



UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA



*STARTING UNIVERSITY*

# STUDENT GUIDE

CARE EXPERIENCED AND ESTRANGED STUDENTS



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By Gray Prothero

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS




This guide was produced as part of the SHARE research internship with the University of Bedfordshire, the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University.

The author, Gray, is an Education Student at the University of East Anglia. They have a passion for Widening Participation and Inclusion.

This booklet wouldn't be possible without the support and research from the amazing team at the University of Bedfordshire, especially Seana Friel and Professor Emily Munro.

A huge thanks also goes to the Outreach team at UEA for supporting the production and distribution of this guide.



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# Introduction

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This guide was produced by students for students.

Whether you are already at university or thinking of applying, we are hoping this guide can be a one stop shop for key advice in your exciting journey with us.

University has its challenges, but we acknowledge that for those leaving care or estranged from their families, there are extra hurdles to overcome.

We are aware that care-leavers are **38% more likely** to withdraw from their course compared to those from a similar demographic background (Harrison, 2017).

This statistic can be scary to look at, but it is important to acknowledge and to be aware of. It is also a motivation; we want to reduce this and support you in the best way we can to see you graduate and thrive.

Through analysis of real care-experienced voices and the research findings, this guide has been produced to support you as a care-leaver or estranged student with the possible hurdles that you may encounter and to inform you on the current support available specifically to you.

# Support at UEA

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At UEA we have an array of support available to you. The types of support are listed here. All you have to do is ask at the Student Information Zone, and they can direct you to the right person and service!



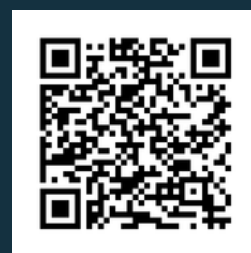
## Starting University



- Arrivals and Welcome activities, social events, gifts and vouchers (e.g. launderette credit, supermarket voucher, free kitchen pack).
- Invitation to the HeadStart transition webinars and on-campus event.

Scan here to find out more  
about HeadStart →

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## £ Financial

- Care Leaver & Estranged Student Bursary (£3000 per year, eligibility criteria apply)
- Graduation funding to pay for gown hire and guest tickets.
- Named as a priority group for the STS Travel & Technology Fund.

## Housing

- Year-round accommodation is available on request for care-leavers and estranged students.
- Storage is available for belongings on campus over the summer break.
- Returner rooms are available for those care-leavers and estranged students who need to stay in university accommodation after year one.

Scan here to find out more about the support at UEA →



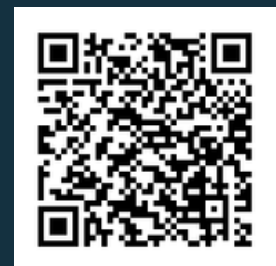


## General Support



- Care Experienced and Estranged Student (CEES) Network.
- Drop-in and booked appointments available all year-round with Liz (Widening Participation Officer), to discuss any concerns or support to refer yourselves to other UEA specialist services (e.g. Wellbeing Team).
- Regular emails from Liz (Widening Participation Officer) during studies, promoting job opportunities, funding, careers support, wellbeing workshops, social events, etc.
- Student Union student-led peer support group – WhatsApp community, social events.

Scan here to find out more about the CEES →



# Starting University: What to Expect

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## Building Relationships

It is only natural to be worried about maintaining current relationships but also forming new ones.

For most there is a desire to **build community**, maintain connections and make new friends. But there are always several worries, which is natural.

You might question and worry about sharing your background and experience, this is a personal decision but just know you will meet likeminded others and form **trusting relationships** over time.

We advise the best way to do this is to put yourself in a variety of situations. Go to your classes, try new clubs and societies, reach out and keep in contact with people and try not to be afraid to reach out to staff at the university. Staff will be a huge part of your university community; they want to see you to do your best and are always **happy to help!**

# Managing your Workload

For many, there is a shift in the amount of work that needs to be juggled; this can be overwhelming, especially with being in a new environment with new people.

Please remember **you are never alone**. Talk to us, come to the Student Information Zone where they can direct you and advise you on anything university related.

If you are struggling with your work, talk to your lecturers and advisor (a designated member of staff in your subject area for you to talk to).

If things do get too much, especially around exam and essay season, remember that there are **reasonable adjustments** available and extensions can be given; talk to your advisor or the Learning Enhancement Team.

We will always try our best to make university as **manageable and accessible** for you as we possibly can. Reach out either face-to-face or via email, a solution is available.

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# Living Independently

People arrive at university with a variety of skills and experiences. You may have never lived independently or maybe you are used to it and enjoy it. Whatever your experience many find there is so much to learn, and new things will always pop up!

The best advice we can give for learning skills like cooking and budgeting is to **never be afraid to give it a try** and learn to deal with the possibility of not getting it right the first time. They are important skills and will take time, but be persistent, watch tutorials and learn from others.

If you aren't at university yet, **practice** before you arrive, it will be one less thing to think about and learn.



# Housing Worries


For care-leavers and estranged students housing is often seen as one of the biggest worries. You might worry because you will need somewhere to stay over the holidays, or maybe you are worried about the financial side of affording rent.

Universities understand this and purposefully put **different schemes** in place. At UEA, as discussed previously, we have the option to stay over the holidays.

You can also continue to **stay** in our accommodation past your first year to reduce the stress of finding other housing and worrying about guarantors.

Lastly UEA has a **bursary scheme** of £3,000 per year which can help you with your living expenses, (you don't need to apply for this).

For everything except the bursary all you need to do is ask and we will make sure these are available to you.



# Looking after your Wellbeing

With all the hustle and bustle that is university it is easy to let your mental health and wellbeing slip or for something to change in your personal life that might impact you.

For you to keep on doing your best and moving through your degree, we have a **variety of support** services here to help you. In our Student Life and Wellbeing team in Student Journey & Support Services, we offer access to one-at-a-time talking therapy and workshops and group sessions which are both with professional mental health and wellbeing specialists who can direct and equip with the skills you need to aid in your wellbeing.

If you believe you will need further support, we can **direct you** to other services and offer advice.

It is important to us that you feel supported and enjoy your time at UEA to be able to complete your studies. We will help you achieve your goals **one step at a time!**

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# Top 5 Tips

1

## Learn to love a plan

Whether to write your assignments or to organise your life, a plan can help organise your thoughts and set in you in the right direction.

2

## Manage your finances

If you are a money worrier, try and create a budget, start a savings account or find a part time job to ease your worry.

3

## Know your Why

Motivation can be hard to come by but having a strong why for being at university and doing your course can go a long way on the hard days.

4

## Learn Life Skills ASAP

University work is going to come hard and quick so being prepared in your home life regarding cooking, cleaning and budgeting is going to serve you well.

5

## Reach out and Explore Services

Many go through university not even knowing what support is available to them, don't be that person, scout out the university and don't be afraid to ask for help.

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You belong here.

Whatever your background, whatever your  
“Why”, UEA is here to support you.

If one thing sticks in your mind from this  
guide, is this:  
you are never alone!

We are always one call and one email  
away.

If you need support,  
all you have to do is ask.

