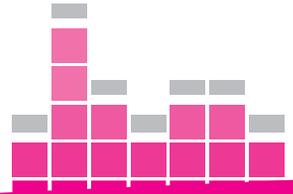


sound advice on

STUDENT FINANCE



Student finance – New full-time students 2015/16

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk



student finance wales
cyllid myfyrwyr cymru



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government

What is Student Finance Wales?

Student Finance Wales is a service provided by the Student Loans Company. We provide financial support on behalf of the Welsh Government to students from Wales entering higher education in the UK.

Depending on your circumstances, your course and where you study, you may be able to get a range of financial help and support. And most students won't have to pay any tuition fees up front.

You could get grants and bursaries (which you don't have to pay back) and loans (which you do). There's also extra help for those with special circumstances for example, if you have children or adult dependants, a disability, including a mental-health condition or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.

For more useful tools and guidance or to apply, visit: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Find regular updates on Facebook and Twitter:

 [Facebook.com/SFWales](https://www.facebook.com/SFWales)

 [Twitter.com/SF_Wales](https://twitter.com/SF_Wales)

 [youtube.com/SFWFILM](https://www.youtube.com/SFWFILM)





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WHAT CAN I GET?



There's a lot of help available to you while you're studying. While at university or college you'll have two main costs – tuition fees and living costs. The main types of student finance are Tuition Fee Loans and Maintenance Loans (which have to be paid back) and grants and bursaries (which don't). **This includes the Tuition Fee Grant for full-time students.**

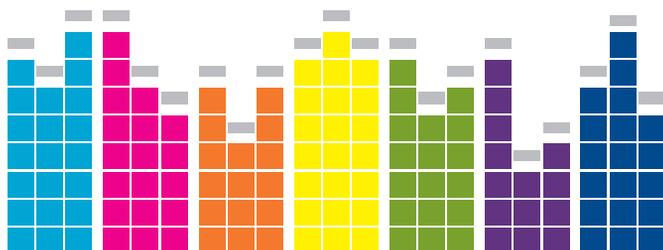
The following pages show what help you might be able to get and what it's for.



Help with tuition fees

Tuition Fee Loan

What's it for?	It can help pay your tuition fees.
How much can I get?	Up to £3,810 to help towards the tuition fee charged by your university or college.
Do I have to pay it back?	Yes, but only when you've left university or college and your income is over £21,000 a year.
Anything else?	<p>Tuition fees can vary between different universities and colleges, and between different courses at the same university or college.</p> <p>There may also be different fees in place in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Check with your university or college to confirm the tuition fee you'll be charged so you can ask for the right amount when you apply.</p> <p>We pay your Tuition Fee Loan direct to your university or college on your behalf.</p> <p>You'll have to repay any percentage of the Tuition Fee Loan we've paid to your university or college from the first day of term, even if you leave or suspend your course.</p>



Fee Grant

What's it for?	It can help pay your tuition fees.
How much can I get?	Up to £5,190 to cover the difference between the maximum Tuition Fee Loan available and the tuition fee charged by your university or college.
Do I have to pay it back?	No.
Anything else?	We pay your Fee Grant direct to your university or college on your behalf. You can't get a Fee Grant if you study at a private university or college.

When your Tuition Fee Loan and Fee Grant are paid

When payment is made to your university or college	How much of your Tuition Fee Loan and Fee Grant is paid to your university or college
At the start of term 1	25% of the tuition fee
At the start of term 2	25% of the tuition fee
At the start of term 3	50% of the tuition fee



Help with living costs

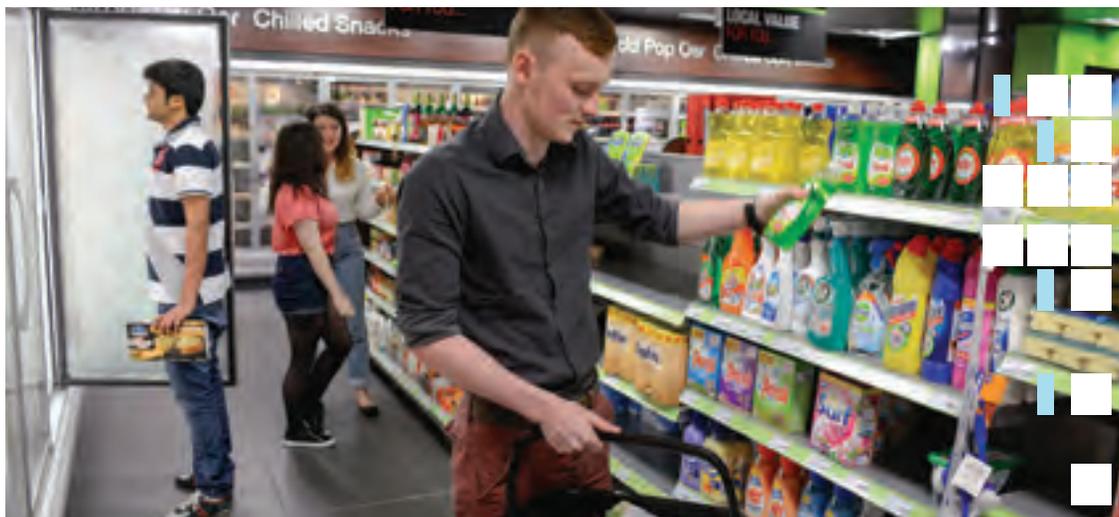
Maintenance Loan

What's it for?	It helps with living costs like food, books, rent and other expenses while you're studying.								
How much can I get?	<p>The amount you can get depends on your household income and where you're studying.</p> <table><tr><td>Living with parents</td><td>Up to £4,162</td></tr><tr><td>Studying in London and not living with parents</td><td>Up to £7,532</td></tr><tr><td>Studying elsewhere and not living with parents</td><td>Up to £5,376</td></tr><tr><td>Living and studying abroad for at least one term</td><td>Up to £6,410</td></tr></table>	Living with parents	Up to £4,162	Studying in London and not living with parents	Up to £7,532	Studying elsewhere and not living with parents	Up to £5,376	Living and studying abroad for at least one term	Up to £6,410
Living with parents	Up to £4,162								
Studying in London and not living with parents	Up to £7,532								
Studying elsewhere and not living with parents	Up to £5,376								
Living and studying abroad for at least one term	Up to £6,410								
Do I have to pay it back?	Yes, but only when you've left university or college and your income is over £21,000 a year.								
Anything else?	<p>We'll reduce the amount of Maintenance Loan you can get by 50p for every £1 of Welsh Government Learning Grant you get, up to a maximum reduction of £2,580.</p> <p>We pay your Maintenance Loan straight into your bank account, usually in three instalments, one at the start of each term.</p> <p>You must be aged under 60 at the start of your course to get a Maintenance Loan.</p>								



Welsh Government Learning Grant

What's it for?	It helps with living costs like food, books, rent and other expenses while you're studying.	
How much can I get?	You could get up to £5,161 depending on your household income. The table below gives a rough guide to what you can get.	
	Household income	How much?
	£18,370 or less	Full grant of £5,161
	Between £18,371 and £50,020	Partial grant
	£50,020	£50
	More than £50,020	No grant
Do I have to pay it back?	No, unless you leave your course early.	
Anything else?	<p>We usually pay your Welsh Government Learning Grant in three instalments; one at the start of each term, along with any Maintenance Loan.</p> <p>You can find out more about how your household income affects your entitlement at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk</p>	



Special Support Grant

The Special Support Grant replaces the Welsh Government Learning Grant for some students in certain circumstances.

What's it for?

It helps with extra course-related costs such as books, equipment, travel or childcare.

You may get a Special Support Grant if any of the following apply:

- you're a single parent, or single foster parent with a child or young person under 20 who is in full-time education;
- you have a partner who is also a student and one or both of you are supporting a child or young person under 20 who is in full-time education;
- you have a disability and qualify for Disability Living Allowance, Disability Premium or Severe Disability Premium;
- you're deaf and qualify for Disabled Students' Allowances;
- a doctor has confirmed that you've been unable to work for at least 28 weeks;
- you have a disability and qualify for income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- you're waiting to go back to a course after taking agreed time off from that course due to an illness or caring responsibility that has now ended;
- you're aged 60 or over;
- you're able to get housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit;
- you're able to get a Personal Independence Payment; or
- you're able to get Armed Forces Independence Payment.

Special Support Grant continued

How much can I get?	You could get up to £5,161 depending on your household income.
Do I have to pay it back?	No, unless you leave your course early.
Anything else?	<p>If you can get a Special Support Grant, you won't be able to get a Welsh Government Learning Grant as well. However, it won't affect the amount of Maintenance Loan you may get. We work out entitlement to Special Support Grant in the same way as the Welsh Government Learning Grant. Jobcentre Plus and your local authority's benefit department won't take account of Special Support Grant when working out your entitlement to state benefits.</p> <p>If you're not sure whether to apply for the Welsh Government Learning Grant or Special Support Grant, contact us for advice or talk to the student adviser at your university or college.</p>



Extra help

What can I get?	What's it for?	Do I have to pay it back?	Find out more
Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)	It helps with extra costs you have as a result of a disability, including a mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty. Disabled Students' Allowances can help pay for specialist equipment, a non-medical helper, travel or other extra costs. They don't depend on your household income. How much you'll get depends on your individual needs.	No, unless you leave your course early.	For more information, download 'Extra help – Disabled Students' Allowances' at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk
Childcare Grant (CCG)	It helps with childcare costs if you have dependent children aged under 15 (or 17 if they have special educational needs) in registered or approved childcare. You can get 85% of childcare costs, up to a maximum of £161.50 a week for one child or £274.55 a week for two or more children.	No, unless you leave your course early.	For more information, download the guide 'Extra help – Dependants' Grants' at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk
Parents' Learning Allowance	It helps with course-related costs if you have dependent children. You can get up to £1,557 a year, depending on your household income.	No, unless you leave your course early.	For more information, download the guide 'Extra help – Dependants' Grants' at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk
Adult Dependants' Grant (ADG)	It helps with costs if an adult depends on you financially. You can get up to £2,732 a year, depending on your household income.	No, unless you leave your course early.	For more information, download the guide 'Extra help – Dependants' Grants' at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Extra help continued

What can I get?	What's it for?	Do I have to pay it back?	Find out more
Travel Grant	It helps with travel costs if you're attending a clinical placement in the UK or studying abroad as part of your course. It covers reasonable costs spent on travel expenses during the academic year. You have to pay the first £303 of travel costs, so you'd get your travel costs over £303.	No	For more information on the Travel Grant, see our website: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk
Bursaries and scholarships	You may get help from bursaries or scholarships from your university or college.	No, unless you leave your course early.	Check the university or college website for details.



ESTIMATE YOUR STUDENT FINANCE

You can get a personalised estimate online by using our student finance calculator.

You'll need to provide some information about yourself, your course and your household income.

You can get estimates for up to five different universities, colleges or courses to let you compare costs and work out the best choice for you financially.

Once you've used the calculator:

- transfer the information from the calculator to your online application to save you time and effort
- save your estimate so you can go back to it later
- email the estimate to yourself

To use the calculator, visit: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk



DO I QUALIFY?

Whether you qualify for student finance depends on:

- your personal eligibility
- your course
- your university or college

Personal eligibility

Where you live

You can only apply if:

- you're a UK national or have 'settled status' (that is, no restrictions on how long you can stay in the UK);
- you normally live in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of your course; and
- you've been living in the UK for at least three years before starting your course.

If you don't meet those conditions, you may also be eligible if you are:

- an EU national, or a relative of one;
- a refugee, or a relative of one;
- under humanitarian protection (as a result of a failed application for asylum);
- an EEA/Swiss migrant worker, or a relative of one;
- the child of a Swiss national (your parents must provide information and evidence they'll be living in the UK at the start of your course); or
- the child of a Turkish worker.

Your age

To qualify for a Maintenance Loan you must be under 60 when you start your course. There's no upper age limit for grants or Tuition Fee Loans.

Previous study

You'd normally get student finance for the length of your course plus one year. Any years of previous study you've completed will be taken into account when we're working out how many years of your new course you can get student finance for.

If you didn't apply for student finance for your previous course, or your household income was too high for you to get finance, this will still count as previous study. This is because your course would still have got public funding even if you never received any student finance yourself.

If you left a course for compelling personal reasons such as illness or bereavement, the year you left might not be counted as previous study. You should send us evidence, for example a letter from your doctor to show why you left your course.

Your course

Your course should lead to a recognised designated higher education qualification such as:

- first degree (for example, BA, BSc or BEd)
- some Foundation Degrees, such as Fda, FdSc or FdEng
- Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
- Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
- Higher National Certificate (HNC)
- Higher National Diploma (HND)
- some Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses, for example a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE)

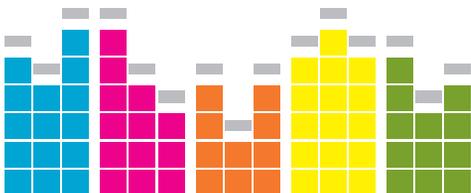
If you're not sure whether your course qualifies for student finance, check with your university or college.

Your university or college

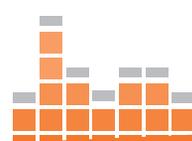
The university or college you plan to study at must be either:

- publicly funded (paid for by the Government) and in the UK; or
- privately funded and in the UK but running individual courses that get public funding from the Welsh Government

If you're not sure whether your university or college qualifies, check with them directly. For more information on whether you qualify for student finance, visit: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk



HOW AND WHEN DO I APPLY?



You don't have to wait until you've accepted a place on a course to apply for student finance.

Just create your student finance account and apply using your first choice of course. You can change your course or university details online before the start of your course.

So apply online now and have everything in place at the start of your course. Apply at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk.

If you're only applying for the Tuition Fee Loan and the basic Maintenance Loan (the bits that don't depend on your household income), you can complete your application without your parents or partner giving any details.

If you're applying for finance that depends on your household income, we'll ask your parents or partner to give us some information about themselves and their income. They can log on and fill in their part separately. Remember, your application isn't complete and can't be assessed until we have all the information we need.

Before you start your online application, make sure you have the following to hand:

- your passport
- details of your university and course
- your bank details
- your National Insurance number
- your parents' or partner's details, including their National Insurance number and income

You don't need to send us your passport!

Provide your valid UK passport details when you apply and we'll check your identity. You need to fill in your application for student finance before **15 May 2015** to make sure you have your money when you start your course.

If you apply after this date, you might not get all your money on time but we'll try to make an initial assessment so you have some money as close to the start of your course as possible.

If any of your details change after you've applied for student finance, don't worry – it's easy to update your application.

At any point during the academic year you can:

- log into your online student finance account and make changes to your personal details
- advise us of any other change in your circumstances
- contact us to adjust the amount of Maintenance Loan or Tuition Fee Loan you wish to receive

If the fee you're being charged changes before you start your course you should tell us about this directly. However, if it changes after your course starts, you need to ask your university or college to tell us about it instead.

Likewise, if you intend to change your course, repeat a year, leave higher education or suspend your studies after your course has started, you need to ask your university or college to tell us.

We don't normally need evidence of your household income when you first apply. However, we may contact you at a later date and ask you to send us evidence to support your application.

Remember to print your student declaration form, sign and return it to us.

EVIDENCE YOU MAY NEED TO PROVIDE

In most cases, you can easily provide the evidence we need by filling in the details we ask for on the application.

By providing details of your valid UK passport details and your parents' or partner's National Insurance numbers we can automatically check your identity and household income and process your application as quickly as possible.

However, in certain situations you, or your parents or partner, may have to send us evidence such as a non-UK passport, a birth certificate or a P60.

Once you've filled in your online application you'll see a list of any evidence you need to send. Remember to send this straight away. If you don't, your student finance might be delayed and you might not be paid on time.

Any identity evidence we ask for should be originals, not photocopies. You don't need to send any financial evidence up front. If we do ask you for evidence of your household income you can send us photocopies and these will be securely destroyed once we've checked them.



TOP TIP

Remember to put your customer reference number on anything you send us.



STARTING UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE

You have to register at your university or college before we can make your first payment. You'll usually do this in the first week of your course and you may have to take along your Student Finance Entitlement letter, so make sure you keep this safe.

Once you've registered, your university or college will let us know you're attending and we'll make your first payment. You don't need to do anything else. It can then take two to three working days for the money to reach your account.

We'll pay any Welsh Government Learning Grant or Maintenance Loan you're entitled to into your bank account. We'll pay your Tuition Fee Loan and Fee Grant direct to your university or college.



HOW DO I GET PAID?



GET YOUR STUDENT FINANCE ENTITLEMENT LETTER

Once we've assessed your application, we'll send you a Student Finance Entitlement letter showing what student finance you can get.

You should keep this letter as you might have to show it to your university or college when you register.

TOP TIP

Remember to register at your university or college – we can't pay you until you do!



TOP TIP

Beware of fraudulent emails from anyone claiming to be us. We'll never ask you to update your bank details or confirm your student account details by email. If you get an email asking you to follow a link to the Student Finance Wales website, send it to: phishing@slc.co.uk

Do not reply to the email or click on the link.

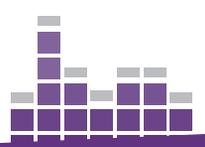


RE-APPLYING NEXT YEAR

You need to re-apply for student finance for every year of your course. Fees may change each year and grant and loan amounts can also change.

We'll contact you when you need to re-apply. Remember to keep the password and secret answer for your online account safe as you'll need these, along with the customer reference number you were given when you registered online, to re-apply each year or to let us know about any changes to your details. Your parents or partner will have their own password and secret answer so they will also need to keep these safe.

WHAT ABOUT REPAYMENTS?



Once you've finished your course, repaying your student loans is straightforward. The amount you repay each month depends on your income, not what you borrow.

You'll be due to start repaying your loans the April after you finish or leave your course. And then you won't have to repay until your income is over £404 a week, £1,750 a month or £21,000 a year.

Some important points about repayment:

- Your repayments are based on your income once you finish studying.
- Your income includes your salary and any other sources of income you have.
- Your employer will automatically take 9% of your income over the threshold through the UK tax system (Pay As You Earn – PAYE) or you'll pay through self-assessment if you're self employed.
- If your income drops below the threshold, your repayments will automatically stop.
- You can make voluntary repayments at any time.

The table below shows some examples of what you might repay each month. You can also use our repayment calculator at: www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk to work out what your repayments might be.

Income each year before tax	Monthly Salary	Approximate monthly repayment
£21,000	£1,750	£0
£24,000	£2,000	£22
£27,000	£2,250	£45
£30,000	£2,500	£67
£33,000	£2,750	£90
£36,000	£3,000	£112

The threshold will be updated each year in line with average earnings.



Interest

You pay interest on your loan from the day we pay your first instalment until the loan is repaid or written off, whichever is first. Any loan remaining after 30 years will be written off.

The amount of interest charged will vary, depending on your circumstances:

	Interest
While you're studying	Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 3%
From the April you're due to start repaying your loans	Interest will be based on your income £21,000 or less – RPI £21,001 to £41,000 – RPI plus up to 3%, depending on your income £41,000 - RPI plus 3%

To find out more about repayment, go to www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk

Partial cancellation

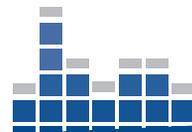
If you take out a Maintenance Loan in 2015/16 you could get up to £1,500 from your student loan balance cancelled by the Welsh Government when you start repaying.

You're eligible for partial cancellation once you start repaying either voluntarily or when you've left university or college and your income is over £21,000 a year.

The amount of partial cancellation depends on the amount of Maintenance Loan taken out, when you start to repay.

The partial cancellation will be £1,500 unless you've taken out a smaller Maintenance Loan. If you borrow less than £1,500 the partial cancellation will be less – in line with the amount you borrowed. You're only entitled to get partial cancellation once.

For more information, go to: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk



Need help?

We have other useful resources to help you apply including:

- quick guides on 'Disabled Students' Allowances', 'Dependants' Grants' and 'What, how and when to repay'
- downloadable guides including 'A guide to terms and conditions'

These resources are available to download from: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Contacts

Student Finance Wales

For more information and to apply visit: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

You can also phone us on **0300 200 4050** (textphone: **0300 100 1693**) between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 1pm on Saturdays.

National Union of Students (NUS)

You can get more information from the NUS website at: www.nus.org.uk/nus-wales

Scholarship Search UK

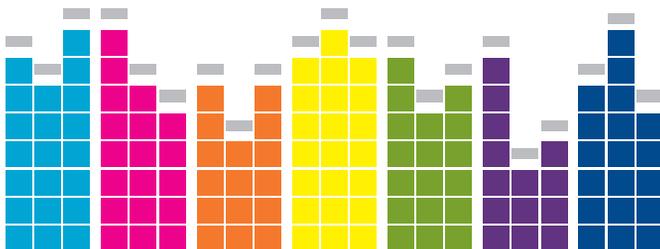
This provides information about other sources of funding for undergraduates.

The website is: www.scholarship-search.org.uk

National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA)

NASMA is a charity working to help students by providing advice, information and training.

You can get more information by going to: www.nasma.org.uk



CHECKLIST

Check off each step to be sure you have your money when you start your course.

START

1

I've read through this guide and checked out the extra information and guidance online at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

2

I've used the Student Finance Calculator and have an idea of what student finance I could get.

3

I know how to apply for student finance and that the deadline is 15 May 2015.

4

I've registered online at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk and now have a customer reference number.

5

I've found out whether I need financial details from my parents or partner to support my application.

6

I've logged in to my online account and applied online before the deadline.

7

I've printed, signed and returned my declaration form.

8

I've sent any necessary evidence or further information to Student Finance Wales, remembering only to send original documents of identity evidence.

9

My parents or partner have registered online and filled in their part of my application.

10

Student Finance Wales has asked me to send further evidence or information.

11

I've logged into my online account to check the progress of my application.

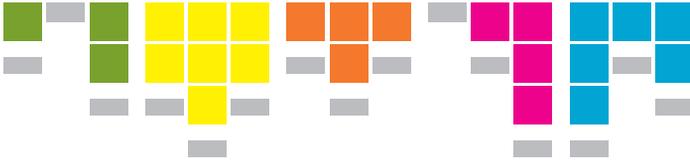
12

Student Finance Wales has sent me a Student Finance Entitlement letter telling me how much I'll get.

13

I've taken my Student Finance Entitlement letter to my university or college and registered with them.

FINISH



You can download more copies of this guide online at: **www.studentfinancewales.co.uk**.

You can also order this guide in braille, large print or audio by emailing with your name, address, customer reference number quoting reference SFW/FSHE/V15 to: **brailleandlargefonts@slc.co.uk** or you can telephone us on **0141 243 3686**. Please note: the above email address and telephone number can only deal with requests for alternative formats of forms and guides.

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