

Top 10 tips for HE Student Finance



Doncaster
College | University
Centre

Many people struggle making sense of the student finance system but here are a few tips which will help you to complete the application form. Remember the careers team can assist with more complex cases.

1

Check your eligibility

Student Finance regulations can be complex even if you are a UK national. If you have lived outside the EU for any length of time you may not be eligible for funding straight away. Also if you have studied in higher education beforehand, then this may affect your eligibility.

2

Log on!

You will need to create an account for Student Finance England, which you will keep all the way through your studies. Make sure you keep a note of your customer reference number as you will need to quote this number in the future. Don't worry about which university or course you are going to at this stage as you can make amendments at a later date. The main thing is to give SFE all the evidence they need so that they can start processing the information.

3

Make sure you apply on time!

Student finance usually opens each Jan for the September start. If it is your first year you will need to apply by the end of May to ensure that you get your money at the start of term. It will be easier for the 2nd and 3rd year students!

4

Supporting Evidence

You will need your National Insurance number (and possibly your parents/ partners). They will need further documentation such as passport or birth / marriage certificates. You will need P60's, Tax credit information and other proof.

5

Shop Around!

Different universities offer different fees and many offer scholarships. Obviously your choices are not just based around money, but it is definitely worth looking in to. Use Student calculator to compare each choice.

6

Get Supported!

If your case is complex such as living overseas, changes to parents income or you are estranged from parents it may be wise to seek help before completing the form. Remember loans have to be paid back but grants don't!

7

Download additional documents

If you have a disability or need help paying for childcare (you cannot get this support if you already receive child tax credits), you will need to complete additional forms. They will need supporting evidence such as child-minders details and letter from doctors to confirm any disability.

8

Appeals

If you have been refused support from Student Finance England, if you feel you have a good enough case, you can appeal. It is worth asking for help as careers advisers can look into the regulations and advocate on your behalf.

9

Getting Paid!

You will receive your maintenance loan/ grant straight into your bank account at the start of each term. It can take up to 8 weeks to process an application so ensure that you send all the documentation that Student Finance ask for.

10

Repayments!

You will not have to pay your fees back until you are earning over 21K and the amount you pay is assessed on what you earn rather than the debt you owe.

A few no-no's!

- Don't forget to shop around, not all universities charge 9K per year
- Don't leave it too late to apply as it can take a long time to process forms especially if it is a complex case
- Don't forget to apply for additional funding if you are eligible
- Don't forget to send in any supporting evidence as this will delay your application

