

Pembroke College - Estranged Students Policy

Estranged Students Policy

Estranged students are young people studying at undergraduate level without the support and approval of a family network. Estranged students typically have no contact with their parent/s or wider family for varying reasons. For Student Funding England purposes the term 'estranged student' describes someone who has no relationship with, or support from, their parent/s; the situation is permanent and there has been no contact with the parent/s for at least a year. However not all students will fit within this definition and support is available for all students who feel they are studying without the emotional or financial support of their parent/s or family.

The University and its colleges aim to offer a supportive and caring environment to all our students, in which they are able to excel at their studies while participating fully in university life. We recognise the particular emotional, financial and practical barriers faced by students who are studying without the support or approval of a family network, and are committed to doing all we can to provide an environment that enables them to thrive at Oxford.

Pembroke College is supporting the [University's StandAlone Pledge](#) commitment. The Academic Registrar will be the primary point of contact for applicants and on-course students, offering support and signposting for estranged students.

The University of Oxford aims to ensure that help is provided to ensure a successful university experience, and offers a package of support.

- Ongoing college support for individual needs and welfare.
- Assistance in securing year round accommodation
- Access to counselling provision via the [University Counselling Service](#)
- Support from the [Careers Service](#) to find employment during the vacations
- Enhanced financial support, depending on circumstances

Funding

UK estranged undergraduates studying without family support can apply for a non-repayable annual bursary of up to £3,000 for each year of their course to provide additional funding to help with costs, including during the vacations. This support is available to all undergraduates (also including PGCE and GEM students) who were under the age of 25 on the first day of their course. It is not a requirement for a student to be assessed as estranged by their regional funding agency to apply. Before applying, students must have taken out the full government support available to them, unless there is a good reason why this is not the case.

Oxford's bursary support for undergraduates

If the student has a household income of £27,500 or less in their first year, they will be eligible for a [Crankstart Scholarship](#) and invited to join the programme. If their household income is less than £42,875, they will be eligible for an Oxford Bursary. These schemes provide funding levels of between £500 and £5,500 p.a. to help with the cost of living. The level of support and entitlement depends on the year of entry and on their household income, which must be reassessed annually by the student's Regional Funding Agency (Student Finance England, SAAS, etc).

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If a student has been assessed as Independent by means of estrangement by their Regional Funding Agency, they will be considered to have a household income of £0 and therefore be entitled to the maximum Crankstart Scholarship or Oxford Bursary depending on their year of entry and study.

College funding

College Hardship Grants

College hardship grants are to help those experiencing particular hardship not covered by the University hardship funds, or to supplement their sources. Students should contact the Academic Office who will be able to guide them through the application: academic.office@pmb.ox.ac.uk

JCR Art Fund Hardship Grants

The JCR Art Fund provides hardship grants all year round for unexpected or sudden (and not persistent) financial hardship. There is no maximum amount for which students may apply. Further information regarding eligibility and the application form can be acquired from the current JCR Vice-President. Students who wish to apply anonymously can do so by contacting a member of the welfare team or other college member to email the application on their behalf with the name removed.

Vacation Grants are available for students staying in college accommodation during vacations. Applications should be made through the Academic Office – as above.

The Accounts Office is happy to help students in their dealings with student funding bodies; it is assumed that students will apply for the maximum loan and grants amounts available to them. The Bursar is also happy to discuss budgeting concerns with students.

The University's [Careers Service](#) offers advice on securing vacation employment in Oxford or further afield.

Accommodation

Accommodation is of particular concern to a student without parental support. It is therefore important that college is able to offer the stability of year round accommodation, in particular to cover the holiday periods, to alleviate the stress of having to find temporary vacation accommodation.

First Year rooms will normally be available within staircases allocated to Freshers unless the student has additional requirements for support that may dictate having a room elsewhere on the site or there are other logistical considerations (for example, specific requirements outlined within a Student Support Plan). This arrangement will be made on a 38-week contract.

From the second year onwards, rooms on 38 week contracts will be made available either in rooms on main site, or in the Geoffrey Arthur Building (GAB) Annex accommodation. There are no rooms allocated for this purpose in Rokos Quad. In all cases, normal rates will apply.

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Students may be able, on request, to stay in college accommodation over the summer, but are likely to be required to move to an available room (which may be at the GAB). In the event that a suitable room is unavailable the College will help find alternative accommodation within Oxford. There is routinely no catering support available during vacation periods but individuals will be encouraged to discuss their needs with College to explore whether alternative support can be made available.

Estranged students are not guaranteed accommodation in college during periods of suspension, as the StandAlone pledge does not apply to students who are not currently on course. Suspended students can still access funding from central University hardship funds to cover accommodation costs if required.