

Life after graduation 2018/19

Student services

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Foreword

Graduating from university can be a very exciting time for many students and marks the start of a new stage in your life.

However, it may also be the first time you've had to think about paying taxes or living independently. With this in mind, we have put together a handbook to give you advice and tips on issues you may be faced with when leaving university, and put you in the best position to succeed once you graduate.

If you have any suggestions on how this handbook could be improved, please email student.funding@solent.ac.uk

Section One: The Next Step

Careers advice

Solent Futures has a commitment to continue to support graduates after graduation. The services offered by the team include one-to-one advice and guidance, mock interview practice, and access to a large employer network.

Solent futures is available throughout your life after graduation, which means you can access their service at any point. You can contact the team by emailing: careers@solent.ac.uk

If you're struggling to understand your career options and opportunities, or you just need some help with CV writing or interview technique, then there are a number of tools that you that you may find useful.

Try the career planner quiz (www.prospects.ac.uk/planner) to match your skills to a number of careers. You could also try the Employability Self Evaluation (ESE) test: <https://bit.ly/2LcPUeR> which can show you where your strengths are in terms of employability. A range of other careers and employability advice can be found on the Solent website: <https://bit.ly/2LpeE0t>

Advice for finding a job abroad

There is a range of information available for university students and graduates relating to working abroad available on the prospects website: <https://bit.ly/2JrW45H>.

This is broken down into finding work in countries worldwide, advice on visa requirements, language requirements, and where to look for jobs for each country. There is also advice on how to explain qualifications to potential employers.

Postgraduate opportunities

Postgraduate study information

A postgraduate degree refers to a range of qualifications that require an undergraduate degree to gain entry, these include courses such as Masters and PhD.

Solent University offers a range of MA, MSc, LLM and MBA courses, as well as professional and part-time courses accredited by recognised industry bodies.

Postgraduate degrees are taken for different reasons, such as to move into academia and research, to move into a specialist career path or to change track entirely. Solent alumni could be eligible for up to a 50% reduction in tuition fees, if returning to study a postgraduate course. The discount applied will depend on your degree classification. More information on discounts offered by Solent can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2uErCjF>

Postgraduate loans

Loans are available for both taught and research master's programmes (MA, MSc, MBA, MREs, LLM and MPhil) and cover all subject areas. Eligible postgraduate students can take out a loan from Student Finance England to help them pay for their accommodation and tuition fees during their studies.

Postgraduate loans are not available for postgraduate certificates or postgraduate diplomas. You cannot apply for a loan if you already have gained a qualification at masters (or higher) level. You will repay your Postgraduate Loan at the same time as any other student loans you may have.

The repayment plan that applies to postgraduate loans compared to undergraduate loans differs slightly. You start repaying the loan is when your annual income is over £21,000 and pay back 6% of your income over the minimum threshold.

Further information can be found on the Student Loan Repayment page: <https://bit.ly/2gnyCIR>

Alumni information

Solent alumni community

When you graduate you become part of the Solent alumni community. Our alumni community is made up of over 60,000 talented individuals just like you. As a part of our global alumni community, you can take advantage of a range of benefits, including:

- Up to a 50% reduction on postgraduate tuition fees
- Reduced price gym membership
- Free/discounted library access
- Career advice and business support services for life
- 10% discount at the Solent Conference Centre
- Exclusive events

You can find out more on our website: www.solent.ac.uk/alumni-benefits

Get involved

As part of our alumni community, there are plenty of ways you can get involved with the university: www.solent.ac.uk/alumni

Stay connected, Stay Solent for life

Let us know any changes to your details online at:

www.solent.ac.uk/alumni-details

Join our online community

- Like our page on Facebook: SolentUniAlumni
- Follow us on Twitter: @SolentUniAlumni
- Join our group on LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/groups/3676635](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3676635)
- #SolentForLife

Section Two: The World of Work

Work contracts

There are a range of different contract types and employer responsibilities that come with each type of contract, including:

- Full-time and part-time contracts
- Fixed-term contracts
- Agency staff
- Freelancers, consultants and contractors (self-employed)
- Zero hour contracts

Full-time and part-time contracts

There are no specific number of hours that makes someone full-time or part-time, but a full-time worker will usually work 35 hours or more a week. Fixed-term contracts:

- Last for a certain length of time
- Are set in advance
- End when a specific task/event is completed

Fixed-term employees must receive the same treatment as full-time permanent staff.

Agency staff

You're an agency worker if:

- You have a contract with an agency but you work temporarily for a hirer. Agencies can include recruitment agencies, for example 'temp agencies'.
- You're also an agency worker if you look for work through entertainment and modelling agencies.

Freelancers, consultants and contractors

- You are self-employed or are part of other companies
- You will need to look after your own tax and NICs

Zero hour contracts

- You're on call to work when needed
- You don't have guaranteed hours, and may not actually be given work.
- You don't have to do work when asked to.

Employability rights

The rights that an employee receives are dependent upon the type of contract that they are employed under.

Full time contracts employee rights

Workers are entitled to certain employment rights, including:

- getting the National Minimum Wage

- protection against unlawful deductions from wages
- the statutory minimum level of paid holiday
- the statutory minimum length of rest breaks
- to not work more than 48 hours on average per week or to opt out of this right if they choose
- protection against unlawful discrimination
- protection for ‘whistleblowing’ - reporting wrongdoing in the workplace
- to not be treated less favourably if they work part-time

They may also be entitled to; statutory sick pay, statutory maternity pay, statutory paternity pay, statutory adoption pay, shared parental pay.

How does statutory sick pay (SSP) work?

SSP is paid by your employer for up to 28 weeks if you’re too ill to work. You need to qualify for SSP and have been off work sick for 4 or more days in a row (including non-working days). You cannot get less than the statutory amount. You can get more if your company has a scheme for sick pay.

Fixed-term contracts

Employers must not treat workers on fixed-term contracts less favourably than permanent employees doing the same or largely the same job, unless the employer can show that there is a good business reason to do so. Employers must also ensure that fixed-term employees get:

- the same pay and conditions as permanent staff
- the same or equivalent benefits package
- information about permanent vacancies in the organisation
- protection against redundancy or dismissal

Anyone who’s worked continually for the same employer for 2 years or more has the same redundancy rights as a permanent employee.

Agency staff

From the day you start work you have worker’s employment rights (look at full-time and part-time contract rights). You also have the same rights as your permanent colleagues to use any shared facilities and services provided by your employer, for example:

- a canteen or food and drinks machines
- a workplace crèche or mother and baby room
- car parking or transport services, like a local pick-up service or transport between sites

After 12 weeks in the job you will qualify for the same rights as someone employed directly. This is known as ‘equal treatment’. Your rights include:

- ‘equal pay’ - the same pay as a permanent colleague doing the same job
- automatic pension enrolment
- paid annual leave

Freelancers, consultants and contractors

You may not be entitled to the same rights as workers, e.g. minimum wage. Employment law doesn't cover self-employed people in most cases because they are their own boss. However, if a person is self-employed:

- they still have protection for their health and safety and, in some cases, protection against discrimination
- their rights and responsibilities are set out by the terms of the contract they have with their client

Zero hour contracts

Everyone employed on a zero hours contract is entitled to statutory employment rights. There are no exceptions. A person will benefit from the employment rights associated with their employment status and individuals on a zero hours contract will either have the employment status of a 'worker' or an 'employee'.

Any individual on a zero hour's contract who is a 'worker' will be entitled to at least the National Minimum Wage, paid annual leave, rest breaks and protection from discrimination.

Section Three: Managing Your Money

Minimum wage and the living wage

The hourly rate for the minimum wage depends on your age. You must be at least:

- School leaving age to get the National Minimum Wage.
- Aged 25 to get the National Living Wage - the minimum wage will still apply for workers aged 24 and under.

2019/20 rates

These rates are for the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage. The rates change every April.

Year	25 and Over	21 to 24	18 to 20	Under 18
April 2019	£8.21	£7.70	£6.15	£4.35

Work experience and internships

You won't get the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage if you're:

- A volunteer or doing voluntary work
- On a government or European programme
- Work shadowing

Not entitled to the minimum wage

The following types of workers are not entitled to the minimum wage:

- Self-employed people running their own business
- Company directors
- Volunteers or voluntary workers
- Workers on a government employment programme, such as the Work Programme
- Members of the armed forces

Understanding your payslip

A typical payslip is likely to look something like this:

Earnings		Units	Rate	Amount	Deductions		Amount
Basic Pay				2,008.33	Tax (code 4321A)		233.33
					NI (category A)		169.40
					Pension		50.00
					Student Loan Plan X		10.00
Total		Earnings		2,008.33	Total		Deductions 442.73

Running Totals		Accumulations	
Tax Year to Date	Gross Pay 25,000.00	Basic Pay	25,000.00
	Taxable Pay 14,000.00	Emp's Pension PL	50.00
	Tax 2,799.96		
This Employment	Gross Pay 25,000.00		
	Taxable Pay 14,000.00		
	Tax 2,799.96		
	Employer's NI 169.40		
Previous Employment			
	Taxable Pay		
	Tax		

Amount Paid	
Earnings	2,500.00
Deductions	452.23
Net Pay	1,620.60
B/Forward	
Amount Paid	1,620.60
C/Forward	
Payment method	BACS

Employer's Contributions	
NI (category A)	100
Annual Salary	25,000.00
NI Number	AB 12 34 56 C
Amount Paid	1,620.60

Other items that are likely to appear on your payslip can include; your personal information, the date, court orders and child maintenance, sick pay, maternity/paternity and adoption pay, other deductions, a summary of your year to date, net pay and lastly any important messages that your employer wants to deliver.

Tax and National Insurance information

General information you need to know...

Tax rates undergo regular changes, often yearly, so information is not consistently relevant or reliable. There are two main taxes that are directly applicable to all workers. These are income tax and national insurance contributions (NICs).

How do you pay income tax and national insurance?

The way you pay your income tax and national insurance contributions is largely dependent on whether you're employed or self-employed.

If you are employed by a business, company or organization, it is likely that your income tax and national insurance contributions will be deducted from salary or wages before it is paid to them, through the Pay as You Earn (PAYE) system.

If you are self-employed then it is likely you will pay your income tax and national insurance through self-assessment.

- If you are personally filling in your self-assessment tax returns, you can watch videos and webinars or contact HMRC for general enquiries.
- Self-assessment can be completed with the help of an accredited accountant.
- Help can be found on the GOV.uk: <https://bit.ly/2JwRaEC>

Income tax

Income tax is taxed at three different bandings; basic rate, higher rate and additional rate. Your tax rate will depend on how much you earn.

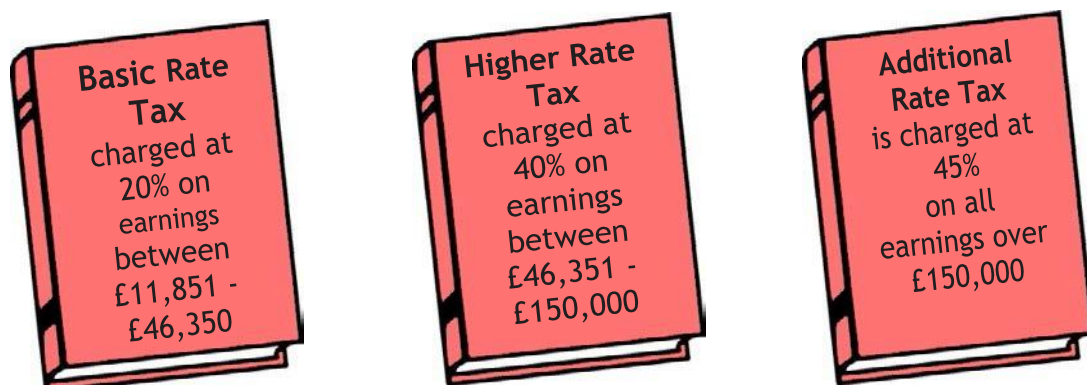
Personal allowance

Everyone is entitled to a personal allowance. Personal allowance refers to the tax free earnings you are entitled to, up to the value of **£12,500** in 2019/20. Any earnings above the personal allowance are then liable to income tax.

Tax codes

Your tax code will normally start with a number and end with a letter. The numbers in your tax code tell your employer or pension provider how much tax-free income you get in that tax year. Letters in your tax code refer to your situation and how it affects your Personal Allowance. More information on tax codes can be found at: www.gov.uk/tax-codes

Tax rates



National insurance contributions (NICs)

National Insurance Contributions paid by a person are largely dependent on whether they are employed or self-employed. If a person is employed they will pay class 1 NICs. If a person is self-employed they must pay class 2 and class 4 NICs depending on their profits.

You might be an employee but also do self-employed work. In this case your employer will deduct your Class 1 National Insurance from your wages, and you have to pay Class 2 and 4 payments for your self-employed work. More information and current figures can be found via the GOV.uk link: <https://bit.ly/2mncbsw>

Tax documents to be aware of....

What is a P60?

Your P60 shows the tax you've paid on your salary in the tax year (6 April to 5 April). You get a separate P60 for each of your jobs.

You need your P60 to prove how much tax you've paid on your salary, for example:

- to claim back overpaid tax
- to apply for tax credits
- as proof of your income if you apply for a loan or a mortgage

A screenshot of a P60 End of Year Certificate form. The form is titled 'P60 End of Year Certificate' and 'Not valid for 2019/2020'. It contains various fields for personal details, employment information, and tax payments. The form is divided into several sections, including 'Personal details', 'Employment details', and 'Tax payments'. There are also instructions and a section for 'Employer's use only'.

What is a P45?

You get a P45 from your employer when you stop working for them. Your P45 shows how much tax you've paid on your salary so far in the tax year (6 April to 5 April).

A P45 has 4 parts (Part 1, Part 1A, Part 2 and Part 3).

- Your employer sends details for Part 1 to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and gives you the other parts.
- You give Part 2 and 3 to your new employer (or to Jobcentre Plus if you're not working).
- Keep Part 1A for your own records.

A screenshot of a P45 form. The form is titled 'P45 Part 1' and 'Details of employee leaving work'. It contains various fields for personal details, employment information, and tax payments. The form is divided into several sections, including 'Personal details', 'Employment details', and 'Tax payments'. There are also instructions and a section for 'Employer's use only'.

Further information can be found at the following links:

- Self-employed tax and NICs information - <https://bit.ly/2Jsdn60>
- Self-assessment information - <https://bit.ly/23hGv6z>
- Income tax information - www.gov.uk/income-tax-rates
- National Insurance Information - www.gov.uk/national-insurance

Pension information

State pension

Once you reach your state pension age you can start to claim your pension. However, you don't have to retire or claim your state pension at state pension age, you can wait until you're ready. You can check what your state pension age will be, and in which year you'll reach that qualifying age, on the GOV.UK website: www.gov.uk/state-pension-age

Basic Facts

- What you receive is dependent on your National Insurance record - This is how much National Insurance you have contributed over the years.
- State pension is relevant to graduates as you will likely get a job where you're earning enough money to start paying NI, which will then contribute to your state pension.

How to claim your state pension

Your state pension will not be given to you automatically - about 4 months before you reach the state pension age you should get a letter which will tell you how to claim. It can be claimed in three ways:

- Over the phone.
- Download the state pension claim form and send it to your local pension centre.
- Claim from abroad (including the Channel Islands).

Workplace pensions

All employers are lawfully required to enrol all eligible employees into a workplace pension scheme as of 2018. Contributing to a workplace pension scheme will give you additional income on top of your state pension when you retire.

It doesn't matter what kind of contract you're on, if you meet the following criteria you should be automatically enrolled into your employer's pension scheme:

- aged between 22 years old and state pension age
- Earn more than £10,000 per year (If you earn less than £10,000, you can still request your employer to enrol you)
- Work in the UK

Being part of a workplace pension is often a good idea, but for some it might be sensible to opt out of this scheme for a while, which can be done by contacting your employers workplace pension provider. The amount you and your employer pay towards the pension depends on:

- What type of workplace pension scheme you're in
- Whether you've been automatically enrolled in a workplace pension or you've joined one voluntarily ('opted in')

Joining a workplace pension scheme means that your take-home income will be reduced, but it may also mean that:

- You're entitled to tax credits or an increase in the amount of tax credits you get.
- You're entitled to an income-related benefit or an increase in the amount of benefit you get.
- You'll reduce the monthly amount of your student loan repayment that you need to make.

More information can be found on gov.uk website: www.gov.uk/workplace-pensions

Student loan repayment information

The basics

You don't start repaying until the April after graduation and once you start earning over £25,000 per year. After 30 years any outstanding student debt is written off.

How do you repay your loan if you're employed?

Your student loan repayments are deducted from your pay by your employer.

How do you repay your loan if you're self-employed?

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will work out how much you pay from your tax return. You pay at the same time as you pay your tax (see page 9).

How do you repay your loan if you work abroad?

The rules are the same if you work for a UK employer abroad. If you work for an overseas employer, your repayments are based on either:

- the minimum amount under Plan 1 for that country: <https://bit.ly/L6dDKj>
- the minimum amount under Plan 2 for that country: <https://bit.ly/1Ldikfe>

If you go abroad for more than 3 months, you must complete an overseas income assessment form to:

- estimate your income for the next 12 months
- provide your bank details so you can pay by Direct Debit
- The Student Loans Company will work out whether you have to repay and how much.
- You'll have to complete the income assessment form every year you're abroad.

How does the interest work?

The Interest added depends on what you earn. Student loan interest rates are based on the RPI of inflation (the rate at which prices rise). Whilst studying, until the April following graduation, you're charged RPI + 3%. After that it depends on your annual earnings:

- Earn under £25,000: Interest rate = RPI
- Earn over £45,000: Interest rate = RPI + 3%
- Earn from £25,000 to £45,000: Interest rises gradually from RPI to RPI + 3%.
- For example someone earning £35,000 would have a rate of RPI + 1.5%

The interest rate changes every September. You will be charged interest from the day your first payment is made until your loan is repaid in full. Interest is added to the total amount you owe, every month. This is based on the RPI rate of inflation in the year up to the previous March. The interest rate doesn't change what you repay each year. The interest is paid off with your standard payments or if you choose to overpay your student loan to clear it quicker.

Will overpaying actually make any difference?

For overpayments to have any impact you need to repay enough to lower the amount you repay within the 30 year period. It is essentially throwing away money unless you pay a large enough sum to make a noticeable difference.

Only overpay if you are:

- A high earner, likely to clear the loan and interest, in less than 30 years
- Someone overpaying a very large lump sum, which will radically reduce the amount owed, so you can clear it within the 30 years or even clear it entirely straightaway.

Extra information can be found at:

- <https://bit.ly/LwfQPu> (student loan repayments)
- <https://bit.ly/2urLpDD> (Money saving expert - student loan myth buster)

Graduate bank accounts

What will happen to your student account when you graduate?

Most student accounts will mature into graduate accounts on their own. However, many have criteria to achieve in order to qualify for their graduate account. If you don't meet the criteria, your student account will be converted to a standard current account upon completion of your course. If you cannot meet the criteria for a graduate account speak to your bank about your options.

What to think about when looking for and opening a graduate account

1. Don't be loyal to the bank you held your student account with.
2. Get the best 0% overdraft possible.
3. Graduate accounts aren't just for new graduates.
4. Never go over your overdraft limit.
5. If you're likely to be in credit, choose a bank offering good interest rates.

Examples of good graduate bank accounts can be found on the 'Money Saving Expert' pages: <https://bit.ly/2DtOB6z>. Your ability to access the best bank accounts will depend on your credit score, you can check your credit score at either Experian (www.experian.co.uk/) or Equifax (www.equifax.co.uk)

Section Four: Housing Information

Private rental information

General tips for renting private accommodation

- Look at different letting agents. Agent fees vary from no fees to hundreds of pounds.
- Make sure there is an office you can go to if there are any problems.
- Read the small print of any paperwork before you sign or pay any money.
- Get any agreements in writing.
- Never pay any money via money transfer schemes, or before you have had a chance to read the terms and conditions.

What should you check before renting from a letting agent?

Are they registered as a company and what is their business status? Check the government website: <https://bit.ly/1KbBlmy>

Are they registered with one of the letting agents redress schemes?

Letting agents should be registered with one of 3 redress schemes:

- The Property Ombudsman (TPO): <https://www.tpos.co.uk/>
- The Property Redress Scheme: <https://www.theprs.co.uk/>
- Ombudsman Services Property: <https://bit.ly/2NOHSaB>

Do they belong to a professional body?

Some letting agents belong to professional membership bodies, who have standards of conduct, which the agents have to comply with, for example:

- National Approved Lettings Scheme (NALS)
- Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA)
- UK Association of Letting Agents (UKALA)
- National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA)

Are all their fees displayed and transparent?

- By law, since 2015 all letting agents should have clear information about all charges and fees they take. Make sure you shop around and compare fees between agents.

Do they mention client money protection?

- Letting agents should state if they are using a 'Client Money Protection Scheme'

Advice on deposits and fees

There are two main types of deposit that can be charged to you by your letting agent, these are:

A Security deposit

- A deposit is used to protect the landlord from potential costs or unpaid bills when you move out.

A Holding deposit

- Charged by landlords prior to you signing an agreement as a guarantee that you will take the house. We suggest you check whether or not it is refundable.

Inventories

- Inventories help to ensure the return of your deposit by having an inventory and photographs as evidence of the condition of the property when you moved in.
- If your landlord or agency do not provide you with an inventory it is advisable that you and those living in the property create one.

Advice and support for under 25's on renting, housing and a range of other issues is available at 'The Mix': <https://bit.ly/2LrBEM2>

Council Tax information

How do you work out how much council tax you owe?

Firstly you must check the valuation banding for your home, this can be checked the GOV.uk website by using their link and checking your postcode and property to determine the banding.

Once you know your property banding, then you must check how much your local council charges for that band of property. More information can be found at: www.gov.uk/council-tax

What discounts are available?

- You may be eligible for a reduction of up to 100%, if you're on low income or claiming benefits.
- You can claim a 25% discount if you're a single person living on your own.
- You can claim a 25% discount if you're a non-student and live with students.

How do you pay council tax?

The cost is usually split into 10 monthly payments. However, different payment plans are available. The methods of payment accepted are:

- Direct debit
- Online payment
- Bank transfer (BACS)
- By post or in person
- By phone

Mortgage advice

Currently, people struggle to get mortgages, so the government has launched a range of schemes such as 'help to buy' in order to push lenders to offer more. Information on 'help to buy' can be found later in this section. First time buyers often no longer have the luxury to choose the mortgage that's right for them.

What kind of deposit do you need?

To get a mortgage you usually need a minimum deposit of 5%. Yet to get a good mortgage interest rate, currently you'll often need more than the 20% of the home's value as a deposit. The bigger the deposit, the better the interest rate, the lower your monthly repayments, the cheaper the mortgage.

How can you boost your chances of getting a mortgage?

- Boost your credit score - check your current credit score online for free with companies such as Experian and Equifax,
- Increase your deposit value
- Stay out of your overdraft
- Avoid payday loans. (Some mortgage underwriters won't even consider you if you have used a payday loan service)
- Close unused credit cards

What type of mortgage do you want?

There are various different types of mortgages that you can get. However, mortgages fall roughly into two categories; fixed-rate or variable-rate mortgages.

Types of mortgage

Fixed-rate mortgages

A *fixed rate mortgage* has an *interest rate* that stays the same for a set period (e.g. 2 or 3 or 5 years). At the end of the *fixed rate* period the *rate* will revert to the lender's Standard Variable Rate, which will usually be higher than the *rate* you were paying on your *fixed* deal.

Variable-rate mortgages

- Trackers
- Standard variable rates (SVRs)
- Discount rates
- A hybrid option

Mortgage flexibility

- Once you've decided fixed or variable, the next question is do you want a mortgage that is more flexible?
- Can you overpay? If so, time your overpayments right
- Is there a 'borrow back' facility?
- Can you take payment holidays?
- Is an offset mortgage a viable option for you?

What fees must you consider when getting a mortgage?

- Arrangement fee
- Booking or reservation fee
- Valuation fee
- Legal fees
- Stamp duty

How do you get a mortgage?

There is nothing to stop you getting a mortgage on your own or you can use a broker. A broker:

- Can make the process of finding the right mortgage for you easier and faster.
- Mortgage brokers may charge you a broker fee. However, some mortgage brokers will recoup their fees via the mortgage lender instead.

What paperwork will you need?

You typically need:

- Proof of income
- Proof of deposit
- Your last three months' bank statements
- Proof of bonuses/commission
- Your latest P60 tax form

How does your student loan impact your ability to get a mortgage?

Student loans don't appear on your credit file, so the impact isn't really about whether you'll be allowed a mortgage or not. Where it does impact is in the affordability checks which establish whether you can afford to make repayments on a mortgage. Of course, as you have lower take-home income with a student loan, that means you'll be assessed as being able to make smaller repayments. More information can be found at:

- Money saving expert: <https://bit.ly/2wKQ6HG>
- Mortgage advice bureau: <https://bit.ly/2uFQnMt>

Government help to buy schemes

Help to Buy: ISA

If you are saving to buy your first home, you can save money into a 'Help to Buy': ISA and the Government will boost your savings by 25%. So, for every £200 you save, you can get a government bonus of £50. The maximum bonus you can receive is £3,000.

To qualify for a Help to Buy: ISA you must:

- be 16 or over
- have a valid National Insurance number
- be a UK resident
- be a first time buyer, and not own a property anywhere in the world
- not have another active cash ISA in the same tax year: If you have opened a cash ISA this tax year, you can open a Help to Buy: ISA but will have to take additional steps.

Full details on help to buy ISA's are available here: <https://bit.ly/1JtZ0y3>

The Help to buy (equity loan) scheme - For new builds

This is only for those buying a new build and the scheme works slightly differently depending on where you are in the country. In England, it's only for those buying a new build worth under £600,000. Go to <https://bit.ly/1PZBcl5> for more information.

Help to buy: Shared Ownership

If you can't quite afford the mortgage on 100% of a home, Help to Buy: Shared Ownership offers you the chance to buy a share of your home (between 25% and 75% of the home's value) and pay rent on the remaining share. Later on, you could buy bigger shares when you can afford to. Go to <https://bit.ly/29hOUnz> for more information.

For details on any of the help to buy schemes more information can be found on the website: www.help_tobuy.gov.uk/

Other available schemes

Starter homes scheme:

- If you're aged between 23 and 40 and haven't owned a home before, you could be eligible for the new Starter Home scheme which will allow you to purchase a new build home for a discounted price of at least 20% off market price.

- The first homes were available to purchase from spring 2018.
- More information can be found at: www.new-homes.co.uk/starter-homes/

Section Five: Other Support

State benefits

If you are not moving straight into work following graduation then you may need to apply for benefits while you think through your options and next steps. Graduates may start claiming state benefits after they finish their final term of study in their final year. Some of the main benefits are listed below:

- Jobseeker's allowance (JSA) can be claimed by those who are unemployed and actively seeking work.
- Alternatively, universal credit can be claimed by those on low income or out of work, if they meet eligibility criteria.
- You can get child benefit if you're responsible for one or more children under 16 (or under 20 if they stay in approved education or training).
- You can get tax credits. The amount you'll get depends on your circumstances. To work out your claim, HMRC looks at things such as; your income from the previous tax year (what you earned for the 12 months up to 5 April), how many hours you work and whether you're part of a couple

Some graduates may feel uncomfortable accessing state benefits. However, it can be a valuable and needed stepping stone from student loans to paid employment.

Your local Welfare Rights Unit or Citizens Advice office should be able to give you information about any benefits that you may be entitled to receive.

- The Southampton City Council welfare rights & money advice service can help with a range of issues and can be contacted at welfarerights.advice@southampton.gov.uk
- Information on a range of benefits and tax credits can be found at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/ and www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

Financial help if you're disabled

There is a wide range of disability-related financial support, including benefits, tax credits, payments, grants and concessions. The main disability and sickness benefits are:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Attendance Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance

More information is available at: www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled

Mental health support services

If you're experiencing mental health problems or need support, there are many places you can go to for help:

The Samaritans

Telephone: 116 123 (24 hours a day, free to call)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: www.samaritans.org

The Samaritans provides confidential, non-judgmental emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. You can phone, email, write a letter or in most cases talk to someone face to face.

Mind Infoline

Telephone: 0300 123 3393 (9am-6pm Monday to Friday)

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Web site: www.mind.org.uk/help/advice_lines

Mind provides confidential mental health information services. Mind enables people to make informed choices. The Infoline gives information on types of mental distress, where to get help, drug treatments, alternative therapies and advocacy. Mind has around 140 local Minds providing local mental health services.

The Mix

Telephone: 0808 808 4994 (11am-11pm, free to call)

Website: www.themix.org.uk/get-support

The Mix provides judgement-free information and support to young people aged 13-25 on a range of issues including mental health problems. Young people can access the 'The Mix's' support via phone, peer to peer and counselling services.

Rethink Mental Illness Advice Line

Telephone: 0300 5000 927 (9.30am - 4pm Monday to Friday)

Email: info@rethink.org

Website: <https://bit.ly/2vQA3to>

This advice line provides expert advice and information to people with mental health problems and those who care for them, as well as giving help to health professionals, employers and staff. Rethink also runs Rethink services and groups across England and Northern Ireland.

Section Six: General Advice

Register with a GP

- Find out where your local doctors surgery is.
- Contact the practice to find out whether they can accept you as a patient.
- Make an appointment to register.
- Take proof of identity and evidence of your address.
- Complete an application form

Register with a dentist

- There is no need to register with a dentist in the same way as with a GP because you are not bound to a catchment area.
- Find a dental practice that's convenient for you, and phone them to see if there are any appointments available.
- If you do not have a regular dental practice or are new to the area, you can search for an NHS dentist near you at: www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx
- Dental practices won't always have the capacity to take on new NHS patients - you may have to join a waiting list, look for a different dentist, or be seen privately.

Learn to budget

- Learn to budget and stick to it.
- Budgeting will help you to clear your student overdraft and prevent overspending. It can also be a useful tool for saving money as well!

There are many useful budgeting tools that can be found on the internet and are free to use. Some examples include:

- Money Advice service: <https://bit.ly/1TrO1W0>
- Citizens Advice: <https://bit.ly/1UPuQtE>

Best free use budgeting apps:

- YNAB (You Need A Budget)
- Wally Lite - Personal Finance

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