

**Unite Foundation
Scholarship Scheme
2019/2020**

Guidance & Information

**This guidance provides important information.
Please read before filling out an application form.**

Guidance and Information

1 What is the Unite Foundation Scholarship?

The scholarship gives care leaver/experienced and estranged students a **free** student bedroom in a purpose built Unite Students building for 3 years of your university life. No rent, no bills; 365 days a year for up to 3 years of eligible study.

2 What are my chances of receiving a scholarship?

In 2019/20 there are 90 Unite Foundation Scholarships available.

In the 2018/19 cycle we received 187 eligible applications and awarded 90 scholarships. Therefore 48%, or just under half of applicants, were successful.

We are usually oversubscribed and are not able to accurately predict the number of eligible applications we will receive. An application represents a chance, not a guarantee, of a scholarship.

3 Who is eligible for a Unite Foundation scholarship?

Please read the descriptions below very carefully to see if you are able to meet the principle scheme criteria of care leaver, care experienced (Scotland) OR estranged. If you are unsure of your eligibility or the back-up documentation needed, please get in touch with your current or firm choice university. They will be able to offer help with this application or give you advice on other avenues of support to pursue. Contact Unite Foundation on info@unitefoundation.co.uk if you're not sure who to speak to.

The Foundation adopts the differing definitions of national governments so that our insight and research can be set in national and sector policy contexts.

Care experienced (Scotland)

The Scottish authorities define a care experienced student as being aged 16 years or over but under 26 and having, at any time in their lives, been looked after by a Local Authority

Ask your local authority for a letter on headed paper confirming that you are care experienced or the letter from SAAS confirming your Care Experience Bursary (see appendix 1 for an example).

Statutory Care Leaver (NI, Wales, England)

Care leaver is a legal status that can begin at age 16 and lasts until 25 if in Higher Education. There are several different categories of care leaver but all legal definitions are eligible for the Unite Foundation Scholarship Scheme.

Ask your local authority for a letter on headed paper confirming that you are a statutory care leaver; ideally stating which category you fall into, i.e. Relevant, Former Relevant, Eligible or Qualifying (see appendix 2 for an example). Ask them to include in this letter the support they will provide for you whilst you are at university.

Estranged from family

If you are estranged from both of your biological parents, adoptive parents, or only living parent, you will be eligible to apply for the Unite Foundation Scholarship Scheme as an estranged student. Student Finance (SFE, SFI, SFW) or Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS), considers you an independent student on the basis of being estranged from your parents if you are permanently not in contact with your parents.

For guidance on how to prove estrangement to Student Finance England, visit www.sfengland.slc.co.uk/estrangement.aspx

Ask your student finance/award office for a letter on headed paper stating that you have been assessed as an independent student on the basis of estrangement (see appendix 3 for an example).

If you are unable to provide a supporting letter for estrangement

Please enclose a copy of your student finance arrangement AND copies of the supporting documents you supplied to them as evidence of your estrangement.

Additional eligibility criteria

In addition to care or estranged status applicants must also meet all of the following criteria:

- Aged 25 or under on 1 September 2019 and
- Undertaking first and only course of undergraduate study and
- Studying at, or holding a firm choice offer from, a Unite Foundation University and
- UK home fee status student, i.e. not an international Student and
- In receipt of, or applying for, student finance or NHS funding reflecting care leaver/care experienced/estranged student status.

4 Which universities are part of the 2019/20 network?

In order to apply and be eligible for a Unite Foundation Scholarship from 2019/20 onwards you must be attending or applying as firm choice to one of the following universities...

Aston University	Robert Gordon University
Bath Spa University	Sheffield Hallam University
Bournemouth University	University of Bristol
Brunel University London	University College London
De Montfort University	University of Edinburgh
Edinburgh Napier University	University of Exeter
Glasgow Caledonian University	University of Portsmouth
King's College London	University of Reading
Kingston University	University of Salford
Leeds Beckett University	University of Sheffield
Liverpool John Moores University	University of Strathclyde
London Metropolitan University	University of the West of England
Manchester Metropolitan University	University of Westminster
Queen Mary University of London	

5 How do I apply?

Do not send your application directly to the Foundation. The Unite Foundation works in partnership with 27 universities and applications can only be submitted by your current or firm choice university. This is to make sure that elements of your eligibility are confirmed and also to connect you to university staff dedicated to supporting you in achieving your potential in Higher Education. You will need to fill out the application form completely and provide the required supporting evidence.

6 How are the scholarship awards decided?

The Unite Foundation Scholarship Scheme is not able to provide awards for every eligible young person and applies scheme priorities to decide how awards are allocated each year. These priorities are to:

- maintain a balance of benefit between estranged and care leaver students
- reflect a range of academic ability and course choice
- maintain a balance of scholarship students at partner universities

This means that an eligible application offers a *chance and* not a guarantee of a scholarship award. No single scheme priority carries greater weight than another and applicants cannot influence the outcome of the award in any way. If your eligible application is unsuccessful initially, you will be put on the reserve list and can go through the adjustment and clearing process. You can also reapply the following year.

7 Reserve list, adjustment and clearing process

- Awarded scholarship students who are not accepted to their firm or second choice university on receipt of their grades and therefore have to reapply through clearing will be able to take their scholarship with them to their new university if it is within the Unite Foundation network. This is entirely subject to suitable accommodation being available.
- Scholarships made vacant for any reason will then be made available for students in the 'reserve' list category from the same city. Where multiple candidates exist, the Unite Foundation will select replacement scholarship students.
- If no suitable candidates exist to fill vacant scholarship places in a specific location, other university partners will be contacted to increase their overall scholarship populations from their 'reserve' list.

8 Timeline of application process

October – December:	Application forms for scholarship places for the following academic year are available on the Unite Foundation website and from University partners.
January – May:	Students confirm their first choice university via UCAS. Scholarship applications can be completed, evidenced and submitted via universities. Each university will have their own deadline for your application that will enable them to check your forms and discuss your application with you.
June 12th, Midday:	Deadline for applications to be received by the Unite Foundation from the University. Applications sent direct to the Foundation by a student not considered.
July 4th:	Confirmation of awards communicated directly to student and university partners.
July – August:	Accommodation arrangements made for awarded students.
August 7th – 30th:	Reserve list, adjustment and clearing process period.

9 Who is responsible for what?



10 Benefits of the Unite Foundation Scholarship Scheme

- If awarded a scholarship, and on becoming a Unite Foundation Scholar, you will be entitled to three separate years of free accommodation in a designated Unite Students property.
- The accommodation is a single ensuite bedroom in a purpose built student flat with a communal fitted kitchen; the flat will be shared with a mixture of other students most likely at the same university.
- Unite Students flats for Scholars include all household bills, have wi-fi throughout and are served by maintenance and on-site support teams as well as an on-line emergency call centre. Many buildings have other facilities like a laundry, fortnightly cleaning and bike storage. Flats are furnished and the buildings have areas suitable for both study and leisure.
- For each year that you take up the free accommodation offer, your room will be available for the full calendar year; 365 or 366 days on leap years. Occasionally you might need to move flats temporarily to allow for maintenance and redecorating etc.
- You will not require a rent guarantor, a deposit or any rent payments.
- Once you become a Scholar you can choose annually if you would like to take up the free accommodation offer. Your award entitles you to three years free accommodation. These do not need to be consecutive but you do need to remain eligible each year. Years of study that are **excluded** from support are:
 - foundation year
 - years involving study credits toward a Masters whether that be post graduate or integrated with a Bachelors
 - resit years
 - repeat years arising as a result of changing courses
 - years in which you are aged 26 or older at 1 September
- If you get a job in a different city during the holidays or as a placement you can apply for free housing in a Unite Students property – subject to availability – in your employer location.

Miscellaneous support

Where appropriate the Foundation will make available opportunities or benefits provided by our donors and supporters. This may include paid internships, employability coaching, career mentors or other items and activities geared toward making the most of your university experience.

11 Responsibilities of Foundation Scholarship Students

As a Unite Foundation Scholar we will ask you to engage with the Foundation staff for a number of reasons listed below.

11.1 Administration

- Each year that you take the benefit of free accommodation you must sign the normal rental agreement for your room and abide by the standard terms and conditions of the tenancy. Breaking the tenancy agreement will most likely result in loss of your scholarship.
- You must make data sharing choices once you join the scholarship and ensure that the Foundation team and your university always have up to date mobile and email contact details for you.
- You must respond to deadlines that you'll be given for annual room bookings.

11.2 University experience

- You should stay in regular touch with your university named contact; – they are a brilliant source of information and support for all your academic, social and financial questions whilst at university. The Foundation University Partners can also manage queries about your scholarship.
- You should respond to termly communications from the Foundation. These will be a mix of meeting the Foundation team, small surveys, a competition or two, information about job/intern opportunities and chances to take part in Foundation activities like media or events. You can also get in touch with us for any questions related to the scholarship.

11.3 Scholarship scheme evaluation

- As a registered charity we are continuously seeking to improve the way that we work so as to have a better impact on care leaver and estranged young students. Each year we will conduct a survey that collects numeric and qualitative data. You must fill this in and should be completely honest so that the feedback can lead to improvements. We hope to keep in touch with you for up to two years after you graduate. Your feedback and progress can help improve the scheme and is invaluable to our development as a charity.
- You could take part in Scholar focus groups that discuss the scholarship scheme and develop ideas that improve our communications, operations or fundraising.

12 About the Unite Foundation

The Unite Foundation is a charitable trust, registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales and the Scottish Charity Regulator. We focus on enabling young people under the age of 25 to make the most of educational opportunity.

Emphasis is placed on supporting young people for whom access to a secure home is particularly meaningful; students who have previously been in care or are estranged from their parents.

The Unite Foundation Scholarship Scheme provides free accommodation for three years of undergraduate study. So far 344 young people have been awarded a Unite Foundation scholarship with 83 having graduated. In 2019/20 another 90 scholarship places will be available through our national network of partnership universities.

The Foundation itself was established in 2012 by Unite Students, a developer and manager of student accommodation. Unite Students remains the majority donor and makes an annual donation to the Unite Foundation having pledged a total of £8.5 million over the five-year period to 2020.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – A letter from Student Awards Agency Scotland confirming a Care Experience Student Bursary (Sco).



Student Awards Agency Scotland
Saughton House,
Broomhouse Drive,
Edinburgh, EH11 3UT

t / 0300 555 0505
w / www.saas.gov.uk

Award Notice 2018 – 2019

SAAS reference number: (you will need this number to contact us)

College or University:
Course:
Year of course:

SAAS payments

We will pay the following amount of tuition fees directly to your college or university

You are entitled to the following bursary/grants:

Care Experienced Student Bursary

We will pay the total amount of bursary/grants as follows:

17/09/2018	Sort code	Acc
05/10/2018	Sort code	Acc
07/11/2018	Sort code	Acc
07/12/2018	Sort code	Acc
07/01/2019	Sort code	Acc
07/02/2019	Sort code	Acc
07/03/2019	Sort code	Acc
05/04/2019	Sort code	Acc
03/05/2019	Sort code	Acc

If you change your bank details please tell us immediately through your online account. You must tell us at least 3 weeks before your next payment is due to ensure it is paid into the correct account.

Appendix 2 – A letter from a local authority confirming Care Leaver status (Eng, Wal, NI).

My ref:
Your ref:
Date:
Contact:
Direct dial:
Email:



Chief Executive:

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

Re:

Address:

I can confirm that the above-named young person, was subject to a Full Care Order under section 31 Children Act 1989 that was granted to Slough Children Services Trust on the is now a Care Leaver as has turned 18. I enclose herewith the copy of the Court order for your information.

has been in the care of

Please do contact me on the above number if you require any further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

Social Worker

Appendix 3 – A letter from Student Finance confirming the Independent Student Status of an Estranged Person



You need to write your Customer Reference Number on every document you send us.

 Student Finance England
PO Box 210
Darlington
DL1 9HJ
www.gov.uk/studentfinance
0300 100 0607



Customer Reference Number:

Dear

Independent student status granted 2018/19

Your independent student status has been awarded as you're irreconcilably estranged from your parents.

If your circumstances change

You should let us know if, for example, you change your course or get married as you may need to provide further evidence.

Yours sincerely

Student Finance Assessor