

Student Finance Wales Information Notice (SFWIN 02/2018)

To:

Higher education institutions in Wales providing designated higher education courses
Other providers providing designated higher education courses
The Student Loans Company
UCAS
The Open University in Wales
NUS Wales
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
Universities Wales
Colleges Wales
and other interested parties

25 June 2018

Dear Colleague

WELSH STUDENT SUPPORT: POLICY FOR POSTGRADUATE DOCTORAL DEGREE LOANS

This Information Notice describes the policy for postgraduate doctoral degree student support for eligible students for the 2018/19 academic year. The Education (Postgraduate Doctoral Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2018 provide the basis for the system of loan support for students who are ordinarily resident in Wales and EU students in Wales undertaking designated doctoral degree courses in respect of academic years beginning on or after 1 August 2018. The regulations came into force on 25 June 2018.

Support is provided through the provision of loans and enables eligible students to apply for a non-means-tested loan of up to a maximum of £25,000 to cover the entire period of study for a postgraduate doctoral degree course. To qualify, a student must be an 'eligible student' studying a designated doctoral degree course. The loan is intended as a contribution to the cost of study, rather than to specifically cover tuition fees or living costs. Students may use this to support their studies as they see fit. Eligible prisoners may also apply for support. Support is limited to the lesser of the course fee payable by the prisoner and £25,000.

Other key aspects of the policy are set out below:

- available to those settled in the UK and ordinarily resident in Wales; to an EU national or family member of an EU national, to those with a residency status as

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a refugee, to stateless persons granted leave to remain, or those with leave to enter or remain, including their family members who are ordinarily resident in Wales;

- available to students up to 59 years of age on the first day of the course;
- students must not have an equivalent doctoral qualification or a higher level qualification (including qualifications obtained outside the UK);
- subject to one exception, students must not have had a doctoral loan from Welsh Ministers or another UK administration previously;
- to prevent duplication, students must not be in receipt of certain sources of funding, including the Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS2) and the Materials and Manufacturing Academy (M2A);
- available for the study of doctoral degree courses offered by providers based in the UK which meet certain designation criteria;
- courses must be postgraduate doctoral degrees courses which are full-time, part-time or distance learning between three and eight years in length;
- a course is a designated course if, amongst other things, it is one of the following—
 - i. wholly provided by a publicly funded institution;
 - ii. provided by a publicly funded institution situated in the United Kingdom on behalf of a publicly funded institution;
 - iii. provided by a publicly funded institution in conjunction with an institution which is situated outside the United Kingdom;
 - iv. substantially provided in the United Kingdom.
- other courses may be designated at the discretion of the Welsh Ministers;
- loans are not means-tested;
- payments of loan are made in tranches across the number of years of the designated doctoral degree course; and
- in respect of each year of the designated course, payments of loan are conditional upon confirmation of attendance by the relevant institution.

ENQUIRIES

If you have any queries about this Information Notice, please contact the Higher Education Division at the following email address:

HEDConsultationsMailbox@gov.wales