



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

STUDYING
WITHOUT

FAMILY SUPPORT



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to highlight the support available to those who are estranged when they are applying to university, or who become estranged during their studies. There is a wealth of support in place that covers the three main concerns young people have during the application process:

FINANCE, ACCOMMODATION, AND WELLBEING.



WHAT IS 'ESTRANGEMENT'?

'Estrangement' is a term used by Student Finance England to describe those aged 18-24 who are not in contact with their parents. You might describe your situation in a different way; you might have 'lost contact' with your parents, have been 'disowned' by them, or are simply not seeing them anymore. You may also have moved in with other family members or friends, are 'couch-surfing' with no permanent home or are homeless. If you do not have the support of your parents and are no longer in contact with them, you are eligible for specific support from the university both before, during, and after you apply.

Many students may have a relationship with their parents, but it could be negative. Some parents don't want their children to go to university and are controlling or coercive, or the relationship could be abusive. If this sounds like you, please get in contact with us.

While at university, students rely on their family to give them support during the most stressful times. It can be difficult to have no one to lean on when you are going through a period of transition at the beginning of your course, or when you are stressed about exams. Many students also depend on their family for some additional financial support and it is tough not having the safety net of someone supporting you back home. In fact, Student Finance take into account your parents' income when they are deciding how much money you are entitled to, but this is not a realistic arrangement for some young people. The university can step in here and make sure you have the support that you need.

If you are unsure about your situation or want to discuss how we can help, you can contact the estrangement team in askUS at studentdiversity@salford.ac.uk

FIRST STEPS

1. CONTACT THE UNIVERSITY AT studentdiversity@salford.ac.uk

There is plenty of support available to help you complete your application and make the process as smooth as possible. Email us stating that you do not have a relationship with your parents and would like some help figuring out what support is available to you. The sooner you let us know that you do not have family support, the easier it will be.

2. VISIT THE UNIVERSITY (VIRTUALLY OR IN REAL LIFE).

This is a crucial step to help you make an informed decision about whether the university is right for you. You will learn more about your course, accommodation, and the campus as a whole, and it is the best way to get a feel for the university community. You can book on an open day or request a bespoke visit to help you become familiar with the university.

3. COMPLETE YOUR UCAS FORM.

Here you choose your course and the universities you want to apply to. It is helpful to disclose your estrangement in your application so that you are given access to the available support. UCAS have a personal statement writing guide for estranged students that you can find on their website.*

4. APPLY FOR STUDENT FINANCE.

You do not need to have a confirmed place to apply for student finance, and the sooner you complete the application the better. You will need to provide evidence of your estrangement (see 'Applying for Student Finance') so it is better to gather this before you start your application if possible.

* UCAS personal statement guide: <https://bit.ly/3ame8z2>

WHAT DO I NEED?

There are various documents and accounts you will need to apply to university and to live on your own. Those who are estranged may struggle to get access to some of these documents or no longer have control of certain accounts. Below is a list of the required documents and accounts and how to recover them if need be.

DOCUMENT	HOW TO RECOVER	ACCOUNT	HOW TO RECOVER
Birth certificate	Register with the General Register Office (GRO) and order through https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/	Bank	You will need ID and proof of address to set this up. An account controlled by family can be recovered with ID and proof of your situation.
Passport	Order through the Passport Service on the gov.uk website.	UCAS	You can contact UCAS directly to help recover your account.
Exam results certificate	Contact your exam board for a 'certified statement of results' you can use instead of your certificate.	Email	If compromised, you will need to set up a new account and block the old one. Inform all important contacts of your new email address.
Proof of address	This can be a bank statement or medical record.	Phone Contract/PAYG	Try to get a new phone number and let all important contacts know that your number has changed.
		Student Finance	You can contact Student Finance England to recover your account.

You do not need a student bank account to receive your student finance but there are benefits you can get that you wouldn't get with a regular account.

The main benefit of a student bank account is that you can have access to a fee-free overdraft to help with any extra costs you may have during your studies. This overdraft normally lasts for a few years after you graduate before you must pay it back.

To open a student bank account you will need: photo ID (such as a passport or driving licence); proof of address (such as a utility bill or bank statement); and proof of your student status (an acceptance letter from your university or your UCAS code/offer letter).

APPLYING FOR STUDENT FINANCE

This application can be completed online at [gov.uk/student-finance](https://www.gov.uk/student-finance) and you need to have your application in by May (in England) to be guaranteed your money in September.

The form will ask you whether you are a dependent (reliant on your parents) or independent (financially self-supporting) student, and you should tick the box that states that you are 'irreconcilably estranged from your family'. You will have to provide evidence to explain your situation; the more evidence you provide the easier it will be for Student Finance to confirm that you are entitled to the maximum support available.

THE EVIDENCE YOU WILL NEED INCLUDES:

'Confirmation of Estrangement' Form – You will be sent this as part of your application, and it needs to be filled in by an 'independent adult' who knows your situation. This could be a teacher, a support worker, a doctor, or someone else who you have spoken to about your estrangement. A family member or friend cannot complete this form. If you cannot find an appropriate person, the estrangement team at the university can confirm your status if you inform them of your situation.

Supporting Statements – A person of 'professional standing' should write a statement confirming your situation, including how long you've been estranged. Try to make sure these letters are completed on headed paper and include the person's contact details.

- ✓ A letter from a member of staff from your school/college who is aware of your situation and how you became estranged.
- ✓ A letter from housing support showing that you were seeking support after you left home.
- ✓ A letter from a doctor who can show that you have been reporting issues related to your situation.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS – ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU CAN PROVIDE WILL HELP STRENGTHEN YOUR APPLICATION.

- ✓ Official police documents that demonstrate any callouts, arrests or cautions that have occurred in relation to your case.
- ✓ A forced marriage or FGM protection order.
- ✓ A letter from a family member or friend who is aware of the circumstances surrounding your estrangement.

Student Finance evaluate each application individually, so although there are certain guidelines they want you to meet, there can be exceptions made based on your specific situation.

We are aware that the process of collecting evidence for Student Finance can be difficult or upsetting. Additionally, if you have only recently become estranged it can be even more difficult. The Estrangement Team are here to support you through the process and help you collect the evidence you need. You can contact them at studentdiversity@salford.ac.uk

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AT SALFORD

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AT SALFORD

There are additional sources of income available provided by the University of Salford that can help support you through your studies.

SALFORD ESTRANGEMENT SUPPORT AWARD

This bursary is for those with a negative or no relationship with their parents to help with learning and living costs. You can apply at any time during the academic year and it is open to students who do not have 'independent' status from Student Finance. You will need to provide some evidence of your negative relationship with you parents/carers, which will then be assessed by askUS.

ESTRANGED STUDENT SUMMER BURSARY

This bursary is available to you if you have been confirmed as estranged by Student Finance. The money is to help cover some of the additional costs those without family support have over the summer holidays, for example additional rent. If your application is accepted, you will be awarded the bursary for the minimum length of your course and will not have to apply again. For example, if your course can be completed in three years you will only receive the bursary for those three summers.

SALFORD SUPPORT FUND

Should you experience financial difficulty regularly or have an unexpected emergency that is going to cost you a lot, you can apply to the Salford Support Fund. You could be given a non-repayable award that will help you get through the hardship. This fund is open to any UK student, and can be awarded on top of any award you receive through the Salford Estrangement Support Award.

SALFORD INSPIRE SCHEME

New undergraduate students starting their course will receive £150 credit to be spent on a dedicated website which sells useful resources that will help you with your course as well as gadgets and stationery. Those who meet certain criteria will receive an additional £350 (totalling £500) and this is assessed when you register at the start of the year. You will receive the credits for each year of your course, providing you are based on the campus, and your situation is reassessed to determine how much you will receive.

ACCOMMODATION

Finding somewhere to live can be a big worry for those who do not have a relationship with their parents. The University of Salford offers support to ensure that your transition to university is smooth and that you have a solid home base during your studies.

The university partners with Campus Living Villages (CLV) who provide student accommodation and manage two of the Salford accommodation villages: Peel Park Quarter and John Lester and Eddie Coleman Courts. If you stay in either of these villages we can offer additional support:

- CLV can offer 52-week contracts, meaning you do not have to leave your accommodation over any of the holidays. This provides a lot more security and stability for you over the year as you will not have to worry about finding somewhere to live outside of the academic year and will prevent you becoming homeless during the holidays.
- It can be arranged that you do not have to pay a deposit and rental advance up front, instead delaying it until you receive your first student loan payment. This takes away the worry of having an additional cost that you cannot pay before you are receiving student finance.
- If you would like to stay at the accommodation for the three years of your course, that can be arranged through the 'Protected Returner Scheme', which provides you with some extra stability for the duration of your time at university.

The university also works with 'Housing Hand', who are the UK's biggest rent guarantor provider. You will need a guarantor for most types of accommodation you may live in, and normally this guarantor is a parent or guardian. Housing Hand can act as a guarantor for all types of accommodation, although there is a fee for this.

- In your first year there is an exclusive University of Salford price that can be paid in instalments over the year (you will need to cover this yourself).
- The university may be able to cover the cost of using Housing Hand during your second and third year.

HOMELESSNESS AND ESTRANGEMENT

Due to the loss of a relationship with their parents, it can be very easy for estranged people to become homeless. A lot of the time this may not mean you are sleeping on the street: you could be sofa-surfing, living temporarily with relatives, or staying in a foyer. According to Stand Alone, over 30% of estranged students registered or considered registering as homeless before they came to university so it is important to know that you are not alone if this happens to you.* Once you are a student the university will not let you become homeless and there are various sources of support available to you. To access the help you need you should keep in contact with the team at studentdiversity@salford.ac.uk and make sure they are aware of your situation.



You can also access free external support from Shelter (shelter.org.uk) who are a charity that specialise in helping those who are homeless or are struggling with bad housing.

If you need any advice about accommodation – whether you are planning on living in student halls or not – you can contact the team at askus-accommodation@salford.ac.uk

* www.standalone.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/StandAloneUNITEfoundation.pdf

WELLBEING

It is important that all students take care of their wellbeing while at university and there are plenty of resources available to help you do that.

Your first point of contact is the estrangement team within askUS (studentdiversity@salford.ac.uk) and they can put you in contact with other support networks within the university depending on your needs. They can set up a one-to-one appointment with you to make sure you are receiving all the help both during your application and after you arrive at the university.

The Wellbeing team (wellbeing@salford.ac.uk) can speak to you about any worries you have during your studies and, after meeting the team, can refer you on to counselling if necessary.

If you have an additional support need the Disability and Learner Support (disability@salford.ac.uk) team can make sure that support is in place before you arrive at the university. There is also a Disabled Students' Allowance that can help you pay for equipment, a non-medical helper, or just day-to-day costs. This is open to those who have a mental health problem, long term illness or any other disability. You can find out more at gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa

There are also external wellbeing support services that are made specifically for students. During the academic year you can contact Greater Manchester Nightline, a non-judgemental listening service that is run by students for students. You can find out more at manchester.nightline.ac.uk/



STAND ALONE

Stand Alone is a charity that supports those who have become estranged from their family. They offer advice and support services for people of all ages who are experiencing estrangement, and this comes in the form of support groups, workshops, and events throughout the year. The University of Salford has strong links with Stand Alone and can refer you for specialist support and advocacy services.

You can see what Stand Alone have to offer on their website: standalone.org.uk

As a university we have signed the Stand Alone Pledge, meaning that we are committed to supporting students who are studying without family support. You can find out more about the pledge on the Stand Alone website.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

UCAS guide on how to apply to university as an estranged student:
ucas.com/estranged-students/applying-university

Buttle UK provide grants for young people even when they can't get help anywhere else:
buttleuk.org/need-support/young-people

Turn2us helps people in financial hardship get access to welfare benefits, charitable grants, and other financial help. They have a free benefits calculator and you can search for available grants: turn2us.org.uk





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