

THE FACTS ABOUT STARTING UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE



THERE'S FINANCIAL HELP TO MAKE UNI AFFORDABLE FOR CARE LEAVERS

There's lots of financial support on offer to help you go to university, so take a look at what's available from:

- **your local authority** – including help with accommodation costs
- **student finance organisations** – there are differences around the UK, so check the details for your home country
- universities and colleges – contact them to find out about bursaries, or use the Propel website at propel.org.uk
- charitable organisations – some offer grants

You'll need to do your research and apply early for any bursaries or grants. To find out more, read Become's factsheets at www.becomecharity.org.uk, and visit www.ucas.com/additional-funding.

There's advice and support to help you manage your finances and budget while you're studying too, and many universities offer workshops and guidance – ask their student support services for more information.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY TUITION FEES UPFRONT

You apply for a student loan, and the cost of tuition fees is paid straight to the university or college. Repayments don't start until after you've graduated, or you leave the course. If you're from Scotland and intend to study at a Scottish university, you won't pay tuition fees at all.

Loan repayments only start when you earn above a certain amount, and what you pay back each month will depend on how much you're earning, so it will be affordable.

Find out more about student finance at www.ucas.com/finance.





YOU CAN GET STUDENT ACCOMMODATION WITHOUT A GUARANTOR OR DEPOSIT

You can get help finding accommodation that's right for you while you're studying – including year-round accommodation and help with additional costs for holiday periods. Remember to talk to your pathway plan adviser or care worker, if you have one, as they should be able to help you organise it.

Accommodation providers may ask for someone to act as a guarantor, but if there's no one you can ask, speak to student services at the university or college – some can act as a guarantor on your behalf, or waive the need for one altogether for their own accommodation. If your support package includes accommodation, you probably won't have to do anything else, but it's a good idea to check.

When it comes to paying a deposit to secure accommodation, the course provider may waive or reduce that fee, or offer a grant or a loan to help with the cost of it. Ask about this early on in your research, as it could be an important factor when you're choosing where to study.



YOU'LL FIT IN AS MUCH AS ANY OTHER STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY

It's normal to feel nervous about making friends, but each year, universities and colleges welcome students from a diverse range of backgrounds. There'll be clubs and societies with like-minded people – you may even find there are groups for students from care backgrounds. Check what's available from student support services or the students' union.

There's lots of support available to give you a fair and equal chance to do well in your studies. In fact, graduates from a care background are just as likely to achieve a first or upper second degree as students who are not care experienced, and their career routes are similar too.

YOU WON'T BE ON YOUR OWN DURING THE HOLIDAYS

While many students go home, others choose to stay in their halls or around campus during the holidays – for all sorts of reasons. Also, there will be some students who live locally but not on campus, and they who won't be far away, so you won't be alone.

YOU CAN GO TO UNIVERSITY AT ANY AGE AFTER SIXTH FORM OR COLLEGE

Thousands of mature students start university or college each year.

It's worth bearing in mind that support to help you go to university is available from your local authority up to the age of 25, so after this, you'd need to look for other types of support.

For more information, read Become's factsheet 'Helping you reach higher' at www.becomecharity.org.uk, and visit www.ucas.com/care-leavers.