

## **STUDENTS**

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#### **1. EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE**

Education Maintenance allowance (EMA) payments will continue for young people. Department Staff at South Ayrshire Council are working from home and will ensure this continues.

#### **2. GRANT FUNDING AND STUDENT LOANS**

Students in receipt of grant payments for their studies, but are unable to attend educational establishments are being advised that their student funding will continue until the end of their courses. Colleges and Universities have placed FAQ sections on their website with email contacts for student funding departments should any specific questions arise.

The Student Loans Company has confirmed that students WILL be paid their loans/grants next term as normal (for people awarded an 'away from home' loan this will still be paid at the normal rate even if at home).

Most student services and funding staff are working from home and Hardship Funds are still operational, but will be subject to demand.

Anyone receiving Universal Credit will have their student funding counted as income until the last assessment period before the 'long holiday' commences. For example if your course ends in June, and

you continue receiving your student grant or loan payments, they will be used as income up to and including your May assessment period.

### **3. PAYING FOR STUDENT ACCOMMODATION:**

People currently living in university accommodation may wish to go home for the third term, as most institutions have suspended face-to-face teaching.

Some universities have agreed they will not charge accommodation fees for students who will not be living in halls in the summer term, others have agreed that students living in university-owned accommodation will be released from contracts earlier provided they have followed university advice to return home, have emptied their room and returned keys. Policies differ between educational establishments so anyone in this position should contact their college/university to see what their policy is and whether rent is still payable.

It is likely that anyone in private rented accommodation will have signed a tenancy until at least the end of the academic year and will have to pay the agreed rent until the end of the contract.

For anyone unable to pay rent, the guidance for renters in Info Sheet 4 apply, but we would always encourage explaining the circumstances to the landlord so that they're informed and a solution may be reached.

### **NEW 4. EXTRA HARDSHIP PAYMENTS FOR STUDENTS ANNOUNCED**

A £5 million package of emergency financial support is being put in place to help students facing hardship as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Extra cash will be available to any university and college students now struggling as a result of COVID-19, including those attending private institutions. University and college students will be able to apply for any emergency discretionary payments directly to their own institutions.

All bursaries, grants and loans are continuing to be paid as planned but the current unprecedented situation has resulted in increased hardship. The extra funding is immediately available for students most in need, to help alleviate concerns around accommodation costs, mental health issues, general living costs and wellbeing.

Institutions will be provided with specific guidance on the discretionary funding related to COVID-19

Other details of the emergency package include:

- A three-month suspension by SAAS of all new debt recovery actions in respect to grants and bursaries, for students whose circumstances have changed and therefore may have to return overpayments. Where a student is experiencing difficulties SAAS will work with them to agree the best options, with suspension potentially one of the solutions. Some individuals may still wish to continue recovery with a reduced payment plan.
- An extension of the Care-Experienced Accommodation Grant from early April allowing eligible students to access support of a non-repayable grant of up to £105 per week - this is eight weeks earlier than usual.
- £100,000 available to support around 1,000 students studying with private providers, administered by Student Awards Agency Scotland and paid directly to affected students.

**If you have any further questions about any of the above topics,  
or if you require Housing Advice or Information**

**Email [advice@ayrhousingaidcentre.com](mailto:advice@ayrhousingaidcentre.com) or call, text or whatsapp us on 07549 603895 /  
07760750256 or contact us via facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ayrhac>**