SFW Estranged student factsheet

cyllid myfyrwyr cymru
student finance wales

Student Finance Wales (SFW) relates to Welsh domiciled students studying higher education courses at universities or colleges in the UK

Estranged students: information for students

Do you have little or no contact with your parents? Is this unlikely to change? If so, you may be able to apply for student finance as an estranged student.

This means we can assess you using your own income, not your parents' income.

We know that some students can't safely ask their parents for this information. We want to make this process as easy and supportive as possible.

Do I qualify as an estranged student?

You could apply as an estranged student if you're under 25, and one of these applies to you:

- You haven't had any contact with both of your parents, either by phone, in person or in writing, for 12 months or more before your course starts; or
- Your relationship with both of your parents has broken down in the last 12 months, and you don't think this will change soon.

This includes adoptive parents as well as biological parents.

Some examples of estrangement are students who live with friends, students in supported accommodation, and students living with other family members, such as aunts, uncles or grandparents.

If you're under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and have minimal contact with your parents, you may be able to apply as an estranged student, but this would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

We look at every application individually. If you became estranged from your parents recently, in the last 12 months, we'll still consider your application on a case-by-case basis.

Apply for student finance as soon as you can. This gives us enough time to check your application and evidence before your course starts.

How do I apply?

If you already have evidence of your estrangement, send us a copy. This is usually the fastest way to prove your circumstances. For example, this could be a letter from a teacher, doctor, support worker or local authority. The letter should confirm that you're not in contact with your parents.

The letter needs to confirm their relationship to you and the length of time they've known you (this normally needs to be a minimum of 12 months). If your university or college provide this letter and haven't known you as long, SFW can make an exception. The letter needs to confirm your estrangement from both parents, the duration of your estrangement, the level of contact you have with your parents and that reconciliation is unlikely.

If you don't have evidence, you can fill in a Confirmation of Estrangement Form. You and another person will need to complete this together. You can find the form in your online account. You can also download it from our form finder at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/forms. Sometimes, we may also need to call you to talk it through with one of our trained Assessors.

Your university or college can also fill in an Estrangement Form to support your application. For example, your lecturer or someone who supports estranged students at your university or college. This person doesn't need to have known you for three months. They just need to know about your estrangement.

What happens after I'm assessed as estranged?

If you qualify, you'll usually only need to give us evidence once. We'll normally treat you as an estranged student for your whole course.

But if your estrangement is recent, usually within the last 12 months, or if you might reconcile with your parents, we may ask you to give us more evidence in later years.

Support available to you

You don't have to manage this on your own. Your university or college can help. Look for support from Student Services, Student Wellbeing, or the Student Union. UCAS also offers independent support.

It's your choice whether to tell your university or college about your estrangement. If you do, they can offer you support and help with your application.

Important links

UCAS: www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/individual-needs/estranged-students

Student Finance Wales: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-finance/full-time/tuition-fee-and-living-cost-students/household-income/independent-and-estranged-students/