

Students claiming Independent Status

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Last updated: May 2021
Review date: June 2022

Contents

Page

What does being an 'independent student' mean?	3
Checklist for sending evidence to SFE	4
Useful Contact Details	5
Notes	6

What does being an ‘independent student’ mean?

Being assessed as ‘independent’ means your Student Finance body will **not** take your parental income into account when working out how much funding you are entitled to. They will only look at you (and your partner, if applicable).

Students who are 25 or over on the first day of the academic year (usually 1st September) are automatically assessed as independent.

Students who are *under* 25 on the first day of the academic year who want to be assessed as independent will need to fit into one or more of the following criteria and you will need to send evidence to support your claim:

- You are **married or in a civil partnership** (or you have been married or in a civil partnership) - *please send a copy of your marriage certificate or civil partnership schedule to your student finance body.*
- You have the **care of a person under the age of 18** - *please send a copy of the child’s birth certificate plus proof that you’re caring for the child, e.g. evidence you’re receiving Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit or the child element of Universal Credit, to your student finance body.*
- Subject to certain exceptions, you were **looked after by a local authority** throughout any three month period ending on or after your sixteenth birthday and before the first day of the first academic year of your course - *please send a letter from your Social Worker to your student finance body. We also strongly recommend that you contact the Student Funding Team (details at the back) so that we can send you information about our Care Leavers Bursary.*
- You have **no living parents** - *please send a copy of the death certificates to your student finance body.*
- Your funding is based on one parent’s income and that parent dies - *please send a copy of the death certificate to your student finance body and contact the Student Funding Team for further information on other support.*
- Your **parents cannot be traced**, or it is not practical or possible to contact them - *please contact your Student Funding body for advice.*

- Your parents are residing outside the European Commission and an income assessment would put them **in jeopardy** or it's not reasonably practical for them to send funds to the UK if a contribution were assessed. This is most likely to apply if you are a **refugee** or have been granted exceptional leave to enter or remain in the UK.
- You are **permanently estranged** from your parents. If you have no contact with your parents, please contact the Student Funding Team to request further information about estrangement or read our leaflet on **claiming estrangement**.
- Your parents refuse to provide their details to support your application; you *may* still be considered for independent status in *exceptional circumstances*.
- You have **financially supported yourself** for *at least* three years before (1st Sept) the start of the course. You will need to show how you have supported yourself. Any period of self-support, however short, may be counted. The periods of self-support don't have to be continuous they just have to total *at least* three years. Acceptable proof could include:
 - ✓ photocopies of P60s and/or P45s
 - ✓ pay slips
 - ✓ letter from your employer(s) - *letters must be signed, dated and on headed paper - confirming dates you worked there and your earnings*
 - ✓ letters or statements from HMRC or Job Centre Plus confirming the dates you claimed specific benefits
 - ✓ Mortgage statements
 - ✓ Utility bills
 - ✓ Bank statements

Checklist for sending evidence to your student finance body

- Send copies where possible.
- If you must send an original document, make sure you keep a copy for your records and post it 'special delivery'.
- Make sure your name and 'Customer Reference Number' are clearly visible.
- Write a short cover letter to explain the evidence you're sending to them.

Useful Contact Details

- **Student Funding Team:**
Visit: RM050, the Student Hub
Tel: 023 82015200
Email: student.funding@solent.ac.uk
- **The Accommodation Office** (if in halls):
Tel: 023 82015040
Email: accommodation@solent.ac.uk
- **University's Solent Futures** (for career options):
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/careers/careers.aspx>
Email: solent.futures@solent.ac.uk

STUDENT FINANCE BODIES:

- **Student Finance England (SFE),**
www.gov.uk/studentfinance
Tel: **0300 100 0607**

Address any correspondence to:
Student Finance England
PO Box 210
Darlington
DL1 9HJ
- **Scotland (SAAS),**
www.saas.gov.uk/,
Tel: 0300 555 0505
- **Student Finance Wales (SFW),**
www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/,
Tel: **0300 200 4050**
- **Student Finance N. Ireland (SFNi),**
www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/,
Tel: **0300 100 0077**

Please always seek advice before you make any decision which could affect your future funding or study.

NOTES: