

The following information provides a very general overview of financial support available to full-time students on a temporary interruption of studies. The information on benefits below applies only to UK citizens who fulfil the government's various residence and presence conditions. If the student concerned has been away from the UK for an extensive period of time in the last five years, their access to the benefits listed below may be affected.

Hardship Fund

Students on an interruption of studies are not, unfortunately, able to access the discretionary fund. But if the IOS is due to ill health and the student is currently facing financial difficulties (s)he can apply for support from the university's hardship fund. The maximum single award that can be made from the Hardship Fund is capped at £600, depending on a student's circumstances. Further information on the hardship fund is available here- <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-funding/financial-support/additional-financial-assistance/hardship-fund> .

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

If the student concerned has a disability or long-term health condition (i.e. a condition that has lasted for three months and is anticipated to last for a further nine months) (s)he may be eligible for Personal Independence Payment. PIP is a state benefit which is designed to help with the extra costs associated with living with a disability or long-term health condition. The amount the student will receive will depend on the assessor's view of how their condition affects them. But payments range from **£21.55 to £138.05 per week**.

Entitlement to PIP is NOT affected by 1) your current income 2) any savings or financial assets you may have 3) **student status** 4) employment situation 5) receipt of student funding.

It is important to note that the assessment process for PIP can take several months. The student might, however, be able to ask for your payment to be backdated to the date at which they first contacted the DWP to make a claim.

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Employment and Support Allowance is designed to replace earnings for people who are unwell or disabled and cannot work.

Students in full-time education cannot normally claim income-related Employment Support Allowance (even if they are currently on an interruption of studies) UNLESS they are claiming PIP or DLA.

Students in full-time education may be able to claim contributions-based Employment Support Allowance if they are too unwell to work and have made sufficient National Insurance Contributions.

Housing Benefit

If the student is in receipt of PIP, they might also, depending upon their income, assets and accommodation arrangements, be eligible for Housing Benefit.

If the student is deemed to have had 'limited capability for work' for at least 28 weeks, (s)he may, depending upon their income, assets and accommodation arrangements, be eligible for Housing benefit without claiming PIP.

Students' eligibility for benefits is affected by a wide range of factors (e.g. residence, income, if they are a lone parent etc.) and PG students who are writing-up but undertaking limited hours of study can, depending on circumstances, be classified as not in full-time education and this can increase their access to benefits.