

# Independence and Estrangement

## How This Guide Helps

This guide is for undergraduate UK students who would like more information on independence and estrangement and are applying to Student Finance for full means tested funding.

## Contact Details



023 8059 2085



[advice@susu.org](mailto:advice@susu.org)



The Advice Centre - SUSU



[susu.org/support](https://susu.org/support)

## Wellbeing

It is important to recognise that it is normal and natural to feel some anxiety when you are following a formal process and that the University has support in place to help you with your wellbeing. You can contact the Universities Wellbeing Team on [studenthub@soton.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@soton.ac.uk) or by calling **023 80 599 599**. They are available **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**.

## Independent Students

If you are classed as an independent student, your own income and that of any spouse or civil partner will be assessed when you make an application for Student Funding.

You will be assessed as an independent student for funding purposes if:

- You are aged 25 or over before the start of the academic year
- You are married or in a civil partnership before the start of the academic year
- You have been financially self-reliant for at least three years prior to the start of your course (including any periods of unemployment)
- You have responsibility for one or more children
- You are a careleaver
- Your parents cannot be traced, or it is not practical or possible to contact them
- Your parents live outside the European Union and an income assessment would put them in jeopardy, or it is not reasonably practical for them to send funds to the UK if a contribution were assessed (this may apply to a student who is a refugee)
- Your parents are deceased

The Advice Centre can provide support and feedback on providing evidence to Student Finance to be assessed as independent.

## Estrangement

Student Finance may consider you as independent due to being 'irreconcilably estranged from your parents' if you have not had verbal or written contact with both of your biological parents, adoptive parents or your only living parent for a significant period (typically 12 months or more) and this is unlikely to change. If you find yourself in this situation, The Advice Centre can support you through the process of obtaining evidence for Student Finance.

Student Finance assessors take each case on its own merits and may make exceptions to the period of no contact where the circumstances are severe and clearly irreconcilable.

More information on estrangement, including the type of evidence Student Finance will accept, can be found at [Stand Alone](#).

You will not be able to claim independent status because your parents do not want to give details of their income or refuse to provide financial support to you. In this instance, we recommend you book an appointment to speak with an Adviser at The Advice Centre to explore other possible sources of finance.

## Estrangement

For further advice and support on Independence and Estrangement, including the evidence needed for Student Finance, contact The Advice Centre.



---

### *Disclaimer:*

*While care has been taken to ensure that information contained in The Advice Centre publications is true and correct at the time of writing, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information. The Advice Centre and SUSU cannot accept responsibility for any actions taken as a result of advice given in this publication.*

*Reviewed 08/25. Next Review 09/26*

Providing free, independent, and  
confidential advice and information.

 [advice@susu.org](mailto:advice@susu.org)  
 **02380 592 085**

**SUSU**   
Southampton University  
Students' Union 