

Student Support for Higher Education in England: Methodology Note

Notes for all tables

1. All calculations have been derived from unrounded figures.
2. All student numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100 unless otherwise stated
3. All awarded/payment amounts have been rounded to the nearest £100,000 unless otherwise stated.
4. All averages amounts paid/awarded are rounded to the nearest £10
5. Symbols used:
 - . Not applicable
 - Nil or negligible
 - : Figure not available
6. All figures presented (with the exception of the Estimated Eligible Loan Populations (ELP)) originate from SLC's administrative systems. These systems only hold information on students who have applied for and/or receive funding from SLC. More information on SLC's administrative systems can be found on our [Statement of Administrative Sources](#).
7. Awards differ from Payments as they refer to the decision on how much will be paid if the awarded applicants are present for study for the full academic year, while Payments refer to actual amounts received by students and so can be lower if the student is not present for the full academic year or if the applicant does not attend at all or does not draw down the full awarded amount (e.g. they drop out mid-year).
8. Where Awards are presented, only students whom have been 'approved for payment' are included. This means that all identity, residency and income checks have been concluded and the amount shown is the finalised amount awarded. Students can be re-assessed at a later date even after an award is finalised. The data shown is correct as at the effective date given.
9. All Award data originates from SLC's ProToCol system and all Payment data originates from SLC's CLASS system. Further information on our Administrative Data Sources can be found in our [Statement of Administrative Sources](#).

Take-Up Rate Methodology - Table 3A(ii) and 3B(ii)

To provide a take-up rate of students accessing Student Loans we compare our SLC student counts for both Full Time Maintenance Loans and Full Time Tuition Fee Loan borrowers to a count of students who are eligible to receive funding for those products.

10. All estimated eligible loan population figures originate from the Department for Education (DfE). These figures are derived from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) extracts.
11. The take-up rate is calculated by comparing the student counts from two separate datasets. The SLC count of students originating in CLASS (Customer Ledger Account Servicing System) and 'HESA for Eligible Loan Population' derived by DfE. There are innate inconsistencies between the datasets, such as methodology for data processing and the variables included, which means the calculated take-up rate should only be considered an approximation.
12. Both the SLC and the 'HESA for Eligible Loan Population' student counts capture Full Time Undergraduate students, however there are some exceptions. For example, students studying courses such as integrated Master's degrees, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or Part Time Postgraduate ITT (Initial Teacher Training) are eligible for both Maintenance and Tuition Fee Loans and are captured here. This calculation does not include those eligible for Postgraduate (Master's) Loans which were introduced from 2016/17.
13. Loan eligible students are calculated by DfE from HESA data by filtering student records based on loan policy eligibility criteria. The Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Profession (NMAH) Reform for Tuition Fees in 2017/18 has meant developing robust definitions to identify students of these disciplines. Regulations specify whether an NMAH course is eligible based on:-
 - Course start date (i.e. 2017/18 starters onwards)
 - Whether the course is pre-registration, regulated by the relevant body for the subject
 - The level of qualification awarded

To identify students on these courses, these criteria are applied to record level HESA data, as well as filtering for JACS (Joint Academic Coding System) code where appropriate to identify the specific eligible disciplines. This is particularly important for the Allied Health Profession where the regulations specify particular eligible disciplines.

These definitions have been developed in line with the Office for Students (OfS) methodology, for more information see pages 5-8 of their [methodology document](#). Previous NMAH definitions, applied purely to Maintenance Loans as NMAH students

were eligible for a partial Maintenance Loan, relied solely on JACS codes to filter for discipline and were therefore an overestimation of eligible courses. The redeveloped definitions are much more robust and reflective of the loan policy. These definitions have been applied to both Loan products for 2017/18 ELP calculations but no revisions have been made to previous calculations for Maintenance Loans.

14. Although most courses will last more than one academic year, there are exceptions to this which are still included in the Estimated Loan calculations. This ensures eligible ITT courses and courses lasting just one academic year are still included in the final take-up calculations for both Tuition Fee Loans and Maintenance Loans.
15. Other minor revisions for calculating Loan eligible students have been made due to Erasmus (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) (pre 2012/13 starters) and Part Time ITT (pre 2010/11 starters). This applies to the Maintenance Loan ELP statistic, Table 3A(ii) within the 'Student Support For Higher Education In England' publication.
16. There are some Alternative Providers (AP) with students eligible for SLC support that do not feature on the HESA AP student record. There are various reasons for omission, including failure to submit timely returns to HESA for all students during the academic year. The AP ELP tends to underestimate the total eligible loan population for this reason.
17. Returns to the HESA AP Student Record were only mandatory for all English Designated APs from Academic Year 2015/16. Eligible populations and take-up percentages therefore cannot be calculated for Alternative Providers prior to 2015/16.
18. At provider level there are individual providers which have take-up percentages for loans of over 100% of the eligible population. This issue is likely to be caused by either data errors in the HESA student record or inconsistency between the HESA student record and SLC CLASS database. For the Academic Year 2017/18, we have refined our methodology to improve matching between the 'HESA for Eligible Loan Population' and SLC data.
19. The University of Buckingham is included within the Alternative Provider count within the 'HESA for Eligible Loan Population' data since 2015/16 when APs were first included in the ELP data. While the University of Buckingham is an Alternative Provider it has historically been included in HESA publications relating to Public Providers, and therefore was included within the 'HESA for Eligible Loan Population' data for Public Providers before 2015/16.

Take-Up Rate Methodology - Change in time series from 2017/18

The 2017/18 take up rates are not directly comparable to previous years for multiple reasons:

20. There are providers in the SLC CLASS database that do not appear in the HESA AP student record. The approach taken from 2017/18 onwards is to exclude from the take-up rate calculation students from the SLC student count that attend a provider that does not appear in the HESA AP student record. For this reason the SLC student counts on Table 3A(ii) and Table 3 3B(ii) will not correspond to the full student count provided on other tables.

Previous years have not been revised with this methodology due to data being unavailable to link SLC data to the 'HESA for Eligible Loan Population' datasets.

21. HESA have confirmed a data issue for 2016/17 which affected one of the larger Alternative Providers. This results in the 'HESA for Eligible Loan Population' for 2016/17 being understated by the order of hundreds of students.

No revision to the 2016/17 figures have been included.