

MATURE STUDENT INFORMATION GUIDE

For learners aged 21+



WE WELCOME STUDENTS OF ALL AGES

At the University of Southampton, we welcome students of all ages and are committed to supporting mature students to ensure they get the most out of their university experience.

Whilst there's no such thing as a typical student, starting university a bit later in life may mean you have worries about returning to education, the impact of this on your life or finances or how to balance university alongside other existing commitments.

Students who are aged 21 and over, at the start of their undergraduate course, are defined as mature by the University of Southampton. This could mean returning to education after short period out or several years away or someone looking to retrain and

change career. At Southampton we have over 900 undergraduate students who are considered mature.

We are a research-intensive university and a founding member of the Russell Group. Our successes are acknowledged in international and UK league table rankings and education awards. Our degrees and courses enable you to develop critical thinking and independent learning skills that are essential for future leaders and decision makers. Our lecturers are leaders in their fields and offer you the chance to learn about world-changing research as it happens.

“As a mature student it's very important to approach university with the right attitude. Some mature students can find themselves feeling isolated when they do not engage in the student community. It's about recognising your value, you have earned your place, and deserve to access all the resources and activities on offer.”

Debbie, BSc Psychology Alumni

APPLYING TO STUDY AS A MATURE STUDENT

Our aim is to attract the most talented students, irrespective of background.

If you are 21 years or older and looking to continue your education as a mature student, you are welcome to apply through University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). We consider all applicants who have been in some form of education within the past three years and have completed a level 3 qualification.

The University is committed to giving full and fair consideration to all relevant academic qualifications from each applicant. Whilst the University will typically display academic admissions criteria as the most common qualifications (e.g., A Levels), the University welcomes applications from candidates who have (or who will) achieve an equivalent standard in a range of other qualifications.

One of the most popular routes for mature students is the Access to HE Diploma. It is a great way to prepare you for university life. It not only gives you Level 3 qualifications, but it gives you the practical skill that directly relates to studying at higher education level. Anyone over the age of 19 can take an Access to HE course and they are available at many local further education colleges.

Each University of Southampton degree programme will have its own academic entry requirements. For further information on our courses and the entry requirements visit the website:

www.southampton.ac.uk



Find out more

If you have any questions related to academic qualifications and entry requirements contact: admissions@soton.ac.uk



“As a mature student who had real-world experience in a healthcare setting, the first year of the course was probably the easiest for me academically, as it covered information I was already largely familiar with, but in greater detail. This was really helpful to give me a small advantage while I worked on my study and writing skills, which were rather lacking when compared to students coming directly from sixth form and colleges.”

Joshua, MSc Biomedical Sciences

FUNDING YOUR STUDIES

Paying for the course and funding your time at university can be a major concern for all students, not just mature students.

If you're an undergraduate student from the UK, you might be able to get help from the government to pay your tuition fees and could also get a maintenance loan to help with your living costs.

The amount of maintenance loan you're eligible to receive will be assessed on your household income; if you're 25 or over on the first day of your studies, have a dependant under 18 years old, are married or in a civil partnership or have supported yourself for at least three years before the start of your course then you will be considered an independent student and can be assessed on your own household income rather than your parents' income.

You'll have to repay these loans when you're employed after university and start earning above a certain amount.

“Most of all I enjoy learning alongside an amazing cohort of students who all bring their own strengths and unique personalities to the course. Initially I was worried about being twice the age of most people on the course, but I feel completely accepted and my age has only ever been treated as an advantage in terms of life experience and never a barrier.”

Iona, BSc Physiotherapy



There is also additional funding such as the Parents' Learning Allowance, Childcare Grant, Adult Dependants' Grant and Disabled Students Allowances available to eligible students through Student Finance, which don't need to be repaid.

If you are considering studying for a health-related undergraduate degree, then you may be able to access additional financial support through the NHS Learning Support Fund.

If applicable you may still receive Universal Credit alongside a student loan. However, this will depend on your personal circumstances. Maintenance loans to cover living costs will be deducted from your Universal Credit payment; as well as any Special Support loans and grants you may receive. If you have queries regarding how full time undergraduate study could affect your entitlement it is best to speak with Citizens Advice.

The University also offers a range of flexible part time work options. Whether it's a short term internship or being paid to be an advisor for a few hours each month; there are lots of ways to earn while you study.

BURSARIES & SCHOLARSHIPS

In addition, it is also possible to apply for scholarships and bursaries through the University.

University of Southampton Bursary

Undergraduate Home UK students who have a household income of under £30,000, will be eligible for a bursary of up to £2,000 per academic year. You'll automatically be assessed for the Bursary if you consent for Student Finance to share your household income with the University.

Ignite Your Success

A 3-year, alumni funded programme available to eligible students from underrepresented backgrounds which offers a blend of financial, academic, career, and personal opportunities to ensure you reach your full potential. Ignite Your Success is underpinned by a range of £3,000 awards and £10,000 bursaries.

Commuter Fund

The University's Commuter Fund can provide up to a £250 contribution, each academic year, towards the travel costs of eligible students who remain living at home and commute to university campuses for study.

Student Support Fund

Whilst studying at the University, all students can access the Student Support Fund which can provide financial support to students who find themselves with unexpected costs or financial difficulties.

Technology Grant

A discretionary grant of up to £300 to help students, from widening participation backgrounds, access the technology they need to successfully engage with their course.

Health & Wellbeing Fund

Eligible students can receive up to £500 towards costs, such as heating or medical costs which cannot be reasonably addressed by the NHS or University services.



£3,000
awards



£10,000
bursaries



£250
travel contribution

**All figures and funds are based on awards provided in the 2023/2024 academic year; these are reviewed annually and subject to change.*

SUPPORT & SERVICES

Student Hub

The Student Hub is your first point of contact for wellbeing, learning support and financial assistance questions or concerns. The Student Hub can be accessed via email, online chat, phone or through an in person drop-in service and are available 24/7. Through the Hub you can also access 24/7 wellbeing support and speak to trained advisors.

Students with specific learning differences or disabilities

At the University, we are committed to supporting anyone with a specific learning difference (SpLD) or disability.

The University's Student Disability and Inclusion Team provides a variety of services including learning support, assistive technology facilities, mentoring and help with applying for Disabled Students' Allowance.

If you already have a SpLD diagnosis or suspect that you might need one; the team can help you get the support needed. This might be with additional study support or exam requirements.

If you flag a learning difference or disability on your application and accept a place at the university, the team will contact you to discuss your specific requirements.

Academic Skills Service

There's a range of study support available to help those returning to education to aid you in developing the skills needed for your course. The Academic Skills Service offers a variety of workshops and tools, covering a range of areas including critical thinking, essay and report writing,

presentation skills, mathematics and preparing for exams, to ensure you're equipped with the skills and techniques needed to be successful at university.

You can book on to workshops or have a 1-2-1 appointment online or in person, as well as access a range of resources on their website throughout your time at the University.

Support during your studies

You will be allocated a dedicated Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) who will support your academic wellbeing throughout your time at the University. This will normally be a member of academic staff in your own or a closely related subject area. Your Personal Academic Tutor will offer one-to-one support and advice throughout your time at the University, and will support you in your studies.

“Studying at degree level has been a fantastic experience. It has increased my academic skills immeasurably and introduced me to concepts and ideas that otherwise I would not have thought about.”

Holly, BSc Sociology and Criminology

“As a mature student with two primary school aged children, studying in a university sounded like a farfetched, out of reach dream until I received the offer letter. I applied for a subject which is taught by fewer than 10 universities in the UK. I am very glad I got the opportunity to study here at the University of Southampton. The moment I started our course I realized everything about the course was designed very carefully for the best learning opportunity. The facilities are great too. My journey so far has been amazing.”

Dewan, BSc Audiology





Student Inclusion Team

The Student Inclusion Team are committed to supporting underrepresented groups of students, including mature students. They are here to help these students feel engaged, supported and encouraged to take up the opportunities on offer to them.

Libraries

The Hartley Library is one of the largest university libraries in the south of England and based on Highfield campus. It's a great place to study on your own or with a group. There are also libraries available on all our university campuses.

As well as a learning resource including books, journals and other academic materials, there is a free Laptop Loan scheme within the Hartley and Health Services libraries, which is available to all students.

The majority of the library's resources can be accessed online from wherever you are.

IT Services

The University's dedicated IT team, iSolutions, have a Helpdesk which can be accessed in person in the Hartley Library or Sir James Matthews Building whilst on campus or from home through email and remote connection if you need any assistance with your university IT.

Eduroam is a free student WiFi network for use across campuses.

Early Years Centre

The Early Years Centre at the University of Southampton provides high quality childcare from birth to five years of age for students, staff and local residents. It is open 50 weeks per year, Monday to Friday 08:00 - 17:45, and are closed for one week at Christmas, one week at Easter, and all bank holidays. Visit the Early Years Centre webpage to find out more and if you're interested in applying for a place.

Spaces to study

There are many study spaces available across the University's campuses in addition to the libraries. Building 100 on the Highfield campus is filled with study areas, has great views across Southampton and can often be a peaceful place to study.

There's also a range of cafes and catering outlets across the campuses where you can study from.

Student Engagement

The Student Engagement Team engage students in life at the University from the moment they accept an offer. The Team coordinates a range of community events, as well as Be Active free sports. They have the Faith and Reflection Centre, a multi-faith centre on Highfield campus, and offer an online peer mentoring programme to those preparing to start university.

Sports Facilities

Our state-of-the-art sports centre has a swimming pool, gymnasium, fitness classes and sports clubs. All students are welcome to join at a discounted rate.

Accommodation

University accommodation is available to all students of all ages. Mature students who wish to live with other students of a similar age in University accommodation can either apply as an undergraduate who would like to live in a postgraduate area or alternatively apply as a new undergraduate student living in an undergraduate area and detail on the application that you would prefer to live with other mature students. The Accommodation Team will try to allocate you a room that meets your needs, where possible.

Alternatively, if you wish to look for private accommodation in the area you can search for this on SASSH.

The University can also provide accommodation in halls for couples and a limited number of family houses for students with children.

UNIVERSITY LIFE & OPPORTUNITIES

There are many ways to get involved with university life and many opportunities to meet new people; try to explore the opportunities available to you, as these can be a great way of developing a peer network.

Your Adventure Begins Here - Transition Day

The Transition Day is specifically designed to support new mature undergraduate students with their transition to university life and to help to give you the best possible start at Southampton.

“I really loved the opportunity to attend the transition day and feel a bit more settled into the campus and make some great friends that share some of the same anxieties!”

Lucy, BSc Physiotherapy

You'll find out more about studying at the University of Southampton and the support which is available to you when you join us. You'll also have the opportunity to meet other mature students and tour Highfield campus. It will take place before the start of term giving you the opportunity to familiarise yourself before your first day.

Mature Student Mingles

During the academic year, the University holds Mature Student Mingles, where mature students can drop by for free food and drink and a chat with other mature students. These are a fantastic opportunity to get to know likeminded peers, across all years, and to share your experiences and ask questions in an informal setting.

Clubs and Societies

The University of Southampton Students' Union has over 200 societies covering a wide range of interests; these are a wonderful opportunity to meet new people and even try something new.

Online Mature Student Group

You can also meet other mature students by joining our online group; this gives you a platform to engage with other mature students at the University of Southampton online.

“As a mature student I was worried about not fitting in if I didn't want to drink or go clubbing etc. However, there are so many clubs and societies with activity-based events held in the evenings that this hasn't been a concern at all.”

Iona, BSc Physiotherapy



**Scan here
to join**

BENEFITS OF BEING A STUDENT

Student discount cards

As a full-time student, mature students can also enjoy all the benefits that any other students receive, including student discount in many shops, on gym membership, in restaurants and so much more. There are apps such as UNiDAYS and Student Beans as well as discount codes, most of which can be found by simply searching online; they may require you to prove that you are a student.

Council Tax discount

A benefit of being a full-time student is a reduction in your council tax payments, you can apply for this through your local council and there are details about this online. You will need proof of your study and to apply through the relevant channels.

Travelling to Campus

Our University is easily accessible, Southampton has very good transport facilities. There are plenty of Unilink bus routes if you are in Southampton. The airport and railway stations have frequent bus links via Unilink to the university.

Mature students are able to apply for a 16-25 Railcard and can access a range of bus passes, such as an academic year pass through Unilink. If you are driving to campus, you may be able to apply for a parking permit which enables you to park on our nearby Halls sites. Permits for parking on campus are available but limited.

On Campus Lockers

If you want to securely store your belongings, then you can find lockers in the Hartley Library on Level 4. They are available to all students for 1 day at a time use.



Scan to find out more
about being a mature student
and the support available



Find out more:

www.southampton.ac.uk