

A guide to Government (SFE) Discretionary Funding 2024-25



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Student Funding Team

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Drop-in opening times:

10am – 4.00pm Monday to Thursday

10am – 3.30pm Friday

Discretionary Funding

Usually if you suspend your studies your funding payments should stop. However, there is **no automatic entitlement** to receive your funding during a period of suspension. Therefore, most students will need to find a source of income whilst they are suspended from their studies. Many students find work; some return home to live and manage with family support.

However, if this is not possible and you need your funding to continue, you will have to apply for 'discretionary funding' for the time of suspension.

What do I need to send SFE for 'funding through a period of suspension'?

You will need to send several documents to apply. The following list will help you prepare your application:

Write a letter or complete an [financial hardship form](#) if you live in England and send it to Student Finance England. If you come under a different funding body, you may need to contact them for their form.

You need to explain:

- When your difficulties started and how long they have affected you
- How did they affect your ability to study and why it meant you had to interrupt your studies.
- Why you are unable to support yourself financially during your suspension, for example: explain how your ill health meant you couldn't work; what you needed funding for (rent, food, bills, travel to medical appointments, prescription costs, etc.)
- Why you need to continue paying for essential costs during your suspension.

Student Finance believes students may be able to move in with their family during suspension

and do not need to pay for things like rent. However, this is not always the case, for example:

- It may be your medical treatment is in London and you need to stay there; or
- You might be estranged from your family; or
- You are a mature student who has lived independently for some time.

Show evidence that repaying any overpayment now would cause you financial hardship by supplying:

- Bank statements for the most recent 3 months, or for the period when you were suspended if you are applying retrospectively.
- A tenancy agreement confirming your rent amount.
- Evidence of outstanding bills or any financial commitments you are struggling to pay.
- Evidence of the lack of other financial options available to you.
- Whether you are employed or not and, if not, evidence of your inability to work.

Professional evidence regarding your circumstances:

- Provide a letter from a professional person or agency. This could be from a doctor, another health professional or counsellor.
- It should confirm the difficulties you had; the effect they have had on your studies and, if applicable, proof you are not currently able to work due to your difficulties.
- If you are getting evidence from a doctor, you should ask for a **'fit note'**. This is an official document which confirms your limited capacity for work. It can cover a future period as well as a past period.
- Ask your GP to confirm your limited capacity for work for as long a period as they feel able to.
- If you have not received help or support from a professional, a letter from a friend or family member who knows about your difficulties **might** be ok but be prepared that it may be rejected.

IMPORTANT – SEEK ADVICE

Contact the Student Funding Team to discuss your individual circumstances.

Student.funding@solent.ac.uk or Come to the **Funding Drop In** based in the Student Hub in The Spark.

Please note that the information in this guide is intended for Students applying for finance through the Student Finance England system, if you have applied for funding through the Welsh, Irish, Scottish or EU systems the regulations may differ. We have made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this leaflet is accurate. However, we cannot be held responsible for any omissions or errors.