

University of Essex Care Experienced Bursary 2023-24

This bursary is offered as part of our commitment to accessibility and widening participation for higher education and to support students without family support.

If you're a new or continuing undergraduate or postgraduate student who was in UK local authority care at any point in your life and for any period of time, you could be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,500.

The deadline to apply for 2023-24 is 24th July 2024

We also offer an [Estranged Bursary](#). Estrangement is different to being Care Experienced. If you don't meet the eligibility criteria below, please check the terms and conditions for the Estranged Bursary to ensure you apply to the correct fund.

Terms and Conditions

Eligibility

Below is a list of the full eligibility criteria you must meet all the following criteria to be eligible for an award:

- You are a new or continuing, full time or part-time **registered** student at the University of Essex in academic year 2023-24
- You have been assessed as a Home fee-paying student and are ordinarily resident in the UK (overseas fee-paying students are not eligible)
- You are undertaking undergraduate or postgraduate study
- You are under the age of 25 at the start of the 2023-24 academic year.

AND

- You have been in UK local authority care at any point in your life, for any period of time. This includes:

Care leavers

- You have been ‘looked after’ for at least 13 weeks by a UK local authority at some point since you were 14 years old, and were in care on or after your 16th birthday;

Other care experienced

- You spent time in UK local authority care (e.g. foster care or children’s home).
- You were privately fostered.
- You were ‘looked after at home’ under a supervision order.
- You were in kinship foster care (where a friend or family member becomes the foster carer). Kinship care through a formal arrangement, recognised by a Local Authority, and could be prior to a Special Guardianship Order.

***What is “Ordinary Residence”?**

For the purposes of assessing eligibility for the bursary, you must have been ordinarily resident in the UK, for the three-year period prior to commencing your course. Ordinarily resident means that you must have been habitually, normally and lawfully, residing in the UK, from choice, for the specified period. For example, the three-year period for courses starting in October 2023 is calculated as 1 September 2020 to 1 September 2023. Temporary absences during this three-year period may be permitted at the discretion of the relevant University officer. Students may be asked to provide documentary evidence to determine ordinary residence and an assessment of whether a student meets the ordinary residence criteria will be made by the Funding Team, and their decision will be final.

Students who are not eligible

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

- Students who have been assessed as an overseas fee-paying student
- Students who are not in attendance, and on an assessment only programme
- 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

To support your application, you **MUST** provide evidence that you were in local authority care prior to starting your course.

Care leaver:

A Care leaver is defined as a person who, as a result of an order of a competent court, was in care for at least 3 months up to or after their 16th birthday and has not since been returned to the care of their parents.

Evidence would normally be a letter from your Personal Adviser/After Care Social Worker, other forms of evidence may be accepted.

Care-experienced student

You will need to provide a letter on headed paper from the local authority where you spent time in care or with another official organisation who dealt with your care at the time it took place. This letter needs to confirm that you have spent time in care and ideally what type of care this was, see options under the eligibility section.

If you are unable to provide this evidence, you should contact the Funding Team for advice funding@essex.ac.uk

How to apply

The deadline to apply for the bursary for 2023-24 is 24th July 2024

To apply for the Care Experienced you will need to do the following:

1. Ensure that you meet the eligibility criteria above
2. Carefully read these Terms and Conditions
3. Register for the [Blackbullion](#) online money management website if you do not already have an account
4. Click the 'Funds' tab and select 'Care Experienced'
5. Follow the instructions to complete the declaration form, upload the required evidence and submit your application

Assessment and payment

- If eligible, you will receive a bursary of £1,500 if you are studying full time, or £750 if you are studying part time.

- For students who are awarded bursary before May 2024, an email will be sent to your Essex email account in May 2024, requesting that you enter your bank details into My Essex so payment can be made. Once you have entered your bank details, payment will be received within 5-7 days.
- For students who are awarded the bursary after May 2024, you will be paid via BACS to your nominated bank account as stated in your application 5-7 days after being awarded the bursary.
- Payment must be claimed by the 31st of July 2024.

Can I hold this with other awards?

The Care Experienced cannot be held in conjunction with the Refugee Bursary and the Estranged Bursary offered as part of the [University Access and Participation Plan](#) funding.

With the exception of the above, the Care Experienced can be held in conjunction with other University awards that you may be eligible for, including financial support.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of your outcome of your application, you can appeal within 10 working days of your outcome email from Blackbullion. Appeals should be sent to the [Funding Team](#).

Your appeal will be considered at the discretion of the Student Services Manager or their nominee.

Resolution of disputes

Acceptance of the Care Leaver 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.

NOTE: These terms and conditions apply to the Care Experienced awarded to students for the academic year 2023-24. The University of Essex reserves the right to update these terms and conditions as necessary.