

Student Wellbeing Service



Student Finance Northern Ireland Independent Status

You are an independent student if you meet one of the following conditions:

- You have care of a person under the age of 18 on the first day of the academic year for which you are applying for support.
- You are 25 or over on the first day of the academic year for which you are applying for support. For courses starting in September/October 2017 the first day is 1st September.
- You have been married or formed a civil partnership before the start of the academic year for which you are applying for support, even if that marriage or civil partnership is not still subsisting. Your local Student Finance NI office will need to see your marriage certificate or civil partnership schedule.
- You have no living parents.
- You have supported yourself for at least three years before the start of the academic year of your course. This includes any time when you:
 - were in paid full-time employment;
 - received Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance or other state benefit paid to a person who is available for employment but is unemployed, or registered for unemployment;
 - received any pension, allowance or other benefit by reason of a disability to which you are subject or by any reason of confinement, sickness or illness; or
 - received training under any scheme for the unemployed or other funding by any state authority or agency.
- Your parents cannot be traced or it is not practical or possible to contact them;
- Your parents live outside of the EU and an income assessment would put them in jeopardy, or it is not reasonably practicable for them to send funds to the UK if a contribution were assessed (this may apply if you are a refugee);
- You have not communicated with your parents for one year before the beginning of the year in respect of which you are applying for support, or you can demonstrate that you are permanently estranged from your parents (see "Students who have no contact with their parents" on page 14) – your local Student Finance NI office will review your situation each time it assesses your application for a new academic year); or
- Subject to certain exceptions, you were looked after by a local authority throughout any three-month period ending on or after the date on which you turned 16 and before the first day of the first academic year of your course.