

University of Essex Online

Graduation Assistance Fund

2026

The University of Essex Online is offering a Graduation Assistance Fund to assist graduates experiencing financial difficulty who require financial support with the cost of gown hire and/or up to two guest tickets for their graduation ceremony. Awards will be paid directly to the University of Essex and the gown hire company. We have a small, limited number of awards available for students in genuine financial hardship.

Important: If you apply for this fund, you must still book your place through the Graduation Booking system but please do not purchase tickets or a gown while your application is being processed. If tickets for your ceremony are still available, up to two guest tickets and a gown will be reserved for you by the Student Experience Team when you submit your application and will be reserved until you receive an outcome.

Terms and Conditions

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Graduation Assistance Fund, you will need to meet the following criteria:

- You **must** be a current or former University of Essex Online student eligible to attend the graduation ceremony in 2026.
- You must have an annual salary lower than £25,000 (or the equivalent in your local currency).
- You must be able to show that you are in financial difficulty.

Evidence

To support your Graduation Assistance Fund application, you must provide accurate, up to date and relevant evidence to support your reason for applying.

Please be aware that you may be asked to provide further evidence if it is necessary to assess your application. All evidence provided must be clear enough to read, in accepted formats (pdf,

(jpg, doc, xlsx, png, txt) and in English. You must ensure that any evidence that is provided in a language other than English is translated before submitting it as part of your application.

You are required to provide the following evidence to support your application.

Evidence type	Conditions and examples
Proof of Income	This could be in the form of a wage slip. The evidence must contain your name and address and be dated within the last three months.
Bank statements for every financial account that you own	All financial statements must be in clear, readable format, containing the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your name and address. ▪ Bank account details, including sort code, and account number. ▪ Opening and closing balance. ▪ Transactions covering the last 30 days prior to the date you submit your Graduation Assistance Fund application.

How to apply

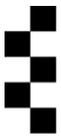
The deadline to apply for the fund is 4th May 2026.

To apply for the Graduation Assistance Fund, you will need to do the following:

1. Ensure that you meet the eligibility criteria above.
2. Carefully read these Terms and Conditions.
3. Click [this link](#) to submit your application with the supporting documentation.

Note: your application will not be assessed until you submit a full and complete application form, which includes all necessary evidence to complete an assessment.

Application and assessment procedures



The application should be submitted using the form provided above, which is also available on the learning platform [here](#). The form will be received and processed by the Student Experience Team.

As part of your application, you will be required to complete a 'supporting personal statement', providing details of your individual circumstances. As part of your statement, you must demonstrate the following:

- What your current financial difficulties are
- Why you or your guests cannot afford to pay for your gown and/or guest ticket(s).

The Graduation Assistance Fund is discretionary, and applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis and will be prioritised in the order they are received. Assessments will examine how well you meet the eligibility criteria for the fund, with a particular focus on:

- **Supporting personal statement:** This should outline your current financial situation and include any other relevant information about your case. Ensure that you have read all supporting guidance and Terms and Conditions fully to ensure that you present a strong and complete case for support.
- **Financial situation:** In addition to the information provided in your personal statement, we will look at your expenditure to understand your financial situation.

All information provided in support of an application will be considered and we encourage you to provide as much relevant information as possible to give us a full picture of your circumstances.

We will aim to complete the assessment and provide an outcome within 15 working days following receipt of application.

Payment arrangements

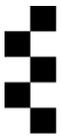
- If your application is approved, you will be granted up to two guest tickets free of charge and/or a gown will be provided free of charge on the day of your ceremony.

Appeals

You may appeal the outcome of your application if your application is declined. This must be sent by email to the Student Experience Team at studentexperience@online.essex.ac.uk within 10 working days of your outcome email.

Your appeal will be considered at the discretion of the Head of Student Services and Head of Revenue and Accounting Operations or their nominee(s).

Resolution of disputes



Acceptance of the Graduation Assistance Fund constitutes acceptance of these terms and conditions. Registered students should contact the Student Experience Team in the first instance for guidance regarding this award. In cases not covered by the above terms and conditions, or where a student claims exceptional circumstances, or disputes a decision not to make payments due under this scheme, final appeals on decisions regarding eligibility must be made via the Student Complaints process.

NOTE: These terms and conditions apply to the Graduation Assistance Fund awarded to students for the 2026 graduation ceremony. The University of Essex Online reserves the right to update these terms and conditions as necessary.