

SLC SP07/2020

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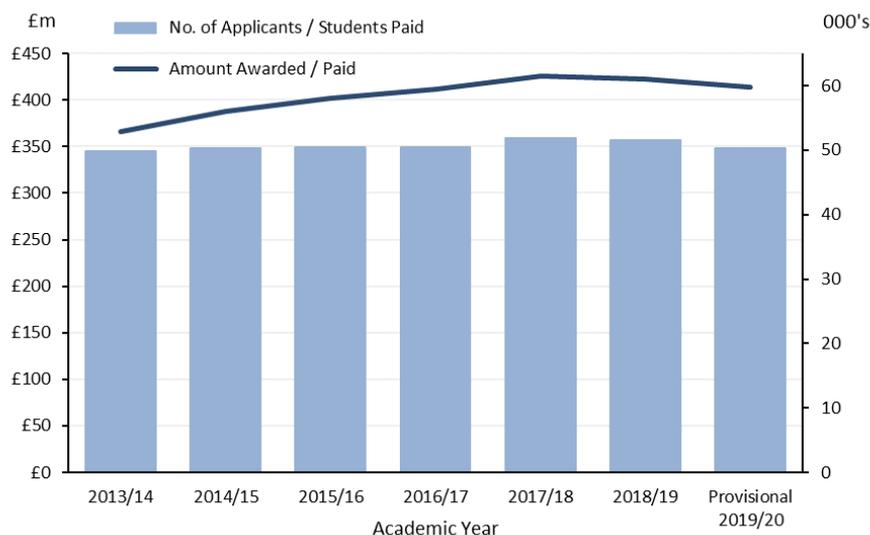
Coverage: Northern Ireland

Theme: Children, Education
and Skills

Student Support for Higher Education in Northern Ireland 2020: 2019/20 Full Year and 2020/21 Early In Year

**Higher Education Student Support decreased slightly in
Academic Year 2019/20 to £413.8 million.**

Figure 1: Number of students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK) receiving Higher Education Support and Amount Awarded / Paid



The amount paid out in supporting Full Time, Part Time and Postgraduate Higher Education students was £413.8 million in Academic Year 2019/20, down 2.0% from £422.2 million in 2018/19. The number of students paid / awarded funding decreased to 50,300 students, down 2.3% from 51,500 in Academic Year 2018/19. *See Table 2*

Since Academic Year 2013/14, the amount paid / awarded in Higher Education funding has increased by 13.0%, from £366.1 million whilst the number of students paid / awarded has remained relatively constant (+0.8%), from 49,900.

Whilst decreases can be seen within Undergraduate funding, there were small increases within Postgraduate funding.

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Table of Contents [\(click for hyperlink\)](#)

Introduction	3
What can you use these statistics for?	3
Things you need to know	3
Overview of Full Time Undergraduate Student Funding Package 2019/20	5
Undergraduate Maintenance Loans	6
Undergraduate Tuition Fee Loans	8
Postgraduate Loans	11
Disabled Students Allowance	12
Summary of Policy Changes – Academic Year 2019/20	13
Early In Year Overview – Academic Year 2020/21	14
Summary of Policy Changes - Academic Year 2020/21	15
Definitions	17
Additional Information	19

Introduction

This statistics publication presents figures and observations on the student support awarded to applicants and paid to students or their Higher Education Provider. Figures are shown for the seven academic years up to and including 2019/20. Section 7 gives a high-level, early indication of Academic Year 2020/21 figures, along with any emerging trends of new policy products.

The publication covers applicants and students domiciled in Northern Ireland taking a designated Higher Education (HE) course at a University or Further Education (FE) College in the UK, as well as EU (Outside UK) applicants and students taking a designated course in Northern Ireland.

What can you use these statistics for?

These statistics can be used as a reference to the number of students awarded / paid and the amount awarded / paid out by the Students Loans Company for students studying in Higher Education between Academic Years 2013/14 and 2019/20, along with an early view of Academic Year 2020/21.

The data used in this publication is from Student Loans Company's administrative systems. These systems only hold information on students who have applied for and / or receive funding. Due to this, these statistics cannot be used to analyse trends or to draw conclusions regarding the full UK student population.

Things you need to know

Payments Vs. Awards

The main aim of this publication is to measure payments to student support recipients funded by Northern Ireland over the course of each academic year. This is effectively what is paid in regard to Maintenance Loans, Tuition Fee Loans, Postgraduate Loans and Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

Awards differ from payments as they refer to the decision on how much will be paid if the applicant is present for study for the full academic year. As payments refer to the actual amounts received by students, they can be lower if the student is not in attendance for the full academic year, if the applicant does not attend at all, or if they do not draw down the full amount which was awarded (e.g. they drop out mid-year). For all new types of support an early indication of what has been paid / awarded two months into the latest academic year, in this publication, 2020/21 is provided in Section 7 of the Tables. The number of payments / awards made will change markedly between this point and the end of the academic year as current students will receive further payments and additional students apply for student support.

There are data reporting limitations in regard to separating out grant product payments by individual product. For this reason, the breakdowns of spend allocations of Maintenance Grants and other targeted support products e.g. Adult Dependant Grant and Travel Grants etc. are reported as awards.

OFS Categories

For Academic Year 2019/20, Higher Education providers in England will have registered with the Office for Students (OfS) as 'Approved (Fee Cap)' providers or 'Approved' providers'. This, and whether providers have an Office for OfS Access and Participation Plan and with / without a Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) will determine the fees they can charge. This will affect those funded by Student Finance Northern Ireland who are studying in an England-located provider.

A number of the tables within this publication were previously split between Public and Alternative providers and therefore as a result of the reclassifications, the following tables will show a summary total of all new categories instead.

Tables affected by these changes are: Table 3A (i), Table 3B, Table 3D and Table 4A.

Roundings, Totals and Averages

All student numbers and amounts have been rounded to the nearest 100 and £100,000 unless specified otherwise. Some totals and averages are calculated from un-rounded numbers.

Effective Dates

The effective dates used in this publication are as follows:

Table 1 to 6:	31st August	Academic Year 2019/20 in full (Table 4C - Provisional 31 st October)
Table 7:	31 st October	Early indicative look at Academic Year 2020/21

Tuition Fee Payments to Providers in Academic Year 2020/21

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Education and Devolved Administrations of Wales and Northern Ireland requested that the Student Loans Company revise the schedule of Tuition Fee payments to Higher Education Providers for the 2020/21 Academic Year.

This revision enabled Providers to access the second instalment of Tuition Fee payments early, while ensuring that students were not impacted by the change.

The increase in amounts paid is evident within *Table 7C* (early view of Academic Year 2020/21) and resulting averages.

Overview of Full Time Undergraduate Student Funding Package Academic Year 2019/20

Figure 2: Maximum rates of Maintenance Grant, full year Maintenance Loan and Tuition Fee Loans available to Full Time Undergraduate students domiciled in Northern Ireland

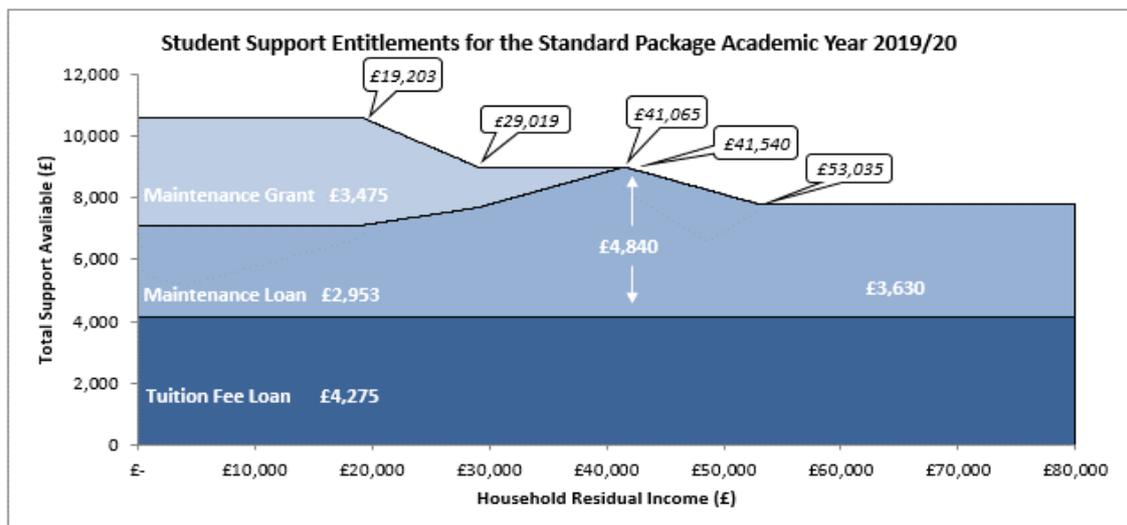
Academic Year	Rates	Maximum Maintenance Grant	Maximum amount of Maintenance Loan	Overall Maximum Support for Maintenance	Maximum Tuition Fee
2019/20 (2006/07 Arrangement)	Elsewhere	3,475	4,840	6,428	4,275
	London	3,475	6,780	8,368	4,275
	Home	3,475	3,750	5,338	4,275

The Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland) / Student Loans Company SLC

Figure 3: Student Support available to Full Time students domiciled in Northern Ireland
For new students entering in 2019/20, living away from home and attending an institution outside London i.e. 'Elsewhere' rate.

Household Residual Income	Maximum Maintenance Grant Available	Maximum Amount of Maintenance Loan Available	Maximum Tuition Fee Loan Available
Up to and including £19,203	£3,475	£2,953	£4,275
Between £19,204 and £29,019 [8]	£3,475 to £1,318	£2,953 to £3,522	£4,275
Between £29,020 and £41,065 [9]	£1,318 to £0	£3,522 to £4,790	£4,275
Between £41,066 and £41,540 [10]	£0	£4,840	£4,275
Between £41,541 to £53,035	£0	£4,840 to £3,630	£4,275
Over £53,035	£0	£3,630	£4,275

The Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland)



For details on previous Academic Year's available funding, see *Table 1a*.

Details of the amounts of loans and grants available to students are publicly available on the [Student Finance NI](#) website.

Undergraduate Maintenance Loans

An Undergraduate Maintenance Loan is funding to help with day-to-day costs, such as rent or food, whilst studying. These loans are available to those studying an eligible Undergraduate, Initial Teacher Training or Postgraduate Certificate of Education course, at an eligible Higher Education Provider on a Full-Time basis. The amount awarded is dependent on household income.

Full Time Maintenance Loans continue gradual decrease in both numbers and amount paid

Figure 4: Number of students domiciled in Northern Ireland receiving Full Time Maintenance Loans

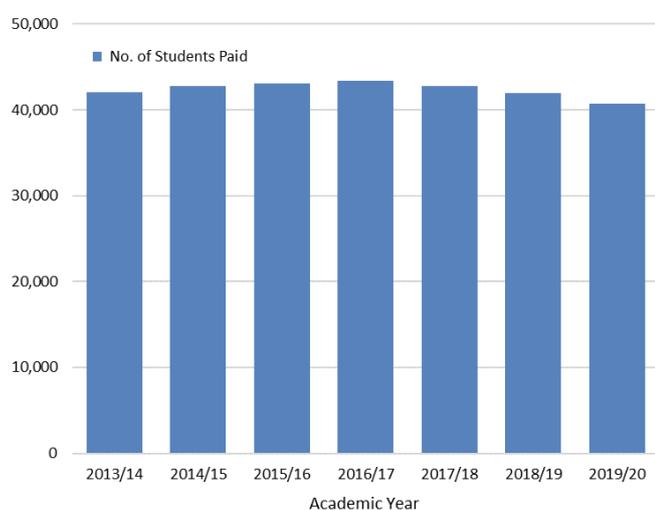
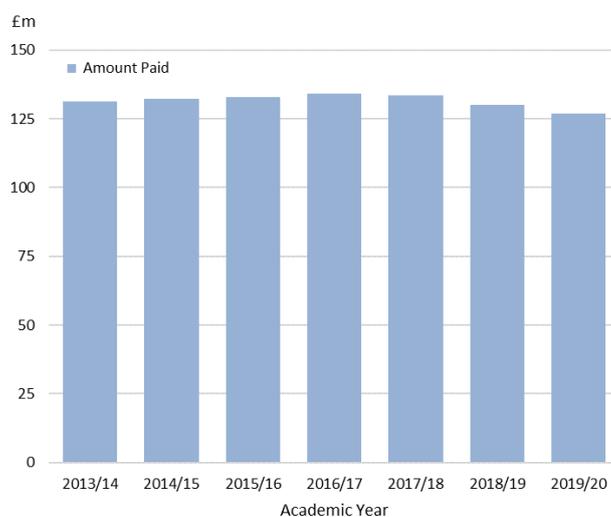


Figure 5: Amount Paid out in Full Time Maintenance Loans for students domiciled in Northern Ireland



Since 2013/14, the number of Full Time students in receipt of Maintenance Loans has remained relatively stable. Following an accumulative increase until Academic Year 2016/17, the number of students taking Full Time Maintenance Loans has marginally decreased over the subsequent three academic years.

In Academic Year 2019/20 the number of students taking a Maintenance Loan decreased by 2.9% to 40,700 in comparison to the previous year's figure of 41,900. See Table 3A(i)

Mirroring the trend in loan borrower numbers, Full Time Maintenance Loan payments also peaked in Academic Year 2016/17. From £134.2 million, the total amounts paid out has reduced gradually year-on-year until the most recent decrease of 2.5% in Academic Year 2019/20 to £126.9 million.

Decreases in the number of Full Time Maintenance Loans are in line with the overall gradual decrease shown for Full Time Northern Ireland student funding.

% of eligible Full Time Undergraduate students taking out Maintenance Loans continues to decrease

Figure 6: Full Time Estimated Eligible Population and students in receipt of Full Time Maintenance Loans in Northern Ireland

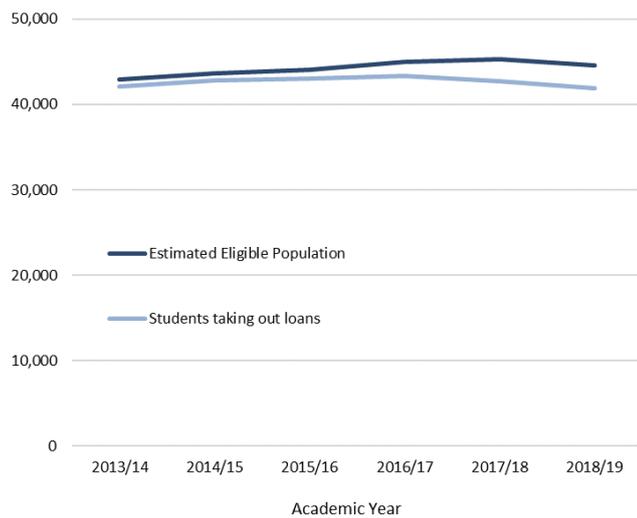
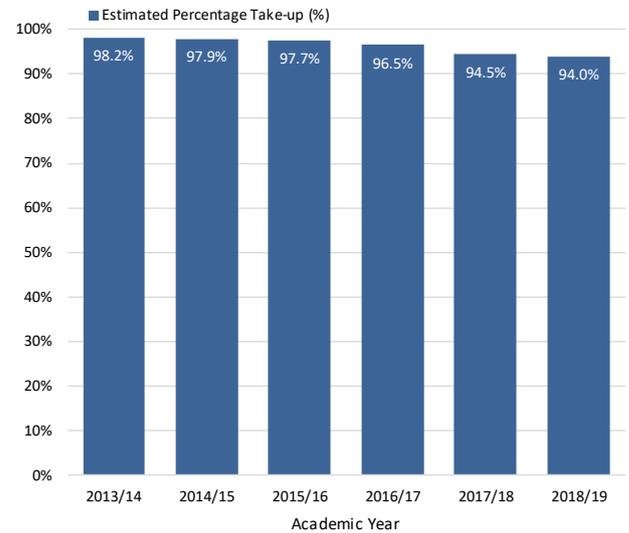


Figure 7: Estimated Percentage Take-Up of Full Time Maintenance Loans in Northern Ireland



The 'Estimated Eligible Population' figures indicate the numbers of students that are eligible to apply for student finance (including those who do not apply). These figures are supplied to Student Loans Company by the Department for the Economy (DFE). The take-up rate is calculated from the number of eligible students who choose to apply for a Maintenance Loan.

The number of Full-Time students taking a Maintenance Loan started to gradually decrease in Academic Year 2017/18, by contrast the estimated eligible population continued to increase for a further year, before decreasing for the first time in 2018/19. See *Table 3A(ii)*

Academic Year 2013/14 saw a take-up percentage of 98.2% which has steadily decreased to 94.0% in 2018/19, meaning that out of the 44,600 students who were eligible to apply for a Maintenance Loan in Academic Year 2018/19, 41,900 students received a Loan payment.

Due to the data availability, figures for the 2019/20 Academic Year will be presented in our next publication, planned for November 2021.

Undergraduate Tuition Fee Loans

An Undergraduate Tuition Fee Loan covers the cost of the tuition fees charged by the university or college. These loans are available to those studying an eligible Undergraduate, Initial Teacher Training or Postgraduate Certificate of Education course, at an eligible Higher Education Provider on a Full or Part Time basis. Tuition Fee Loans are not dependent on household income.

Amount paid out in Full Time Tuition Fee Loans decreases due to gradual fall in the number of students taking these loans

In line with the overall trend seen within Full Time Undergraduate student funding in Northern Ireland in Academic Year 2019/20, the number of students taking a Tuition Fee Loan has slightly decreased. *See Table 3B*

Academic Year 2019/20 saw a 1.8% decrease in the number of students to 39,700 from 40,400. This was also a decrease of 3.5% from Academic Year 2016/17 when student numbers taking Tuition Fee Loans were at their highest.

2019/20 saw a total paid in Full Time Tuition Fee Loans of £209.9 million. This is a 0.7% decrease on 2018/19's figure of £211.3 million.

Figure 9: Average Amount Paid in Full Time Tuition Fee Loans to students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK)

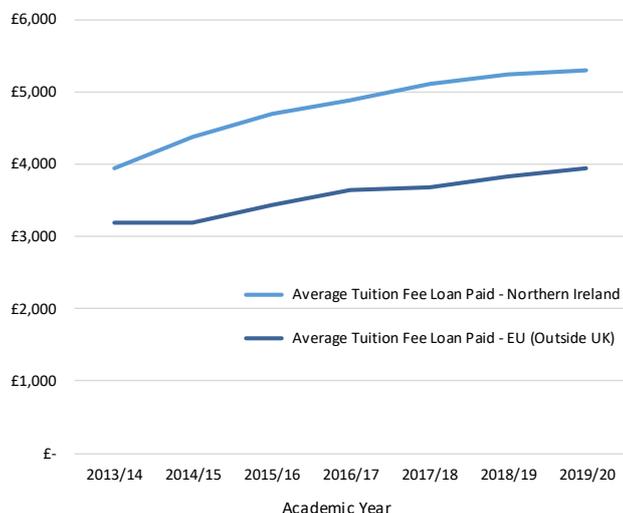
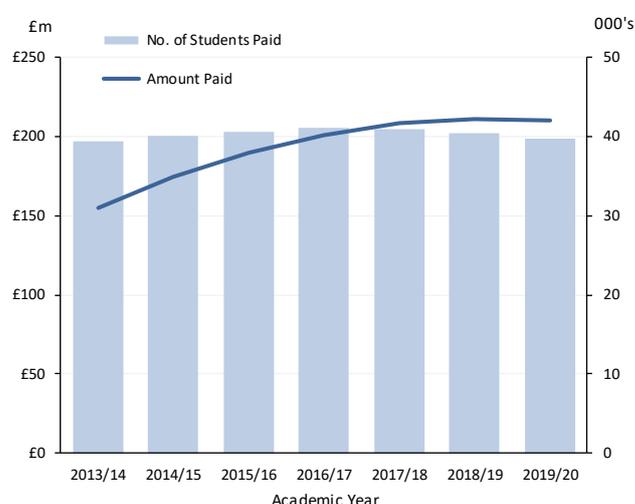


Figure 8: Number of students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK) receiving Full Time Tuition Fee Loans and Amount Paid



As the number of students in receipt of Tuition Fee loans has gradually declined since Academic Year 2016/17, yet the amount paid has increased, the average loan has continued to increase year-on-year.

This is due to the more prominent decrease in borrower numbers. *See Table 2*

In comparison to Academic Year 2018/19, the average Tuition Fee Loan for a Northern Ireland domiciled student has increased slightly in 2019/20 (+ £60)

For EU (Outside UK) domiciled students studying in Northern Ireland, this has increased by an additional £110.

Decrease in the number of students studying outside Northern Ireland taking Full Time Loans in 2019/20

The subset of Northern Ireland domiciled students opting to take a Tuition Fee Loan to study in other parts of the UK decreased in Academic Year 2019/20 after four years of continuing increase.

In comparison to 2018/19, this number has decreased by 4.2%, to 12,800. See Table 3C

Since Academic Year 2018/19, Northern Ireland domiciled students studying elsewhere in the UK account for one third of those taking Full Time Tuition Fee Loans funded by Student Finance Northern Ireland.

This has gradually increased from 28.9% in 2013/14.

Figure 10: Number of students domiciled in Northern Ireland taking Full Time Tuition Fee Loans by Country of Study

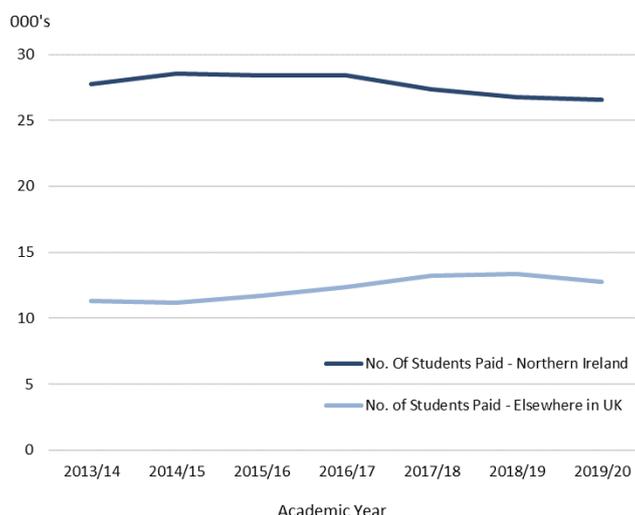
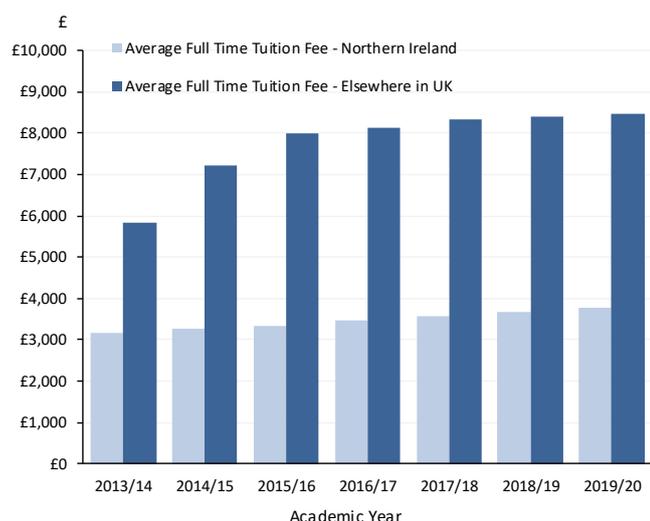


Figure 11: Average Full Time Tuition Fee Loan Amounts for students domiciled in Northern Ireland by Country of Study



The average Full Time Tuition Fee Loan paid on behalf of a student studying outside of Northern Ireland is more than double than at providers within Northern Ireland. In Academic Year 2019/20, the average Loan for study paid out elsewhere in the UK was £8,500 compared to £3,800 for those choosing to study within Northern Ireland.

Whilst in 2019/20, 32.5% of borrowers studied outside of Northern Ireland, higher tuition fee charges resulted in the total amount paid to providers elsewhere in the UK being in excess of half the total loaned (51.8%).

£108.1 million of the £208.5 million paid out on behalf Northern Ireland domiciled students, were to Providers in England, Wales and Scotland.

Part Time Tuition Fee Loan numbers increase for the second year, following introduction in Academic Year 2017/18

Figure 12: Number of students domiciled in Northern Ireland & EU (Outside UK) receiving Part Time Tuition Fee Loans

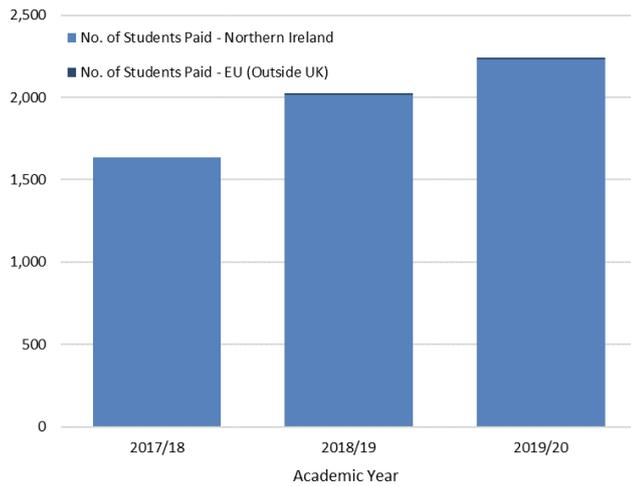
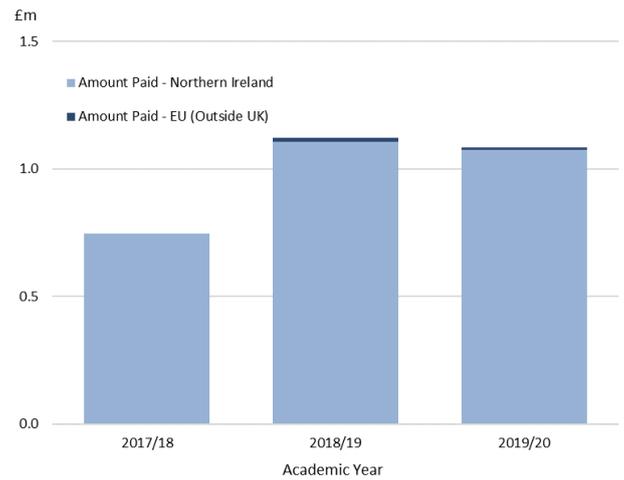


Figure 13: Amount Paid in Part Time Tuition Fees for students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK)



In Academic Year 2019/20 there was an increase of 210 students accessing Part Time Tuition Fee Loans funded by Student Finance Northern Ireland from the 2,030 reported in 2018/19 to 2,240 (+10.5%). See Table 5A

This increase can be attributed to Northern Ireland domiciled students, as the number of EU (Outside UK) domiciled students taking out Part Time Tuition Fee Loans decreased.

Despite this increase in total students, the amount paid out reduced slightly from £1.12 million in 2018/19 to £1.08 million in 2019/20.

In comparison to Academic Year 2018/19, the average Part Time Tuition Fee Loan paid on behalf of Northern Ireland domiciled students has reduced by £70 and by £60 for EU (Outside UK) students.

Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan

A Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan is funding to help with course and living costs whilst studying an eligible Postgraduate level course. They are paid directly to the student and are not based on their income or the income of their household. Students studying either a Postgraduate Certificate of Education or an Initial Teacher Training course are not eligible for Postgraduate funding, they can alternatively apply for Undergraduate finance.

Increase in the number of Tuition Fee Loans paid to Postgraduates slows in third year of availability

Figure 14: Number of Postgraduate students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK) receiving Tuition Fee Loans

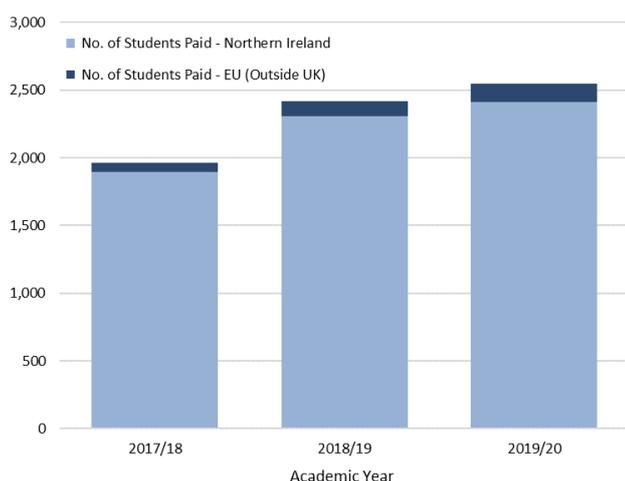
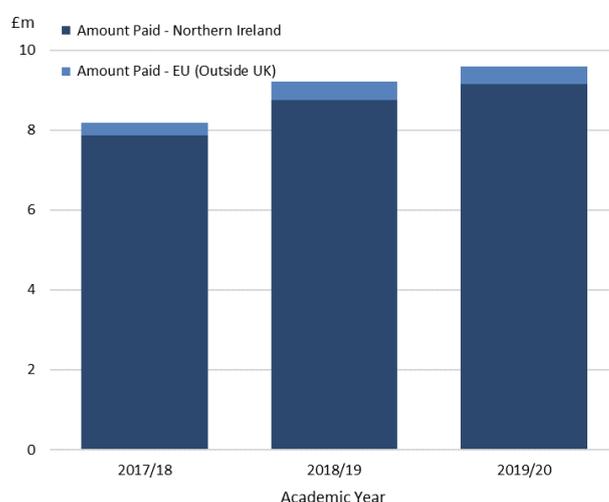


Figure 15: Amount Paid to Postgraduate Students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK) receiving Tuition Fee Loans



The number of Tuition Fee Loans paid to Postgraduates in Academic Year 2019/20 was 5.2% higher than in the previous year, reaching 2,540. The amount paid out increased by 4.3% in comparison to Academic Year 2018/19, an increase of £0.4 million. See Table 6A

In comparison to the growth seen in the previous year, these are less significant. When comparing Academic Year 2017/18, the product's first year, to 2018/19, there was a 23.2% increase in regard to student numbers and a 12.6% increase in regard to loan amounts paid out.

The slower increases seen in 2019/20 are typical for new products to show a slower uplift in their third year.

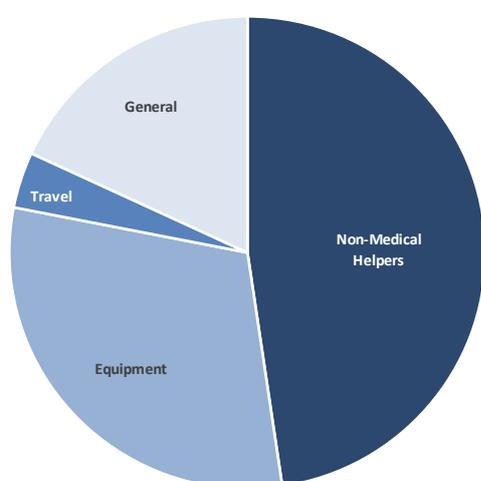
Since 2017/18, when the Tuition Fee Loan for Postgraduates was introduced, the number of loans paid out has increased by 580 students (29.5%). The amount paid out has increased by £1.4 million (17.4%).

Disabled Students Allowance

Disabled Students Allowances help pay for extra costs a student might incur as a direct result of their disability. This also includes long-term health conditions such as mental-health illnesses, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia etc. The individuals' condition must meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2010. Disabled Students' Allowance does not usually have to be repaid, unless the student leaves their course early.

Reduction in Full Time DSA spend in 2018/19 compared to previous year

Figure 16: Amount Paid in Full-Time Disabled Students Allowance by Category - Academic Year 2018/19



The amount paid in regard to all categories of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) in Academic Year 2018/19 equated to £3.3 million.

See Table 4B

This was 6.5% less than the £3.5 million spent in Academic Year 2017/18.

Reductions in association with 'Non-Medical Helpers' claims (-9.6%), 'Equipment' claims (-2.8%) and 'General' claims (- 7.7%) were offset by an increase in 'Travel' claims (+ 14.5%).

Despite a lower amount paid out in Academic Year 2018/19 than in the previous year, 'Non-Medical Helpers' Allowance remained the largest % of total DSA outgoings, with 47.7% of the overall Full Time DSA spend for that year. Claims amounted to £1.6 million of the total £3.3 million paid out.

'Non-Medical Helpers' Allowance is used to help pay for support workers such as British Sign Language interpreters, mobility trainers etc. Helpers can provide course-specific assistance with library support, typists, readers etc.

As at the 31st August 2020, a total of £3.2 million had been paid out for Academic Year 2019/20 for Full Time students. This is equal to the 2018/19 figure at the same point.

Generally, Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) are paid direct to the providers of equipment and services covered by the allowance although students may receive some funding paid directly to them, depending on their circumstances.

The vast majority is paid to suppliers once the Student Loans Company receive the invoices for equipment or services. Invoices continue to be received well after the end of the academic year which is why we quote figures a year later. Also, the majority of DSA applications are received after the term starts as many students do not become aware that they are entitled to support until they have started their course.

Students are able to apply for more than one category of DSA.

Summary of Policy Changes – Academic Year 2019/20

- **Full Time Tuition Fee Loan** – In Academic Year 2019/20, loans were available to new Full-Time students studying at a Northern Ireland Provider increased to £4,275. For those studying at a Provider elsewhere in the UK, the maximum loan was maintained at £9,250.
- **Full Time Maintenance Loan** – The maximum loan for living costs for students living away from home and studying outside London was increased to £4,840, for students living away from home and studying in London to £6,780 and for students living at home to £3,750.
- **Full Time Maintenance Package** – No change to 2018/19. Students commencing their courses on or after 1 August 2019 were entitled to support for living costs, by means of a Maintenance Grant and a loan. Full-time students, with a household residual income of £41,540 or less are eligible to apply for the means tested grant of up to £3,475. The level of further grants and loans are dependent on where the student is living and studying, and reduces based on their household residual income above £19,203 e.g.: -
 - Students living at home are entitled to a maximum package of £5,338. The maximum grant is £3,475. This is reduced, income-dependent to where the balance of the maximum amount of £3,750 can be taken as loan.
 - Students studying away from home, in London, are entitled to a maximum package of £8,368. The maximum grant is £3,475. This is reduced, income-dependent to where the balance to the maximum amount of £6,780 can be taken as loan.
 - Students studying away from home, outside London (Elsewhere rate), are entitled to a maximum package of £6,428. The maximum grant is £3,475. This is reduced, income-dependent to where the balance to the maximum amount of £4,840 can be taken as loan.
- **Part Time Tuition Fee Loan** – Increase on 2018/19. In Academic Year 2019/20, Part Time students were eligible to apply for a non-means tested fee loan of up to £3,206.25.
- **Part Time Course Grant** - No change from 2018/19. In Academic Year 2019/20 Part-time students are eligible for a grant of up to £265 for books, travel and other expenditure relating to their course. This grant is income assessed and available to those up to a maximum residual income of £28,068.
- **Part Time Fee Grant** – No change from 2018/19. Eligible students starting courses on or after 1 August 2019 were entitled to apply for a means-tested fee grant up to a maximum of £1,230, pro-rated according to their intensity of study. This grant is income assessed and available to those up to a maximum residual income of £28,068. The intensity of study will be based on the number of credits that the student intends to complete in a given academic year.
- **Disabled Students Allowance** – No change from AY 2018/19.
 - For Full Time Undergraduate students, Non-Medical Helper Allowance remained at £20,938, the Specialist Equipment Allowance at £5,266, and the allowance for other disability related expenditure (General Allowance) at £1,759.

- For Part Time Undergraduate students, the Non-Medical Helper Allowance remained at £15,703, the Specialist Equipment Allowance at £5,266 and the allowance for other disability related expenditure (General Allowance) at £1,319.
- The maximum Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) for those on Postgraduate courses remained at £10,469.
- Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan – No change from 2018/19. Maximum loans for new students starting Postgraduate Master’s courses remained at £5,500 per course.

Changes in policy occurring in previous years can be found on our [statistics page](#).

Early In Year Overview - Academic Year 2020/21

Table 7C shows an early view of Academic Year 2020/21 at effective date 31st October 2020. This would be approximately two months into a typical academic year however, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of courses started later. As a result, this table may be less representative of the academic year as a whole, than in comparison to previous years’ *Table 7C*.

Due to the irregular start to the 2020/21 Academic Year, and this very early cut of data, limited inferences can be drawn as to how the full academic year will play out. Table 2 in the publication to be released in November 2021 will show a near- finalised view of the 2020/21 Academic Year.

Northern Ireland - This section includes those in receipt of payments for Maintenance Loans, Tuition Fee Loans, Tuition Fee Grants and Disabled Students Allowance, as well as those awarded HE Maintenance and Special Support Grants, Course Grants, Tuition Fee Grants and Other Targeted Support including Childcare Grants; for both Undergraduate (Full and Part Time) and Postgraduate Northern Ireland domiciled students. Rows on this table indicate unique counts, students receiving at least one type of student finance.

EU (Outside UK) - This section includes those in receipt of payments for Tuition Fee Loans, as well as those awarded Tuition Fee Grants for both Undergraduate (Full and Part Time) and Postgraduate EU (Outside UK) domiciled students studying in Northern Ireland. Rows on this table indicate unique counts, students receiving at least one type of student finance.

Overview

By end-October 2020, a total of 44,600 Undergraduate and Postgraduate students have been paid / awarded student finance for the 2020/21 Academic Year. This is 1.4% lower than at the same point in the previous Academic Year.

A total of £150.5 million has been awarded / paid to Undergraduate and Postgraduate students for the 2020/21 Academic Year by 31st October 2020. This is 31.4% higher compared to the same point in the previous year, which is considerably higher than the 4.1% decrease in the previous academic year. The increase can be predominantly attributed to an early second instalment of Undergraduate Tuition Fee payments made to Higher Education (HE) Providers.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Education and Devolved Administrations of

Wales and Northern Ireland requested that the Student Loans Company revise the schedule of Undergraduate Tuition Fee payments to Higher Education Providers for the 2020/21 Academic Year. This revision enabled Providers to access the second instalment of Tuition Fee payments early (two paid in October, instead of first paid October and second in February), while ensuring that students were not impacted by the change.

The average paid / awarded has significantly increased in comparison to the same point in Academic Year 2019/20 (+ 33.2% vs. -1.6% in the previous year). This is again predominantly as a result of the early payment of the second Tuition Fee liability to Providers. Due to EU (Outside UK) students not being entitled to Maintenance support, the early second instalment of Tuition Fee Loan payments has had a larger impact on the averages paid.

These early figures may also have been affected by the Ofqual standardisation of grades, allowing students whose exams were cancelled in the summer of 2020 to receive calculated grades enabling them to progress to further study. For more information please see gov.uk.

Summary of Policy Changes - Academic Year 2020/21

- **Full Time Tuition Fee Loan** – In Academic Year 2020/21, loans were available to new Full-Time students studying at a Northern Ireland Provider increased to £4,395. For those studying at a Provider elsewhere in the UK, the maximum loan was maintained at £9,250.
- **Full Time Maintenance Loan** – No change to Academic Year 2019/20. The maximum loan for living costs for students living away from home and studying outside London was maintained at £4,840, for students living away from home and studying in London to £6,780 and for students living at home to £3,750.
- **Full Time Maintenance Package** – No change to Academic Year 2019/20. Students commencing their courses on or after 1 August 2020 were entitled to support for living costs, by means of a Maintenance Grant and a loan. Full-time students, with a household residual income of £41,540 or less are eligible to apply for the means tested grant of up to £3,475. The level of further grants and loans are dependent on where the student is living and studying, and reduces based on their household residual income above £19,203 e.g.: -
 - Students living at home are entitled to a maximum package of £5,338. The maximum grant is £3,475. This is reduced, income-dependent to where the balance of the maximum amount of £3,750 can be taken as loan.
 - Students studying away from home, in London, are entitled to a maximum package of £8,368. The maximum grant is £3,475. This is reduced, income-dependent to where the balance to the maximum amount of £6,780 can be taken as loan.
 - Students studying away from home, outside London (Elsewhere rate), are entitled to a maximum package of £6,428. The maximum grant is £3,475. This is reduced, income-dependent to where the balance to the maximum amount of £4,840 can be taken as loan.
- **Part Time Tuition Fee Loan** – Increased on Academic Year 2019/20. In 2020/21, Part Time students were eligible to apply for a non-means tested fee loan of up to £3,296.25.

- **Part Time Course Grant** - No change from Academic Year 2019/20. In 2020/21 Part-time students are eligible for a grant of up to £265 for books, travel and other expenditure relating to their course. This grant is income assessed and available to those up to a maximum residual income of £28,068.
- **Part Time Fee Grant** – No change from Academic Year 2018/19. Eligible students starting courses on or after 1 August 2019 were entitled to apply for a means-tested fee grant up to a maximum of £1,230, pro-rated according to their intensity of study. This grant is income assessed and available to those up to a maximum residual income of £28,068. The intensity of study will be based on the number of credits that the student intends to complete in a given academic year.
- **Disabled Students Allowance** – No change from Academic Year 2019/20.
 - For Full Time Undergraduate students, Non-Medical Helper Allowance remained at £20,938, the Specialist Equipment Allowance at £5,266, and the allowance for other disability related expenditure (General Allowance) at £1,759.
 - For Part Time Undergraduate students, the Non-Medical Helper Allowance remained at £15,703, the Specialist Equipment Allowance at £5,266 and the allowance for other disability related expenditure (General Allowance) at £1,319.
 - The maximum Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) for those on Postgraduate courses remained at £10,469.
- **Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan** – No change from Academic Year 2019/20. Maximum loans for new students starting Postgraduate Master’s courses remained at £5,500 per course.

Changes in policy occurring in previous years can be found on our [statistics page](#).

Definitions

Term	Definition
Alternative Provider	An Alternative Provider is any provider of higher education courses which is not in direct receipt of recurrent funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (OfS) or from equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations; or does not receive direct recurrent public funding (for example, from a local authority, or from the Secretary of State for Education); and is not a further education college. Only providers with courses designated for student support are included in the statistics.
Applicant	This is a person applying for student support. Not all applicants take up a place. Applicants become students once they take up a place and the SLC has received a confirmation of their attendance.
Award	If an applicant for student finance is assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria as stipulated within the student finance regulations, then they will be awarded student support. Awards will be paid on condition that the applicant subsequently attends the Higher Education Provider at which point they will be considered a student and payments will be released according to the payment schedule for the support types awarded.
Country of Study	The country in which the Higher Education (HE) Provider is located and where which the applicant intends to / is studying at.
Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)	Disabled Students Allowances help pay for extra costs a student might incur as a direct result of their disability. This also includes long-term health conditions such as mental-health illnesses, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia etc.
Domiciled	The country in which the applicant would normally reside in the three years prior to the start of the course. This publication covers those students domiciled in Northern Ireland who study anywhere in the UK and EU (Outside UK) students studying in Northern Ireland.
Entry Cohort	Grouping of applicants according to the Education (Student Support) Regulations against which the applicant was assessed for support. Student finance applicants are generally covered by transitional protection which means they continue to be assessed against the regulations in place for their first year of study, but this is not always the case.
Estimated Eligible Population	The numbers of students that are eligible to apply for student finance including those who do not apply. Figures for the estimated eligible population are supplied by the Department for the Economy (DfE NI). DfE use data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and other sources with the closest approximation of eligibility criteria available from those sources.
Final Figures	The final position refers to statistics in a steady state. Final figures are not expected to change significantly and should represent the final outcome.
Full Time	This refers to the mode of study for which student support is being paid, primarily to undergraduate students. For the purposes of this publication, the full-time data also includes part time and flexible ITT students who started their courses before 2010/11, as these students were also eligible for full time student support. Students starting the same courses after 2010/11 are not included.

Full Year Maintenance Loan	The amount of Maintenance Loan available to students varies between those studying in their final year and those studying in an earlier year of their course. Students in their final year will be entitled to a reduced amount to reflect the reduced length of time in attendance at their university over which maintenance support is required.
Higher Education Provider	For the purpose of this publication it is an organisation designated for student support and can include Universities which receive the bulk of their funding from public sources and Further Education Colleges.
Household Residual Income	This is the income associated with the household where the applicant normally resides. It comprises of the taxable earned and unearned incomes of the applicant or those of the applicant's parents' minus any allowable deductions.
Level of Support	Identifies if the applicant was awarded the full level of means tested grant, the partial level or no grant at all.
Maintenance Loan Rate	Applicants are entitled to a different amount of Maintenance Loans depending on their term-time residence. Rates differ for applicants living at home, in London or elsewhere (excluding London).
Other Targeted Support	These are grants and allowances provided to students meeting specific circumstances. Targeted support includes Travel Grant, Parental Learning Allowance, Childcare Grant and Adult Dependents Grant.
Provider Type	See either 'Public Provider' or 'Alternative Provider'
Provisional Figures	These are figures based on the status at either end-August or end-October (Section 7: Early In Year Insight & New Policy). End-August is used as this reflects the end of the academic year for the majority of Providers. However, due to small subset of providers being subject to movement due to later course start dates (formerly Alternative Providers), these are noted as Provisional and then finalised at the end of the following academic year. Section 7 of the publication provides a look at emerging trends of new policies, two months into the academic year. These figures are not revised.
Public Provider	A Public Provider is any provider of higher education courses which is in direct receipt of recurrent funding from OfS or from equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations; or in receipt of direct recurrent public funding (for example, from a local authority, or from the Secretary of State for Education); or is a further education college. Only providers with courses designated for student support are included in the statistics.
Student	For the purpose of this publication, an applicant for student support becomes a student once the Student Loans Company has received confirmation that the person is attending a course with a Higher Education Provider. Not all applicants take up a place.
Student Support Available	This is the arrangement available at the time of the application for support. It includes the range of support available, the eligibility rules and the income thresholds.
Take-up Rate	The rate of which the Eligible Population chooses to apply for a Maintenance Loan.

Additional Information

Data Sources

This publication uses data from Student Loans Company (SLC)'s administrative systems. For details of the administrative data sources used in our publications see the [Statement of Administrative Sources](#).

Data Quality

Student Loans Company has published the Quality Guidelines that it follows. As per those guidelines a Quality Plan is produced for each publication. The Quality Plan stipulates two stages of Quality Assurance. Data is extracted from the administrative systems then reviewed using a standard Quality Assurance checklist. The statistical tables created using that data are quality assured using the Statistical Quality guidelines. See our [Quality Guidelines](#) for further information.

Related Statistics Publications

Student Loans Company publish statistics on Higher Education Funding for England and Wales as part of the same series this publication belongs to. These are published at the same time as part of the series [Student Support for Higher Education](#). SLC also publish statistics on the repayment of Student Loans for higher education in the series Student Loans in Northern Ireland. The [latest release](#) of this series, covering Tax Year 2019-20 was published in two parts, Part One on the 11 June 2020 and Part 2 added on 27 August 2020.

The Student Awards Agency for Scotland publish details of Higher Education funding in Scotland in their publication Higher Education Student Support in Scotland. The [latest release](#) of this series was published in August 2020 covering Academic Session 2019/20.

National Statistics

This is a National Statistics publication. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

This publication series (publications for England, Wales & Northern Ireland) was awarded National Statistics status in October 2011 following a [full assessment](#) against their Code of Practice. Since the assessments by the Office for Statistics Regulation we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made several improvements including the following:

- Supplementary tables added giving payments breakdown by HE Provider within Provider Type - England only
- Part Time and Postgraduate DSA added – All domiciles
- Additional tables added to show DSA payments breakdown by Type – All domiciles
- Postgraduate Loans added – England and Wales
- Methodology for calculating take-up % for refined – England only
- Sections restructured, bringing Loans more to the fore and clearly separating out Full Time Undergraduate, Part Time Undergraduate and Postgraduate students. The 'Early In Year' focus changed to actual students and amounts paid rather, than applications and amounts awarded
- Introduced cross-country comparison of average Maintenance Loan paid