

Support for Care Leavers

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1 INTRODUCTION

If you were in care immediately before you started your course, or were in care when you finished your compulsory schooling, you may be entitled to additional support as a care leaver. As well as the main support package, you may be entitled to help with accommodation costs during the summer holiday that falls between each year of your course. This additional support is paid in the form of a grant which is called the Vacation Grant for Care Leavers.

2 SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Depending on your age and circumstances you will either be classed as an independent or dependent student.

Care Leaver under the age of 23 on/before the first day of the academic year

If you are a care leaver who is under the age of 23 on or before the start of the academic year we are assessing you for, and you do not meet the conditions to be classed as independent (You do not have a child dependent on you, you are not married/living with a partner, and have not been self-supporting from income or benefits for any three years prior to starting your course), we will regard you as a 'young' student. If you are eligible for the student bursary you will receive the **Young student bursary**.

Care Leaver over the age of 23 on or before the first day of the academic year

If you are a care leaver who is 23 or over on or before the start of the academic year we are assessing you for, we will regard you as an 'independent' student. If you are eligible for the student bursary you will receive the **Independent student bursary**.

Make sure you claim for everything that you are eligible for. We can only pay you for the level of support you ask for. The types of support available are tuition fees, student loan, bursary and living-costs grants. You can visit our website at www.saas.gov.uk to get more information about the student support available to eligible students.

3 EVIDENCE REQUIRED TO PROVE YOU ARE A CARE LEAVER

To prove you are a care leaver, we will need a letter from your Social Worker or Social Work Department confirming that you were 'looked-after' or had been subject to a custodianship order throughout any 3 month period which ended on or after your 16th birthday and before the first day of your course.

If you cannot give us the above, we will accept a letter, on company header paper, from a professional person* who knows your circumstances and can confirm that you are a care leaver.

If you are claiming the vacation grant for care leavers you will be required to send in additional evidence in order to be assessed for this grant. Please see the [evidence](#) section for the grant for more information.

*A professional person can be, for example, a doctor, lawyer, teacher, counsellor, student adviser or minister of religion.

4 VACATION GRANT FOR CARE LEAVERS

If you have been in care and require help with your accommodation costs you may be able to claim the Vacation Grant for Care Leavers.

The grant is intended to cover accommodation costs during the summer holiday that falls between each year of your course. The maximum that we can pay is £105 a week during the vacation. We pay this direct to the landlord; we cannot pay it to you.

You cannot claim the grant for the summer holiday that falls before the start of the first year of your course or the summer holiday after you graduate. However, you **can** apply if you are progressing from an HNC/HND directly to another course without a break in study.

You do not have to be staying in private rented accommodation or halls of residence to claim this grant. You can still apply if you are staying with a friend or relative or continuing to live with foster carers.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR VACATION GRANT FOR CARE LEAVERS

To be eligible for this grant you must meet **all** of the following conditions:

- Have been in the 'care' of (looked after by) a local authority or voluntary organisation or have been subject to a custodianship order throughout any 3 month period which ended on or after your 16th birthday and before the first day of your course. We can only count a continuous period of 3 months. We cannot add together shorter periods to make the necessary qualifying period.
- Be under the age of 23 on the first day of your course.
- Your living-cost support must not have been assessed on parental income.
- Not be in receipt of Housing Benefit (HB). However, if your HB does not meet your housing costs in full, we can pay the Vacation Grant for Care Leavers **in place** of HB. It is up to you to decide which you want to claim.
- Have claimed your full student loan entitlement.

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EVIDENCE REQUIRED FOR VACATION GRANT FOR CARE LEAVERS

We require the following evidence:

- A signed and fully completed AB06 form (we will send this to you if you indicate on your online application that you wish to claim this grant); and
- A letter from your Social Worker or Social Work Department confirming that you were 'looked-after' or had been subject to a custodianship order throughout any 3 month period which ended on or after your 16th birthday and before the first day of your course; or
- A letter from a professional person (on their organisation's headed paper), who knows your circumstances and can confirm that you are a care leaver

And

- A copy of your formal rent agreement or;
- If you continue to live with the people that used to foster you, a letter from them confirming they are not in receipt of fostering fees for you; or
- A letter from the friend or relative you are staying with outlining your tenancy agreement/living arrangements.

5 THE APPLICATION FORM

The only way to apply for support is online through our [website](#). There is help text throughout the application process that will explain how to fill in the form.

To claim the Vacation Grant for Care Leavers you must tick the box on the first page of the application, along with ticking any other support that you want to apply for, to indicate you want to apply for '**Living Cost Grants**':

What Are You Claiming?

Please tick the boxes to tell us what support you want for session 2014-2015.

Tuition fees
(Payment of fees does not happen automatically every year. You must check this box if you want to apply to have your fees paid)

Are you studying inside or outside Scotland? Inside Outside
(If you are studying abroad, please indicate whether your home college or university is inside or outside Scotland.)

Loan for Living Costs

Loan applied for and Household income is £34,000 or above
(Up to £4,500 is available to all students. You do not need to give us your household income)

Loan applied for and Household income is below £34,000.
(You must supply us with your household income unless you are an independent single student. For more information click the 'Need Help')

Young Students' Bursary or Independent Students' Bursary

Living Cost Grants
(Dependants' Grant for Adult Dependants, Lone Parents' Grant)

Disabled Students' Allowance

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If you indicated that you want to apply for living cost grants on the first page of the application, you will then see a page titled **'Living Cost Grants'** as you progress through the application. You will need to tick the box underneath the heading **'Vacation grant for care leavers'**

Living Cost Grants

Other Supplementary Grants
Need Help ?

Please note that fields marked with an asterisk (*) must be completed to successfully submit an application.

If you are a lone parent and have a child who is dependent on you, you may be entitled to the Lone Parents' Grant. ?

If you wish to claim this grant please enter details of your child.

First name(s)	<input style="width: 60%;" type="text"/>
Surname	<input style="width: 60%;" type="text"/>
Date of birth <small>(please use format dd/mm/yyyy)</small>	<input style="width: 60%;" type="text"/>
Relationship to you	<input style="width: 60%;" type="text" value="Please select"/>

Vacation grant for care leavers. ?

If you want to claim this grant tick the box and we will send you the appropriate form.

Before we can pay this grant, you will need to fill in an additional form which we will send to you. You will be required to complete this form and return it to us along with the relevant [evidence](#) required.

Towards the end of the application you will be presented with a page titled **'Household Income Details'** which has conditions numbered one to seven. If you do not meet conditions one to five to be classed as an independent student, you must tick condition six. Although you are not dependent on parent(s), you are dependent on your social work department, therefore you should tick this box and send the relevant evidence.

Household Income Details

Dependent or Independent Status

This part of the application will help you decide whose income details (if any) we require. Please check one of the following boxes.

If you meet any of conditions 1 to 5 please check the relevant box and we will treat you as an independent student .

1. You have reached the age of 25 before the start of the academic year we are assessing you for and you are not married and you are not living with a partner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You have a child of any age dependent on you at the start of the academic year and you are not married and you are not living with a partner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Your parents are no longer alive and you are not married and you are not living with a partner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. You have supported yourself from earnings or benefits outside full-time education for any 3 years before the first day of the first academic year of your course and you are not married and you are not living with a partner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. You are married or live with a partner. Please make sure that your partner or spouse provides the income details we ask for later in the application.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I am dependent on my parents/step-parents. If your household income is below £34,000 please make sure that your parent (s) and/or step-parent and/or parents partner provides the income details we ask for later in the application. You will not receive income - assessed support without that information.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. I am applying for fees only.	<input type="checkbox"/>

6 ADDITIONAL HELP

If you require additional assistance during the completion of your application please contact our dedicated online application helpline on **0300 555 0505**.

7 WHO CARES? SCOTLAND

Who Cares? Scotland is a national voluntary organisation – established in 1978 – providing a range of advocacy advice and support services across Scotland for children and young people with experience of care up to the age of 25. You can visit their website at www.whocaresScotland.org to get more information about the work they do.

Ashley, a care leaver who will begin her Bachelor of Arts degree course in session 2014-2015, will be blogging on the Who Cares? Scotland website about her journey back to the classroom. You can follow Ashley's blog [here](#).

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