



Students' Union Student Advice Centre's guide to student issues related to coronavirus

The Students' Union's Student Advice Service recognises that many students are currently facing uncertainty and anxiety around their course and assessments, their financial situation, and their accommodation – and that this will have an impact on their mental and physical health.

The situation is changing regularly, as is the guidance. Therefore, we have tried to pull together some useful links and information based on our understanding of the position at this current time. We will endeavour to update this information as things change or more information becomes available. We are aware that everyone across the UK and the rest of the World are having to take time to get to grips with the impact of the virus and the measures being put in place to try to deal with it. Not all the answers are clear, and most policies, arrangements or legislation are being developed under pressure and while people are juggling new remote working practices with other life circumstances. We would like to encourage students take these factors into account when liaising with staff at the University, Students' Union, and other organisations.

Please read the information below before you contact us, as you will hopefully find the answer or resource that you need. If you still have questions, or your enquiry is not covered by the information below, please contact us via the form on our website:

https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/contactus/

Academic / University concerns

The University has a dedicated webpage with FAQs, which covers most queries that students will have around how the coronavirus pandemic and the measures related to it will affect them. The webpage is updated regularly. You can access it via MyHallam or directly at:

www.shu.ac.uk/coronavirus

If your question is not answered by going to the webpage above, you can contact the University Help Centre by telephone (from Monday to Friday 9am until 5pm) or e-mail, and a dedicated team of staff will try to help you.

Telephone: 0114 225 4555

Email: coronavirus@shu.ac.uk

Teaching and learning

The webpage above (click on 'for students') outlines the University's position regarding teaching and learning. All teaching activities will be delivered online and/or accessed remotely, and face-to-face teaching will be replaced by online teaching; see the webpage for more details. Arrangements for



those activities that cannot be delivered online and/or accessed remotely will be made and communicated to students by Heads of Department.

Assessments and exams

The University will be publishing information about this soon. In the interim, we would advise that you continue to work towards the deadlines and exam period that were in place before these issues arose.

The Skills Centre is continuing to offer help and support remotely; see their blog site for details: <https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/skillscentre/2020/03/16/remote-offer-at-the-skills-centre/>

Students who are ill or whose studies are affected by their personal circumstances

The University is aware that students' ability to engage with their studies and submit for their assessments may be affected during this time, for example if they become ill with coronavirus, if they are required to self-isolate due to a family member or other person they live with being ill, or if they are otherwise affected by the measures being put in place, e.g. unexpected childcare responsibilities due to schools closing. How these different scenarios will be considered is currently being discussed by the University and any amendments to the guidance around Extenuating Circumstances, RRAAs (Request to Repeat and Assessment) and Appeals will be communicated soon.

Students who have mostly completed an assignment but need a short extension of up to 5 days can request this via the Request to Extend a Submission Deadline (RESD) process outlined on My Hallam: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/myhallam/study> Note that you must submit a RESD at least 24 hours ahead of your deadline via My Student Record, and upload any uncompleted work. You should continue to work on your assignment in case your request is not accepted and you still need to submit your work by the original deadline.

Meetings related to University rules and regulations (e.g. Academic Conduct, Disciplinary, Fitness to Practise, Capacity to Study)

Students who receive an invitation to a meeting related to a University regulation should first see our self-help resources (webpages and PDF leaflets): https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/

You can then contact us via our form for further advice and support: https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/contactus/

Complaints

Our current understanding is that students who wish to make a complaint about a teaching-related or service-related provision, including where that relates to the impact of coronavirus, should follow the University's student complaints process as usual: https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/appeals_and_complaints/index.html

This includes using the Early Resolution stage first, in most cases, to try to resolve the complaint informally.

Advice & help

STUDENT
ADVICE
CENTRE



Note that if you have a complaint related to the recent two periods of industrial action (strikes) there are separate forms for this.

Students may find it helpful to read these FAQs for Students by the OIA (Office of the Independent Adjudicator, which oversees how universities deal with student complaints, appeals and other processes): <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/coronavirus-faq-for-students/>

Placements

There is specific reference to students undertaking placements in the University's coronavirus website information. The University has said that students should observe their placement providers' local response to coronavirus. Academic support for placements will be delivered by email, phone and videoconferencing wherever possible. For more details, refer to the 'coronavirus FAQs for students on placement' on the website. These are very detailed and should give you all the information you need in relation to your placement and outlines which members of University staff you can contact if you have concerns about your employer's response. Your placement employer is likely to still be confirming their approach and this may be updated regularly.

Students on placements outside the UK have been contacted by the University. Further guidance for these students is on the University FAQs webpages.

Healthcare students on placement should read the detailed 'coronavirus advice for health students on placement' section of the University's coronavirus webpages (click on 'for students on health placements').

Financial concerns

Student Finance / NHS funding payments

We are not aware of any likely delays in the payment of the next instalment of student finance.

Students should continue to apply to Student Finance England for their funding for next year – applications are open and the deadline for returning students (to make sure your funding is in place for the start of next year) is 19 June.

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHS BSA) has indicated that they have contingency plans in place, with their priority being to ensure that all healthcare students expecting imminent payments will receive these on time. If you have any concerns, please speak to your department or contact the NHSBSA on 0191 232 5371.

Students experiencing financial difficulties

Students who are struggling financially may wish to speak to their bank about options for interest-free overdraft facilities. We would caution against taking out commercial loans, especially payday loans and other high interest forms of borrowing.

You may be eligible to apply for the **Student Success Scholarship**:

<https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/student-success-scholarship>

Advice & help

STUDENT
ADVICE
CENTRE



If you are eligible (check the Scholarships tab in My Student Record to see if you have the application link) but have not yet applied, you should do so as soon as possible. If you think you might be eligible but can't see the link, contact the Student Funding Team via Hallam Help:

hallamhelp@shu.ac.uk

The **Hallam Hardship Fund** is open if you are experiencing financial difficulties. For more information about the criteria and how to apply, see our guidance leaflet on this and the information here: <https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/additional-financial-help>

If you are likely to receive a Student Success Scholarship payment and wish to request that this is paid to you earlier than the advertised payment date, you will need to complete a Hardship Fund form for this option to be assessed.

If you are financially struggling to buy food, you may be able to receive a **digital food voucher** from the Student Funding Team at the University. You should contact Hallam Help (see above) to request this.

If you use up your voucher entitlement but still need help paying for food, the Students' Union Advice Service may be able to issue a **food bank voucher**. Please contact us so that we can discuss your situation with you: https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/contactus/

The Student Funding Team is also processing applications from students who have out of pocket expenses due to a staff or student led trip being cancelled. If this applies to you, please email Hallam Help to get the link to the form.

Students struggling with debt

The Students' Union Student Advice Service can advise students in relation to unmanageable debts. Please contact us if you wish this support:

https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/contactus/

National Debtline has issued a factsheet for people who may be facing debt as a result of the coronavirus pandemic: www.nationaldebtline.org/coronavirus

Students claiming benefits

Please note that only certain groups of full-time students are eligible to claim benefits. Before making a claim, please contact us for advice. You can also see the information on our self-help webpages: https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/advicehelp/money/

Students who work

We will be expanding on this section, but students should see Citizens' Advice information regarding employment rights, sick pay and other issues that may be relevant to students whose work is affected by the coronavirus pandemic: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/>

☎ 0114 225 4148

➔ hallamstudentsunion.com/advicecentre

 SHEFFIELD
HALLAM
STUDENTS'
UNION



Accommodation

Leaving your current tenancy early

If your tenancy has a fixed term, you will need to check your tenancy agreement to see if there is a break clause or provision to give notice and leave early. If this is the case, ensure you follow the terms of this very carefully to make sure any notice you give is valid.

However, usually if you wish to end a tenancy before the end of the fixed term you must negotiate this with your landlord and obtain their permission/agreement in writing. There is detailed information on the Shelter website about negotiating a 'surrender' of the tenancy with your landlord:

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/private_renting/how_tenants_can_end_a_fixed_term_tenancy

It is very important to follow the correct procedures and get everything agreed in writing. If the landlord doesn't agree to you leaving early but you still do so, you will remain liable for the rent until the end of the fixed term. If it's a student property, they may not agree as it is quite late in the year to find a replacement tenant - and it may be especially hard for you to find one in the current circumstances, given that lots of students are returning back to their usual family place of residence. However, you can of course discuss it with them. Some landlords will accept a surrender if you make a payment of some of the future rent. If your landlord has previously not met some of their obligations, e.g. in relation to your deposit or repairs, then this may also be a way of negotiating with them.

If you have a joint tenancy agreement because you share a house with other people, you will also need to discuss it with them and all the tenants must agree to you surrendering the tenancy (and therefore any arrangements that you are trying to agree with the landlord to facilitate this). They may be particularly concerned to find out who might live there instead, and whether the rent will definitely be covered, as they will become liable for any outstanding rent that isn't paid by you (or the new tenant if they take over the tenancy). If they don't agree but you leave anyway, they may take court action against you to recover any additional money that they have to pay.

Difficulty paying rent

If you are having difficulty paying your rent, please see the section above regarding 'financial concerns', and this information from Citizens' Advice about new measures that have been brought in as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, to give additional protection from eviction to tenants who may be struggling to pay their rent: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/>

More information about both of the above issues and other coronavirus-related housing concerns is at: https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/coronavirus

Advice & help

STUDENT
ADVICE
CENTRE



International students

There is very clear and detailed information and guidance for International students on the University's webpages: www.shu.ac.uk/coronavirus (click on 'for students')

Erasmus students should also see the University's webpages.

You may also find it helpful to look at information on the UKCISA website:

<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Coronavirus-Covid-19-info-for-international-students>

If you need to contact the University's International Experience Team, please email Hallam Help: hallamhelp@shu.ac.uk

Your wellbeing

At this stressful time, there has been a lot of information and guidance produced about ways to keep well, both physically and mentally.

Mind have produced this guide: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>, whilst the BBC ran this useful article '[Coronavirus: how to protect your mental health](#)'.

If you wish to access the **University's Student Wellbeing service**, for support with how you are feeling about the coronavirus and related issues, or about another matter that is affecting you, please register with the service: <https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/wellbeing/student-wellbeing-service> (click on 'Register for Support'). This webpage also gives links to self-help information that you may find useful in the first instance.

The service is working remotely. From 12 noon on Monday 23 March, once you register, you will have access to self-bookable 30 min telephone appointments via UniHub.

Students who are already booked into appointments or whose appointments have been cancelled because of the move to remote working will be contacted by the relevant practitioners and offered appropriate follow up depending on their circumstances.

If you need urgent support details for emergencies and out-of-hours help can be found on the Student Wellbeing My Hallam page <https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/wellbeing/help-urgently>

In addition, details of other advice and support providers are listed on the Students' Union Advice Service's Get in Touch page: https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/contactus/

Please note that the Students' Union's Advice Service is currently working remotely, using online and email advice. Please see our self-help resources or contact us via our website: https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/

Last updated: 20 March 2020

☎ 0114 225 4148
➔ hallamstudentsunion.com/advicecentre

