

University of Essex

Care Experienced Bursary 2024-25

For students who have experience of being in care, we recognise that accessing financial support from family and friends 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. Please see our Access and Participation Plan for more information.

If you are an undergraduate or postgraduate student, verified as a care leaver or as care experienced and you were under the age of 25 when starting your course, you could be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,500.

The deadline to apply for this bursary is **Friday 25th July 2025**.

Definitions

Care leaver

- A care leaver is a young person who has been in the care of, or has been given accommodation by, their local authority (LA) such as foster care or a children's home for a period of at least 13 weeks between their 14th and 16th birthday and including their 16th birthday.

Care experienced

- Care experienced is a wider term that means any person who has experienced care under the age of 18. This is not the same as being a 'Child in Need'; to have experienced care there would generally need to be a court order for removal from the birth family.
- Anyone who does not fit into the 13-week rule above and does not received support from the local authority but has at some point been removed from their birth parents would be considered care experienced. For example, if you have been adopted, if you have a formal kinship care arrangement, or you experienced care before fourteen or after sixteen.
- We recognise that many care experienced people face the same challenges to care leavers but do not receive local authority support.

We also offer an Estranged Bursary. Estrangement from your parents/guardians is different to Care Experienced.

Terms and Conditions

Eligibility

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

- Students must be verified as a care leaver or eligible care experienced individual by the Care Experienced Bursary assessor and must have been resident in the UK during the period of care ((i.e. England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland - including the Republic of Ireland).
- This bursary is restricted to students who have been assessed as paying Home fees and are entirely self-funded*.
- Students must register at the University of Essex on a full-time or part-time**, undergraduate or postgraduate course in academic year 2024-25.
- Students must have applied for and have been **approved** for funding from Student Finance England (SFE) (or other UK 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 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 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

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

Care-experienced

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.

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

How to apply

The deadline to apply for this bursary is Friday 25th July 2025.

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 '*Care Experienced 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 to enter your current bank details into MyEssex. Once you have entered your bank details, you will receive the payment within 5-7 business days.
- If you do not enter your bank details by the deadline for the January payment date, your instalment will be rolled over to the April payment date.
- Students who are awarded the bursary **after** January will receive the full award in the April payment date.
- If you do not enter your bank details by the deadline for the April payment date, your instalment will be rolled over to the end of year payment date.
- For students who have been awarded the bursary prior to Monday 2 June 2025, if you have not updated your bank details by **Friday 18 July 2025**, you will no longer be eligible for the bursary and your application will be declined.

Can I hold this with other awards?

The Care Experienced Bursary **cannot** be held in conjunction with the Refugee Bursary or the Estranged Bursary offered as part of the University Access and Participation Plan funding.

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

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 Care Experienced Bursary awarded to students for the academic year 2024-25. The University of Essex reserves the right to update these terms and conditions as necessary.