

Student Finance Wales (SFW) relates to Welsh domiciled students studying higher education courses at universities or colleges in the UK

What is Student Finance?

Student Finance is a combination of loans, grants and other financial support available to help students pay for higher education courses at university or college. www.ucas.com/money-and-student-life/money/student-finance/student-finance-wales

To be eligible for SFW support, students must be undertaking an eligible Higher Education (HE) course at university or college and meet the set nationality, residency and previous study criteria. For a comprehensive overview please visit: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-finance/full-time/tuition-fee-and-living-cost-students/who-qualifies/

There are three core parts of the SFW student finance package, a Tuition Fee Loan, a Maintenance Grant (from the Welsh Government) and a Maintenance Loan.

Tuition Fees

The maximum fee that ordinary higher education providers in the UK can charge in 2026/27 is £9,790. Note that private providers are not subject to fee caps. The maximum fee for accelerated degree courses in England is £11,750. However, a fee loan will only be made available up to £9,790 and any shortfall must be met by the student. For Private providers who are not subject to a fee cap, a tuition fee loan is only available up to £6,525.

A non-means tested Tuition Fee Loan is available to eligible students, which SFW pay directly to the university or college once your child has started their course.

Maintenance Loan & Grant

Most SFW students can get a mixture of loan and grant to help with their living costs, such as rent, food, travel and other costs.

The amount paid will depend on where a student will live while they study, including if they live in the parental home or if they live away from home (separate rate if they live in London).

The amount of grant paid will depend on an income assessment. Full-time students may be eligible, subject to certain exceptions, to the non-means tested base grant of £1,020. An additional amount of maintenance grant is available to those with a household income of up to £59,200. The maximum amount of grant is available to those with a household income of £18,370 or below.

For an estimate of their student finance entitlement, students can look at the current academic year figures: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-finance/full-time/tuition-fee-and-living-cost-students/what-s-available/

The Maintenance Grant is income assessed, which means the amount a student can receive will be based on the taxable income (wages, interest from savings, taxable benefits etc) of their parents or a parent and their spouse/civil partner or cohabiting partner.

The grant amount is then “topped up” with a maintenance loan to give the student their total maintenance amount.

Household income is confirmed via HMRC and is based on the last complete tax year, e.g. if your child starts university in academic year 26/27, your income figure from 2024/25 is what will be used.

If your income has reduced by at least 15% in the current tax year, you can request a new assessment is carried out based on the new, lower amount which can entitle students to additional levels of support.

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/current-year-income/current-year-income-finalisation/

Other Support

Students with a disability, a mental health condition, or specific learning difficulty can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) which can help with additional study related costs they may face as a result of their disability.

If they study on an eligible healthcare course (such as nursing) then they could also get additional support from the NHS Bursaries Service. SFW students who study eligible healthcare courses in Wales can find more information on the Student Award Services website www.nwssp.nhs.wales/ourservices/student-awards-services/

SFW students undertaking an eligible healthcare course in England can find more information on the NHS BSA website: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/student-services.

Many universities and colleges also offer a range of bursaries and scholarships to students based on criteria varying from academic performance to household income or being from an underrepresented student group. See university/college websites and www.thescholarshipclub.org.uk for more information.

Application and Assessment Key Messages

Ensure your child applies for their student finance as soon as the application service is launched.

They do not need a confirmed place in order to apply, they can state their preferred choice of course and change it later if need be.

Make sure any evidence/information needed as part of your child's application is supplied right first time so they can be assessed and paid on time. They'll need things like their National Insurance number, passport, personal bank account details and your email address, which we will use to prompt you to create or log in to your account, to support your child's application.

If you have other child dependants, make sure you provide this information in the relevant section of the application form, particularly if they are also in higher education. This will allow SFW to accurately assess a student's entitlement.

How do repayment's work?

In the April following on from your child completing/leaving/withdrawing from their course they will enter their repayment period, but this does not necessarily mean they will need to start making repayments at this point.

Students must earn above a minimum repayment threshold before they start to repay and the repayment threshold for undergraduate students who started their course from 1st September 2012 will be **£29,385** (from 6 April 2026 to 5 April 2027). These are known as Income Contingent Plan 2 Loans and the threshold is set to increase annually in-line with average earnings increases (RPI).

Once your child is employed and earning above the repayment threshold, deductions of 9% on what they earn above this will be made from their pay via the HMRC tax system.

For example, based on the current repayment thresholds, if they earn **£30,000 annually with a monthly salary of £2,500 then their monthly repayment would be £4**. Any outstanding loan balance will be cancelled **30** years after your child enters repayment, so they may **NOT** repay their entire balance.

Repayments are linked to what they earn and not what they have borrowed.

The Welsh Government Partial Cancellation Policy (PCP) applies to Welsh domiciled students who have received a maintenance loan from SFW since the AY 2010/2011 for a full-time undergraduate course. Eligible students may have up to £1,500 of their first maintenance loan cancelled after they make their first repayment to their loan.

www.gov.wales/student-finance-partial-cancellation-scheme

Repayment Key Messages

It is important that your child reads and understands the full conditions of their student loan. Particularly the interest rate, as this will be applied throughout the life of the loan based on the Retail Price Index (RPI) which gets adjusted each year.

It is the student's responsibility to inform SLC of any changes to their circumstances, including if they change address, they stop working or if they leave the UK for over three months to live, work or travel overseas.

A student loan will not impact your child's credit rating. A lender will likely ask for details of the repayments, but they are not seen as negative borrowing on a credit score rating.

Students can choose to make extra repayments towards their loan balance in addition to the repayments they must make through their salary when their income is over the repayment threshold.

Because a loan will be cancelled at the end of the 30-year term, students should carefully consider their situation before making any voluntary repayments as these cannot later be refunded.

For more information, please see: www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan