

Student Fees

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Care Experienced Scholarship 2026/27

- Eligible applicants resident in England, Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland may apply for a scholarship to fund their Open University studies, up to a maximum of 120 credits per academic year, 360 credits in total.
- The Care Experienced Scholarships Fund is open for all undergraduate module presentations which commence in the 2026/27 academic year (1 August 2026 – 31 July 2027).
- 10 scholarships are available to those with experience of care and who are aged 30 and under.
- Before making an application, please ensure you have read the full Terms and Conditions available at <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/care-experienced-scholarship>.
- **Applications for the 2026/27 academic year will close at midday on 1 July 2026. Applications received after this deadline will not be accepted.**

Completing the application

To be included in the selection process you must complete this application form correctly and in full, providing supporting evidence where required.

Section 1: Your details

1.1

Open University Personal Identifier (If you have one) **Date of birth** **Age**

Title **Forename(s)** **Surname**

Address

Postcode **Nationality**

Email address **Telephone number**

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for a scholarship, applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- You are ordinarily resident in the UK and are eligible to pay a UK fee.
- You hold no existing higher education qualification(s).
- You are starting study with the OU for the first time.
- You intend to study a module starting in the 2026/27 academic year (between 1 August 2026 – 1 July 2027), towards an Open University undergraduate qualification.
- You intend to study a minimum of 30 credits per year.
- You are care experienced and have been within a care setting.
- You are aged 30 or under on 1 September 2026.
- You have an annual personal income of not more than £25,000 or are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

Please note: Scholarship funds are limited. There are a maximum of 10 awards available for the 2026/27 academic year. To ensure support is allocated in accordance with the spirit of the fund, eligible applications and supporting evidence will be reviewed by a panel who will make an assessment based upon the impact of the applicants' care experience. Awards will be made up to the maximum number of scholarships available. Successful applicants will be contacted by **17 July 2026**.

Fulfilling the eligibility criteria does not guarantee you success. If you still plan to study with The Open University even if unsuccessful in applying for a scholarship, you will need to make sure you have an alternative payment method in place. Further information is available on our Fees and Funding page: <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding>. If you are planning to apply for any additional support, such as **Disabled Students' Allowance**, it is advisable to apply as early as possible to ensure all support is in place ready for when you commence study.

Section 2: Your Open University study

2.1 Please give the subject you are interested in.

Subject

2.2 If you know which qualification you intend to study, please give the name or code of the qualification. If you are not sure, you can leave this section blank.

Qualification name or code

2.3 What is your career motivation?

Move into employment.

Change into a new career area.

Develop or progress in current career.

I am not studying for career purposes (**go to 2.5**).

Other, please specify:

2.4 What career are you pursuing?

Section 3: Your eligibility for a scholarship

3.1 Your experience of care

Please select the category which best defines the type(s) of care you have experienced/are currently experiencing. (Select the most appropriate option, you can select more than one type if you have experienced different types of care).

Foster care

Residential care

Adoption

Kinship care

Other – please specify

3.2 Please provide an approximate of the total amount of time you have spent in a care setting to date.

3.3 Please provide evidence of your care experience. This could be a letter from your local authority confirming your care leaver status, or a letter from a GP, social worker, care experienced support service or other professional person from the local authority in which you were looked after.



Send copies of supporting evidence by post, or as a scanned image or photo, we can't return originals.

For full details on the care experience evidence required, please refer to Appendix 1 of the Care Experienced Scholarship Terms and Conditions available at: <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/care-experienced-scholarship>.

Please note, we will not be able to complete our assessment of your application without the required evidence.

3.4 Please provide us with some background about yourself and your current circumstances. You should also include any relevant information about how you think your upbringing impacted your access to education; including any challenges you have faced in receiving higher education and what your goals are for the future.

Ensure you take this opportunity to provide sufficient details of how your experiences have affected your life and education. Information provided here will be reviewed by the panel when assessing applications.

Section 4: Your previous qualifications

4.1 You are only eligible to apply for a scholarship if you have no previous higher education qualifications, attained in the UK or anywhere else in the world. By previous higher education qualifications, we mean any of the following:

- Undergraduate Honours Degree – e.g. BA (Hons), BSc (Hons)
- Undergraduate Ordinary or Foundation Degree – e.g. BA, BSc or Foundation Degree (FD)
- Higher National Diploma (HND), Higher National Certificate (HNC), Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) or Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
- Any postgraduate qualification

Do you already hold any of the above qualifications?

Yes

No

Section 5: Financial eligibility

5.1 Are you basing your application on your qualifying benefit or your personal income?

Qualifying benefit (**go to Section 6**)

Personal income (**go to Section 7**)

Section 6: Qualifying benefits

Complete this section if you are basing your application on a qualifying benefit.

6.1 Tick which qualifying benefit you receive.

Income Support

Housing Benefit (including Local Housing Allowance)

Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)

Universal Credit

A reduction under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (*students in Wales only*)



You need to provide evidence dated within six months of this application of the qualifying benefit you receive. You can either:

- supply a full copy of your benefits award letter; or
- if you are in receipt of Universal Credit as an alternative to providing a full copy of the award letter you can provide a screen shot from the online Universal Credit account. The screenshot will need to confirm name, address, benefit entitlement and that payment has been received within the last 6 months; or
- ask your Jobcentre Plus or local authority housing office to complete Section 6.2 on the next page.

6.2 If you are not sending us a copy of a benefits award letter, a member of staff from the Jobcentre Plus or local authority housing office must sign this part of the form.

I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that at the date of receipt of this form the claimant named below is receiving the benefit(s) and/or credit(s) indicated on the previous page.

Full name of recipient

Signature of certifying officer

Official stamp (stating authority's address)

Name (print)

Date

Now continue to Section 8. You don't need to complete Section 7.

Section 7: Personal income

Complete this section if you are basing your application on your personal income.

- In the table below, give details of your gross personal income for the last complete financial year (1 April – 31 March).
- Make sure you provide **supporting evidence** for each type of income you declare. Send **copies** of supporting evidence, we can't return originals. **Appendix 2** in the Terms and Conditions will help if you're not sure what evidence to provide.
- **Note:** If the total income you declare is nil, you must give an explanation of how you are supporting yourself and provide a letter from any persons supporting you to confirm this.



7.1 Personal income

| Type of income (for the last complete financial year, 1 April – 31 March) | Gross amount received: You |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Employment income | £ |
| Self-employment income | £ |
| Retirement or disability pension | £ |
| Benefits income | £ |
| Unearned investment income (e.g. interest from bank or building society accounts, ISAs, shares) | £ |
| Unearned income from property rental or lodgers | £ |
| Other income (e.g. loans, bursaries, maintenance payments, redundancy payments received for yourself/your partner) | £ |
| Total income for the last financial year | £ |

Section 8: Terms and Conditions

- 8.1** I confirm that I have read, understood and accept the Terms and Conditions (available at <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/care-experienced-scholarship>) for applying for an Open University Care Experienced Scholarship.

Section 9: Declaration

9.1 Read the declaration below carefully before signing it.

- The information given on this form is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- I have read the Terms and Conditions and I understand the conditions of receiving an Open University Care Experienced Scholarship.
- I will inform The Open University immediately of any change in my circumstances that might affect my entitlement to an Open University Care Experienced Scholarship.
- I understand that if I give The Open University false information, or fail to give complete information, I may be prosecuted, and my scholarship withdrawn.

Your signature (If completing electronically, typed signatures are accepted) **Date**

Section 10: Consent to contact

The Open University Care Experienced Scholarship is funded by John Lewis Partnership. If your application is successful, we may wish to contact you inviting you to attend events with donors and other recipients or to share your story for the purposes of promoting the scheme for the benefit of other students. We will not use personal data of any persons in any materials without prior consent. Your answers in this section will not affect your eligibility for a scholarship or your prospects of selection.

10.1 If my application is successful, I consent to The Open University contacting me regarding promotional events and material.

Yes **No**

10.2 Where did you hear about the Care Experienced Scholarship?

On The Open University website

On the John Lewis Partnership website or social media

On social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram)

Through traditional media (e.g. newspaper article, TV)

Word of mouth

Other, please specify:

Section 10: Consent to contact (continued)

10.3 What would a scholarship mean to you?

To allow us to continue to run this truly valuable scheme we need to continue our fundraising efforts. We would really appreciate some words to describe what a scholarship would mean to you, to quote in promotional material. You may like to include how you think a scholarship could affect your life and future prospects. We are happy to publish your quotes anonymously if you would prefer.

Section 11: Application survey

To help us gather information about whether this scheme is making a difference, it would be helpful if you could answer the following questions as part of your application. If you are successful in securing a scholarship, we will ask you similar but relevant survey questions throughout your studies.

I am feeling confident about beginning my studies with The Open University.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

My course will bring a new focus and/or help me achieve my career ambitions.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

I would have studied with the Open University this year without this funding being available.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

It was easy to find information about this funding scheme.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

The information about this scheme was easy to understand.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

The application process was straightforward.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

Section 12: Checklist

12.1 Use the checklist to make sure that your application is complete. Remember to send copies of the evidence you supply, we cannot return originals to you.

Have you:

Read the Terms and Conditions at <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/care-experienced-scholarship?>

Completed all required sections of the form?

Provided supporting evidence of your personal income/qualifying benefit?

Provided supporting evidence of your experience of care? We need to have a clear understanding of your circumstances. Provide as much information and evidence as you wish to share, ensuring you remain within the application limit outlined in the Terms and Conditions.

Signed and dated the declaration in Section 9?

Data Protection Legislation

The following statement describes who will use the information provided on this form and what they will use it for.

We will use the information you give on this form to process your Open University Care Experienced Scholarship application.

The Open University needs the information you give on this form to work out whether you are eligible for a scholarship and is the data controller for that information. The Open University will keep personal information about you so that we can audit the assessment of Care Experienced Scholarship funding.

The data provided on this form will be retained by The Open University for a period of time based on the duration of your qualification.

As a data subject, you have a number of rights.

If you wish to see the information the University holds about you, or if you wish for any information to be corrected, deleted or blocked ("restricted"), please contact us using the details opposite.

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted on the details below.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not in accordance with the law, you can complain to the UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). See www.ico.org.uk

Open University Data Protection Officer
University Secretary's Office
PO Box 497
The Open University Walton Hall
Milton Keynes MK7 6AT
Email: data-protection@open.ac.uk
Telephone: +44 (0)1908 653994

Please scan and email your completed application and supporting evidence to:

Fees-FS-Bursaries-Scholarships@open.ac.uk

If this is not possible, then please post a hard copy of your completed application with supporting evidence to:

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The Open University
PO Box 6055
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