



Tips and tools for managing money as a student

Making your money and pension choices clearer

Whatever your circumstances, MoneyHelper is on your side. Online and over the phone, we offer clear guidance that's quick to find, easy to use and backed by government. We can also point you to trusted services if you need more support.

We can help you:

- clear your debts
- understand your pension options
- plan for retirement
- reduce your spending and build up savings
- navigate life events such as redundancy, relationship breakdown or bereavement
- plan ahead for major purchases
- find out about extra benefits and entitlements.

Just search for MoneyHelper: **moneyhelper.org.uk**

Free impartial guidance
on the web | on the phone

Provided by



1. Setting a weekly budget

Getting a student loan or grant – or money from family or a job – doesn't mean you're instantly rich. This income must last each month or term, so work out a weekly budget to manage your money.

Check out the MoneyHelper page on **student budgeting tips** and use one of the **budgeting calculators** on **Save the Student** or MoneyHelper's **Budget planner**.

2. Maximising income and controlling spending

As a student, this might be the first time you're solely in charge of managing your own money. You'll need to budget for rent, food, bills, transport and socialising. If you can keep your spending in check now, it'll help you avoid getting into money problems later.

With the high cost of living, your money for the term will need to stretch even further. What you spent on food and bills in the past might not be a good estimate for this year.



Budget wisely and don't be afraid to ask for help from your place of study if you're struggling to afford essentials.

Look for student discounts when shopping or signing up for subscriptions. You'll be able to use your student email or ID card for some discounts, but you can also sign up for more on **TOTUM**, **Unidays** and **Student Beans**. Be aware that while discounts can help you save money in the short term, it's easy to be tempted to overspend. It's not "10% off" if you didn't need the item in the first place, it's more like "90% on."

Check the MoneyHelper page on **saving money on bills**.

Be careful and understand the risks of trying to make money by investing. Students have lost large sums of money by using their loan to make high-risk investments in cryptocurrency or on apps selling individual stocks. Check the MoneyHelper page on **understanding risks when investing**.

3. Understanding contracts for renting or paying bills

It's important to understand the liabilities you – or your parents/guardians – could face for failing to pay any money owed when signing a legally binding contract in your name. This applies even if you are sharing bills with housemates.

If a Direct Debit fails (more than once) to somebody you owe money to, this could be deemed a breach in contract, which could impact your credit score.

Check out the MoneyHelper page on **tenants' rights and responsibilities explained**.

4. Checking credit scores

Taking out student loans will not affect your credit score, but other forms of borrowing and paying bills, such as buy now pay later agreements or phone contracts, can.

It's important that you make repayments on time to avoid damaging your credit score. You should always contact the companies you owe money to at the first sign of difficulty. You can check and track your credit report online for free.

Check out the MoneyHelper page on **credit scores**.

5. Managing a student account

A student bank or building society account is the main way for you to manage your day-to-day money.

Freebies that come with a new account can be tempting, but you should consider other factors, such as whether there's an easy-to-use app and what the fee-free overdraft on offer is. It's also important to check out the charges that might apply if you go overdrawn without permission.

Check out the MoneyHelper page on **student accounts**.

6. Using an interest-free overdraft

Working out a budget to cover your expenses for the full term is an important first step. However, an authorised, interest-free overdraft remains a vital lifeline for many students. It can help reduce the need to take out more expensive forms of credit. If you exceed your interest-free overdraft or go into an unauthorised overdraft, you will be charged additional fees and interest.

Remember though, this is not free money, and you must pay it back after graduation.

Check out the MoneyHelper pages on **overdrafts** and on **managing debts after graduation**.

7. Building a savings buffer

Weekly budgeting can make it easier to identify where you can cut back and build a savings buffer for emergencies, however big or small, and so reduce your need to use credit.

If you set up a separate account for your savings, you'll be less tempted to spend it than if the money remains in your main student account.

If you've just turned 18 years old, are you aware that your Child Trust fund is ready for you to access?

Check out the MoneyHelper pages on **child trust funds** or on **instant access savings accounts**.

8. Protecting valuables and possessions

Ensure that your mobile phone, laptop, bicycle and other possessions are adequately protected in case of loss, theft or damage.

Some items may be covered away from home by your parents' or guardians' home contents insurance.

If you're living on campus, ask if contents insurance is included in your accommodation costs.

Check the MoneyHelper pages on **contents insurance** and, if you intend to drive, on **car insurance**.

9. Being alert to scams

Think you'd never fall for a scam? That probably isn't the case. According to Sky News, under 25s are six times more likely to fall victim to criminals using social media platforms than over 50s.

Make sure you remain alert to scams: you could be targeted through text or WhatsApp messages, emails or social media. These scams could be advertising get-rich-quick schemes, free government grants (likely benefit fraud) or asking you to be a money mule by transferring funds illegally between accounts.

You should report any scams you're targeted with immediately to **Action Fraud**. Never disclose any personal information or send or receive money from scammers. Using your bank account for illegal activity can mean it'll be shut down, which makes receiving money from your student loan or job much more difficult.

Check out the MoneyHelper page on **scams**.

10. Struggling with debts

If you're struggling with debt or worried about money, reach out straight away for free help.

All universities and colleges have student support services, and many have dedicated student money advisers, who can help you work out how to deal with debts and access hardship funds.

For more serious debt issues, you can use the MoneyHelper **debt advice locator tool** to find a trained and experienced professional who can help you for free.



Visit the MoneyHelper site by scanning this QR code

MoneyHelper

MoneyHelper is independent and backed by government to help people make the most of their money by giving free, impartial money and pensions guidance to everyone across the UK – online and over the phone.

For free and impartial guidance on any money or pension queries, you can contact us by calling on:

Money guidance

0800 138 7777

Mon – Fri 8am to 6pm

+44 20 3553 2279

if you're outside the UK

Pensions guidance

0800 011 3797

Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm

+44 20 7932 5780

if you're outside the UK

Or visit **moneyhelper.org.uk**

Webchat:

moneyhelper.org.uk/moneychat

moneyhelper.org.uk/pensionschat

WhatsApp:

+44 7701 342744

(money guidance)

Join our **online communities** for support:

moneyhelper.org.uk/online-communities



Tips and tools for managing money as a student

is one of the guides available from MoneyHelper. This publication is available in Welsh. To see this and our full range of guides and request copies visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/free-printed-guides**

MoneyHelper*

Money guidance **0800 138 7777**

Mon – Fri 8am to 6pm

Pensions guidance **0800 011 3797**

Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm

Typetalk **1800 10800 915 4622**

Mon – Fri 8am to 6pm

WhatsApp **+44 7701 342744**

Website **moneyhelper.org.uk**

Money
Helper
Savings

If you would like this guide in Braille, large print or audio format please contact us on the above numbers. Information correct at time of printing (April 2024). These guides are reviewed once a year.

*Calls are free. To help us maintain and improve our service, we may record or monitor calls.