.

Terms and Conditions

Eligibility

You must meet the criteria listed below to be eligible for an award:

- Students must have been verified as estranged by Student Finance England (or other UK government funding provider) during the 2025-26 academic year.
- This bursary is restricted to students who have been assessed as paying Home fees and are entirely self-funded*.
- You must be under the age of 25 at the start of the 2025-26 academic year,.
- Students must register at the University of Essex on a full-time or part-time**, undergraduate or postgraduate course in academic year 2025-26.
- Students must have applied for and have been **approved** for funding from Student Finance England (SFE) (or other UK government funding provider) with the University of Essex as their chosen institution and have consented to the sharing of data.
- Undergraduate students must have had a **means-tested assessment** for funding from SFE (or other UK funding provider).

*Students receiving a repayable loan to fund their studies will be considered as self-funded. This includes but isn't restricted to tuition fee loans from Student Finance England or other UK funding body.

**Substantial part time refers to a student who is registered on a part-time programme that is at least 50% of the full-time equivalent programme.

Students who are not eligible

The following students are not eligible for this award regardless of meeting the above criteria:

- Students who have not been verified as estranged by Student Finance England (or other UK funding provider) during the 2025-26 academic year.
- Students who are not in attendance, and on an assessment only programme.
- Students who are undertaking a repeat year of study or are repeating part-time.
- Students who are over the age of 25 at the start of the 2025-26 academic year.
- Students whose course is sponsored by an employer.

- Students on a distance learning programme.
- Students on unsubstantial part-time or short courses.
- Students who are studying through a University of Essex Partner (e.g. Kaplan, University of Essex Online, Tavistock, etc.).
- Students on Higher/Degree Apprenticeship courses.

Evidence

The Funding Team will check your Student Finance England funding record to confirm that you have been verified as an estranged student.

If there is evidence in your communication with the university or your student record that suggests you are **not** estranged from your parents/guardians when we are assessing your application for this bursary, we reserve the right to request further evidence or to refuse your application.

How to apply

The deadline to apply for this bursary is Friday 17th July 2026.

1. Ensure that you meet the eligibility criteria above and you have carefully read these T&Cs.
2. Login to your **Blackbullion** account – you will need to register as a University of Essex student if you do not already have an account.
3. Click the '*Funds*' tab and select '*Estranged Bursary*'.
4. Follow the instructions to complete the application form, upload the required evidence and submit your application.

Assessment and payment

- We aim to complete an assessment within 3 weeks of a full and complete application and evidence. You will be notified of the outcome to your **Essex email account**.
- If you are successful in being granted an award and are studying full-time, you will receive a bursary of £1,500. If you are studying part-time** you will receive £750.
- Awards will be split into **two instalments**, with payments made by the end of January and the end of April.
- We will contact you prior to each payment date with instructions on how to receive payment of your bursary.

- Students who are awarded the bursary **after** the January payment date will receive the full award by the end of April. Students who are awarded the bursary **after** the April payment date will receive an ad-hoc payment of the full amount and will be contacted regarding the payment date.
- If you have not claimed your bursary by **Friday 29th July 2026**, you will no longer be eligible for the bursary and you will not receive payment for the 2025-26 academic year.

Can I hold this with other awards?

The Estranged Bursary cannot be held in conjunction with the Refugee Bursary or the Care Experienced Bursary.

With the exception of the above, the Estranged Bursary can be held in conjunction with other University awards that you may be eligible for, including the University's Financial Support Funds.

Appeals

You may appeal if you think you have valid grounds. Appeals will only be upheld if it is deemed that the application assessor's original decision would or should have been different, while taking into consideration the eligibility criteria noted in these T&Cs.

Appeals that do not have valid grounds will be dismissed. Before requesting an appeal, please read the eligibility criteria above first. If you still believe that you have valid grounds and meet all eligibility criteria, please detail your reasoning in an email to the [Funding Team](#) within 2 weeks of your initial outcome email.

Your appeal will be considered at the discretion of the Funding Manager or their nominee, and you will receive an outcome within 2 weeks.

Resolution of disputes

Acceptance of this bursary constitutes acceptance of these terms and conditions. Registered students should contact the [Funding Team](#) in the first instance for guidance regarding this award. In cases not covered by the above terms and conditions, or where a student claims exceptional circumstances, or disputes a decision not to make payments due under this scheme, final appeals on decisions regarding eligibility must be made via the [Student Complaints process](#). The Academic Registrar or their nominee will review the case and their decision will be final.

These terms and conditions apply to the Estranged Bursary awarded to students for the academic year 2025-26. The University of Essex reserves the right to update these terms and conditions as necessary.