

# Students in England encouraged to apply now for student finance

News story

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That's the message from the Student Loans Company (SLC) which has ensured that the application service has remained open to students as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

From this week, SLC is contacting returning students to remind them to reapply for their next year's student finance before 19 June. New students are being asked to submit their applications before 22 May 2020. They don't need a confirmed place on a course to apply, they can use their first choice of course and update their application later if this changes.

The easiest way to apply is online at [gov.uk/studentfinance](https://gov.uk/studentfinance) and SLC has produced the following guide and a video to help with the process: [student finance quickguide](#)

## [How to Apply](#)

There is also a dedicated resource for parents and partners who are supporting applications here <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/>

Derek Ross, SLC's Executive Director of Operations said: "We recognise that students will have much to consider at the moment. However, for those going to University this autumn, it is important that they make applying for student finance a priority. SLC has worked hard to ensure the continuity of the application service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the message is still that students should get their applications in ASAP to ensure that their student finance is in place for the new academic year."

Student Finance England has more information on the online student community forum, [the student room](#) and also on a dedicated area on the [UCAS website](#)

This information is designed to help new students and their parents find out everything they need to know about the application process. Students can also follow SFE at [facebook.comSFEEngland](#), [twitter.com/SF\\_England](#) or [youtube/SFEFILM](#) to keep up with all the latest news alerts.

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## **IOM in Italy to support UK nationals who want to regulate their status**

Supporting UK Nationals with the necessary local procedures to obtain and maintain their right to be resident in Italy after the end of the transition period. This is the objective of a new programme launched by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) with funding from the UK Government. The British Embassy in Rome will be supporting IOM as it carries out this important work. The programme is part of a wider initiative through which the UK government and IOM aim to reach and provide assistance to approximately 30,000 British citizens in Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain.

Laurence Hart, Director for the IOM Mediterranean Coordination Office, said:

We are delighted to be able to take forward this extremely useful and valuable activity here in Italy.

IOM will facilitate access to the necessary information about residency requirements for UK Nationals in Italy. We will also provide direct support on completing paperwork for all those who might be having difficulties in taking forward the required procedures introduced here.

Information will be made available on dedicated webpages on both the IOM and British Embassy in Italy websites (see [Living in Guide](#)). IOM will also be offering help to individuals with specific issues, especially those with chronic disease, disability or those experiencing language or technical barriers.

This initiative” underlines Hart “will provide direct support to UK

Nationals, to ensure they avoid finding themselves with an irregular status in Italy. It will also help key Italian institutions streamline the completion of the necessary paperwork.

In order to reach UK Nationals in Italy, it will be important to circulate relevant information at the local level, with the support of the network of town halls, as registry offices will play a fundamental role in the procedure for UK Nationals to regulate their status.

IOM's work will complement the UK government's strategy, which includes the allocation of £3 million in support of organisations helping UK Nationals across several European countries. This will assist UK Nationals with bureaucratic and administrative procedures that are required to regulate their status in Europe.

British Ambassador to Italy Jill Morris commended:

We welcome IOM's new service for UK nationals to help them regulate their status here in Italy, so they can continue to enjoy their rights after the end of the transition period.

The new programme will be launched later this month and will run for 12 months, i.e. until 31 March 2021.

**The measures Italy has put in place in response to the coronavirus means that UK nationals should not try to register their residency at this time. IOM stands ready to support UK nationals in registering with their local town hall when restrictions are lifted.**

**For more info:**

**IOM:** Flavio Di Giacomo, Press Office, tel: +39.347.0898996; email: [fdigiaco@iom.int](mailto:fdigiaco@iom.int) or [iomromepress@iom.int](mailto:iomromepress@iom.int).

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## **[New free online learning platform to boost workplace skills](#)**

A new [online learning platform](#) to help boost the nation's skills while people are staying at home, has been launched today (28 April) by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson.

Free courses are available through a new online platform hosted on the gov.uk website, called [The Skills Toolkit](#). The new platform gives people access to free, high-quality digital and numeracy courses to help build up their skills, progress in work and boost their job prospects.

These are the skills which are highly valued by employers and sought after in a wide range of jobs. With more people expected to be working and studying remotely in the coming months, the platform offers a great opportunity to learn new skills to help to get ahead online and gain the knowledge we'll all need for the future. The platform also offers employees who have been furloughed an opportunity to keep up their skills development while they are at home.

Courses on offer cover a range of levels, from everyday maths and tools for using email and social media more effectively at work to more advanced training. Individuals will be able to access courses helping them to create great online content developed by the University of Leeds and the Institute of Coding, to understand the Fundamentals of Digital Marketing from Google Digital Garage and to learn how to code for data analysis from the Open University. All courses are online and flexible, so people can work through them at their own pace.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I know how difficult the recent months have been and the huge changes the coronavirus has brought on the daily lives of us all.

The high-quality and free to access courses on offer on our new online learning platform, The Skills Toolkit, will help those whose jobs have been affected by the outbreak, and people looking to boost their skills while they are staying at home, protecting the NHS and saving lives.

I want businesses to encourage their furloughed employees to use The Skills Toolkit to improve their knowledge, build their confidence and support their mental health so they have skills they need to succeed after the coronavirus outbreak.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

The impact of Covid-19 has shown how important digital skills are – both for work and other aspects of our lives. Technology is going to play a hugely important role in our economic recovery and this new platform will help ensure everyone is able to improve their digital skills and take advantage of the opportunities ahead.

[The Skills Toolkit](#) is designed to help people gain new skills while they are staying at home and boost their confidence. The courses have been selected on the advice of experts and leading employers to make sure they meet the needs

of business, not just for today but in the future. This is just a first step towards assisting with the longer-term recovery to boost employability across the country, helping people to build up the skills employers need during time spent at home.

Employers are also encouraged to use [The Skills Toolkit](#) to help to support and develop furloughed employees who are interested in learning from home.

Matthew Fell, CBI Chief UK Policy Director said:

Online learning is a great way for people to upgrade their skills at any time, but never more so than during a lockdown.

The toolkit's heavy emphasis on the skills that businesses need are welcome.

Maths and digital skills are highly prized by employers, so for those who take the chance to upskill they can help improve their job prospects and career progression. I'd encourage all businesses to make their staff aware of this learning opportunity.

Julian David, CEO of techUK said:

techUK is pleased to see Government taking an active role in signposting and motivating the public to take advantage of the digital skills training industry offers, techUK has long advocated for a move in this direction. Digital skills will be crucial to the future of the UK economy and our recovery from the COVID crisis.

techUK is passionate about ensuring everyone has access resources to improve their skills and retrain at any age and at all skill levels and we expect this initiative to be a great start on the journey to upskilling Britain.

Simon Nelson, CEO of FutureLearn, said:

At FutureLearn our mission has always been to transform access to education and we are proud to be working with the Department for Education to deliver on that shared vision. We hope that the free digital skills courses included within the Skills Toolkit, which were built in partnership with Accenture, the Institute of Coding, and the University of Leeds, will bring practical and accessible support to people across the country, and ensure that individuals and businesses are able to access the skills and training opportunities they need to keep thriving and moving forward, not just during this challenging period, but beyond it.

Helen Milner, Chief Executive of Good Things Foundation said:

It's at times like this that people start to think about the skills they might want for the future.

With 11.9 million people in the UK still without the essential digital skills for life and work, from adding an email attachment to two-step security verification, we're delighted to be helping the nation learn and gain confidence through our free Learn My Way online courses and Make It Click directory.

David Meads, Chief Executive UK & Ireland, Cisco said:

The pandemic has escalated the need to challenge inequities and drive inclusivity, so the public sector, education providers, businesses, charities and communities can safely and securely embrace digital ways of working.

The Skills Tool Kit is a step towards providing equal access to opportunity and ensuring we develop diverse talent and skills that meet the needs of society today – and in the future.

Nick Williams, Transformation Director, Lloyds Banking Group said:

Now more than ever we're really happy to share our Lloyds Bank Academy digital skills as part of this important Government and industry collaboration. Providing practical support to help more people, small businesses and charities across Britain build the confidence they need to adapt their skills and aspirations has come into even sharper focus. We're all learning new ways of doing things during these challenging times, and whatever we can do to support others makes great sense to us.

Professor Tim Blackman, Vice-Chancellor of The Open University said:

Online learning with The Open University allows anyone, whatever their educational background, to gain new skills and improve their knowledge in a subject, ready for when they return to work. Our world leading expertise and capability in online teaching shapes our free, short courses on our OpenLearn platform. Learners can start at any time and study at their own convenience, balancing learning with other responsibilities, especially in these unprecedented times.

Rachid Hourizi, Director of the Institute of Coding said:

We are delighted to be part of government's Skills Toolkit. The Institute of Coding was created with support from the Department

for Education to make digital skills education available to a larger and more diverse group of people. To do this, we work with our partners to produce a variety of courses, including some that are short, online and free. Developed with input from industry, the Institute of Coding courses in The Skills Toolkit enable you to access learning when it suits you, gain the skills employers are looking for, and learn useful information for your life and career during this challenging period.

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## [New guarantee on death in service benefits for frontline health and care staff during pandemic](#)

- New life assurance scheme launched for eligible frontline health and care workers during the coronavirus pandemic
- Families of eligible workers who die from coronavirus in the course of their frontline essential work will receive a £60,000 payment
- Scheme will cover frontline NHS staff and social care workers in England
- Funding will also be provided to devolved administrations to support similar schemes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

The families of health and care workers on the frontline in England will benefit from a new life assurance scheme during the pandemic, developed after discussions with health and social care unions.

The scheme recognises the increased risk faced by staff during the crisis and will cover coronavirus related deaths of workers in frontline health and adult and children's social care roles during the outbreak. It will cover staff who provide hands-on personal care for people who have contracted coronavirus or work in health or care settings where the virus is present.

Bereaved family members will receive a £60,000 lump sum worth roughly twice the average pensionable pay for NHS staff, with the cost met by the government.

This will cover full, part-time or locum NHS and public health workers, including GPs, dentists, retired staff and second and final year students taking up paid frontline roles.

Within social care, the scheme will cover employees of publicly funded care homes, home care, directly employed carers including personal assistants and frontline child and family social workers.

The scheme is aimed at those who die from coronavirus during the course of

their essential and lifesaving work. This includes those providing direct care as well as cleaners and porters who continue to carry out vital duties in these care environments.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

“Nothing can make up for the tragic loss of a loved one during this pandemic. We owe a huge debt to those who die in service to our nation and are doing everything we can to protect them.

“Financial worries should be the last thing on the minds of their families so in recognition of these unprecedented circumstances we are expanding financial protection to NHS and social care workers delivering publicly funded care on the frontline.

“We will continue to strive night and day to provide them with the support and protection they need and deserve to keep them safe as they work tirelessly to save lives.”

Employers will be asked to initiate claims on behalf of the individual’s families and claims will be verified and processed by the NHS Business Services Authority, who will work with employers to ensure claims are handled swiftly and sensitively.

- The scheme will cover frontline staff in England, but the devolved administrations will receive funding through the Barnett formula. Wales is implementing the same scheme and arrangements are being considered in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- The scheme is time-limited, providing cover for the duration of the pandemic. This is measured as the period for which the NHS workforce provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 are in force (which took effect on 25 March) but claims for deaths occurring before this will be considered. At the conclusion of the emergency response, the Secretary of State will give notice to close the scheme. The coverage of the scheme is broadly drawn across health and care sector employers given the variety of roles and locations, but eligibility is work-related.

1. For the NHS and public health, frontline staff employed by:
  - statutory NHS bodies: Trusts, Special Health Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS England/Improvement
  - GP and dental practices (including GP or dental contractors and GP locums)
  - Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) arm’s length bodies, including Public Health England
  - wider non-NHS organisations who provide NHS-funded services and functions including commissioned services and outsourced services
  - organisations delivering public health grant funded services
2. For adult and children’s social care: all employees of local authorities, care home providers for children and adults, domiciliary care home providers and directly employed carers including personal assistants where some of the funding is public for the care of the service users.

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## Youth, Peace and Security

Thank you, Mr President. Thank you again to you for calling this open debate today and we're also very grateful to the Secretary-General and the Youth Envoy and our other briefers. We're also particularly glad to hear those perspectives from the youth briefers. There was a lot to reflect on there in terms of putting youth and the peace and security agenda into a broader and more personal context. Thank you very much to them.

Mr President, I wanted to focus on on three points today. Firstly, on, as others have done, the impact of COVID-19 on youth and on this agenda. And secondly, on the critical role of education. And thirdly, on the importance of protecting young human rights defenders and young peace builders.

Allow me to begin with a quick word on COVID-19. I think we all know the world is experiencing an unprecedented challenge in the face of this global pandemic. And it's clear that we can only defeat COVID if we work together to defeat it everywhere. And this requires global effort. But young people are going to be key to the global response to this pandemic, and that's going to mean listening to them and ensuring their needs are taken into account, that they are involved in decisions about our handling of this crisis as it affects their lives.

As others have noted, more than half of the world's population is below the age of 30 and they will be hard hit by the second order effects of this virus. They will experience the uncertainty and hardship of the global economic slowdown and the social disruption and, in some places, the humanitarian and conflict impacts if we don't respond quickly to the challenges that COVID will mean for vulnerable societies. So we need youth to join our efforts to fight the virus and we need to ensure that they do not bear the brunt of its impact.

Mr President, the second point I wanted to talk to was about education, and it was really striking in Gatwal's story to hear of how the point at which his life pivoted really from being trapped in the cycle of violence that had trapped his father, was when he was in Uganda and was getting an education there. It's clear that shortcomings in education is not a new phenomenon in many parts of the world, but it's clear that the pandemic is having a profound impact on education systems, too, with over 1.5 billion children and youth out of school. And more disruption will follow as the virus spreads. It's important to note that missing out on an education is a huge waste of young people's potential, but more importantly, it makes societies in which they live less safe and less prosperous because, as Gatwal said, it was an education that gave him hope and prospects. And it is without education that young people, without hope and prospects turn to alternatives including violence.

We also know, Mr President, that school closures have a disproportionate

impact on girls' lives, with girls facing increased risks of child marriage, of teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and being at a risk of dropping out of school permanently. So it's critical that, where we can, we get schools open as quickly as possible.

It's also worth noting that it's not just COVID that's closing down schools. As we've heard in the Council over the last several months, in the Sahel, increased violence has closed hundreds of schools and pushed children out of education again with a knock-on effect on the conflict there.

Mr President, the UK is committed to standing up for the right of every girl to have twelve years of quality education. And we've consistently provided funding to deliver on this promise and we'll continue to do so. In fact, we've added an additional \$6 million to the Education Cannot Wait programme to provide education the world's most vulnerable children and youth, particularly as they are affected by the impact of COVID-19.

Mr President, finally, my third point is that young people have to have the freedom and rights to champion what they believe in. We've been gravely concerned by reprisals against young human rights defenders and peace builders. Young people face attacks and threats and restrictions on their freedom in attempts to stop them from doing their critical work – including, sadly, here at the UN. Young women are at particular risk, whether age and gender can work against them. That's why in February this year we co-hosted an Arria meeting on reprisals against women human rights defenders and women peace builders who briefed the Security Council, and many of whom were young. We believe the Council must work together to foster an enabling environment for young people working on peace and security.

Mr President, the South African Ambassador reminded us earlier that today is South Africa's Freedom Day. And it's impossible really to imagine South Africa winning that freedom without the energy and the mobilisation of its youth and that youth paid a high price for that freedom, from the Soweto uprisings in 1976, right through the violence that was inspired in the lead-up to democratic elections. And I think as we reflect on that, our job here becomes clear, and that is to ensure a voice for the youth of the world that allows them to become central to the way we govern ourselves and the way we decide on the future, but one that does not come at such a great cost.

Thank you very much, Mr President.