

Aston Support Fund Moving On Grant for Care Leavers and Estranged Students

2023/4

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Purpose

Care Leavers and students who are estranged from their parents are considered a priority group in the Aston Support Fund (ASF)¹.

The Aston Support Fund Moving On Grant for Care Leavers and Estranged Students (the 'Moving On Grant') offers grants at the end of undergraduate study, often a critical time for those without a family network to fall back on. Grants of £1,000 are offered to assist students with moving and relocation costs - such as rental deposits - and/or the costs of attending graduation and celebrating this significant achievement for those who may have faced additional challenges in their student life.

The Office for Students (OfS) asks institutions to highlight access and retention activity concerning Care Leavers in their Access Agreements. OfS also places greater emphasis on estrangement in future access agreement guidance².

This grant specifically aims to support the progression of these two distinct groups, post-graduation, to facilitate positive social outcomes into adulthood^{3 4}.

General Provisions

A student will be considered for the Moving On Grant if:

- the student is a current 'Home', 2023/24 undergraduate finalist, and;
- the student qualifies for full student support funding from the Student Loans Company as an 'Independent student', as a Care Leaver or on the basis of Estrangement⁵, and;
- the student is not currently on University Sanctions for student debt, and;
- the student has completed the online application form and all supporting evidence has been submitted before 12pm midday on Friday 28th June 2024.

Eligibility criteria

A student will be considered eligible for a Moving on Grant for Care Leavers and Estranged students if:

- the student meets the general provisions as above, and;
- the student is able to provide a letter or email from the Student Loans Company to confirm that they have been assessed as an Independent Student on the basis that they are a Care Leaver or are estranged. This can be requested from the Independence Team by emailing independent_student_enquiries@slc.co.uk or estranged@slc.co.uk, and;
- the student qualifies to be awarded in the 2023/24 academic year and the award is eligible to be conferred at a graduation ceremony in July 2024.

¹ <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/student-advice/fau/aston-support-fund>

² <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/estranged-students/>

³ <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Care-leavers-transition-to-adulthood.pdf#>

⁴ <http://www.unitefoundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/StandAloneUNITEfoundation.pdf>

⁵ https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/1205/sfe_independent_student_fs_1718_d.pdf

Application Procedure

Application process

The application form will be an embedded link on the Aston University website:

<https://www2.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/student-advice/fau/Moving-On-grant>

If the required evidence is not available at the time of applying students may submit them by email attachment to financialsupport@aston.ac.uk

The deadline for application and receipt of supporting evidence is 12pm midday on Friday 28th June 2024.

Direct invitation to apply

Finalists who have identified as a care leaver through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) application form or via the enrolment or re-enrolment process will be invited to apply for the grant by email and directed to the Moving On Grant webpage.

Finalists who have identified to the Hub that they are estranged from their families will be invited to apply for the grant by email and directed to the Moving On Grant webpage.

Self-referral

Students may self-identify with the eligibility criteria and apply directly via the Moving On Grant webpage.

Approving and Awarding

Approving

Those who meet the general provisions, and the eligibility criteria will be placed on a pending list until the results of the Exam Boards are known.

When eligibility is confirmed, the Student Funds Officer will seek approval of the grant and will notify students by email.

Awarding

A student who is considered to be eligible for the grant will be awarded a one-off grant of £1000, paid in one instalment.

If not already created, an Aston Journey account will be created for each eligible student. The Aston Journey account will be credited with £1000 and students will be contacted to withdraw these funds. When funds have been awarded, further information on how to access funds will be sent to each eligible student.

Timelines

Applications open on Friday 15th March 2024.

Applications close at 12pm midday on Friday 28th June 2024.

Contacts

Questions regarding eligibility criteria and the application process or payments should be sent to financialsupport@aston.ac.uk