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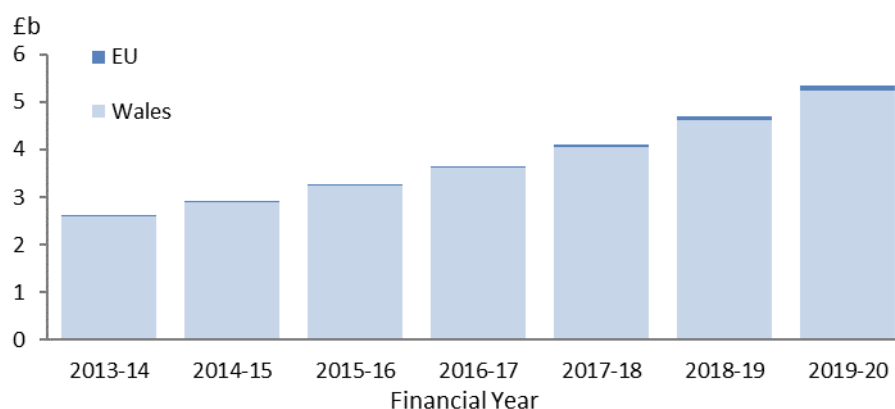
Student Loans in Wales: Part 1

Financial Year 2019-20

Income Contingent Student Loan Balance

Income Contingent Student Loan balance reaches £5.3 billion

Figure 1: Total Balance of Income Contingent Student Loans at the end of Financial Year 2013-14 to 2019-20 (£ billion)



The loan balance for both Wales and EU borrowers reached £5.3 billion by the end of financial year 2019-20. This is a 13.9% (£0.6 billion) increase on the previous end-financial year figure of £4.7 billion, which is consistent with annual increases of previous financial years.

The loan balance has increased year-on-year as new lending and interest added to existing balances outweighs repayments and write-offs.

Of the total balance, 66.7% are amounts are liable for repayment. This means that a borrower has passed their Statutory Repayment Due Date (SRDD). This is the point they would become liable to begin repaying a loan, normally the April after graduating or otherwise leaving their course.

EU borrowers balance reached £90.5 million by the end of financial year 2019-20. This is a 28.9% (£20.3 million) increase on the previous end-financial year figure of £70.2 million. Although the EU loan balance has still increased in financial year 2019-20, there was a small reduction in the percentage increase to that seen last year, financial year 2017-18 to 2018-19, which was 32.3%.

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Introduction

This statistics publication presents figures and observations on student loan outlays, repayments and borrower activity for Wales domiciled Student Loans Company (SLC) customers. This covers students who are studying, or borrowers who have studied in Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) in the United Kingdom (UK). Figures are also shown for European Union (EU) students studying in Wales.

Figures provided here are for Income Contingent Repayment (ICR) Loans administered by SLC, which were introduced in Academic Year 1998/99.

This publication covers financial years 2013-14 through 2019-20.

Complete information on student finance arrangements in Wales are available at the Student Finance Wales [website](#).

What can you use these statistics for?

These statistics can be used as a reference to the value of the Student Loans Company (SLC) loan balance at the end of the financial year, student outlay within a financial year and information on borrower activity and repayment amounts.

The data used in this publication is sourced from Student Loans Company's 'Customer Ledger Account Servicing System' (CLASS). This system only holds information on borrowers who have received funding from SLC. This publication also only includes information on loan products and does not include information regarding grants and bursaries. Under normal circumstances grants and bursaries are not considered repayable.

Due to this, these statistics cannot be used to analyse trends or to draw conclusions regarding the full UK education funding landscape.

Things you need to know

Reduced Publication Series

In adherence to government rulings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and with staff working remotely, we are currently unable to produce our full suite of statistical tables. This decision has been made, taking into account the three pillars of the Code of Practice for Statistics (Trustworthiness, Quality and Value) and following recent guidance from the UK Statistics Authority on changes to statistical outputs during the coronavirus outbreak. Within this document, we will therefore only refer to published data (Table 1, Table 5a and Table 5b). The remaining data tables and commentary will be released in due course. Further details can be found on our [webpage](#).

More Frequent Data Sharing (MFDS)

From April 2019 the frequency in which repayments data was provided to SLC by HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC) increased. Before this SLC received customer repayment data, reported by employers, annually from HMRC after the end of the financial year. This has now increased to weekly. This means for SLC customers being paid monthly through the Pay as You Earn (PAYE) system, SLC receives information of student loan deductions monthly. **This increase in frequency has resulted a change in time series for repayments and interest applied for the 2019-20 financial year.**

Repayments of Income Contingent Loans are shown in this publication in the financial year they are posted to customer accounts. As SLC were previously notified of repayments by HMRC usually within one year of the financial year ending, the repayments shown in a given financial year were mainly for the year before. The same was also true for the associated interest calculations being applied to these customer accounts.

As SLC are now receiving this information at a greater frequency (from April 2019 onwards), financial year 2019-20 will have more repayments data than previous financial years. Almost two years' worth of customer PAYE repayments and interest calculations (those processed by SLC in both FY 2018-19 and 2019-20) will be included. For the 2020-21 financial year, due to be published June 2021, the time series should normalise with a single years' worth of repayments data being included (those processed by SLC in FY 2020-21).

HMRC will still provide SLC with annual information within one year of the financial year ending, which will be reviewed and applied to customer accounts like before. This end of year file will be the end of financial year position for PAYE borrower. This could result in minor adjustments to customer balances. These adjustments and will be included in the next reporting financial year data.

The figures / trends in this publication which have been affected by MFDS will be clearly marked throughout this publication but for additional information in regard to MFDS please see [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) webpage.

The MFDS Effect on Interest Rate Calculations

The interest applied to accounts, like repayments, is reported within this publication in the financial year it was posted to the customer's account, and not necessarily the year the interest was accrued. For PAYE repayers this is dependent on when repayment information is received from HMRC and thus affected by the introduction of MFDS in the 2019-20 financial year (explained above).

Pre MFDS, PAYE repayment information was received by SLC annually from HMRC for each borrower, usually after the end of the financial year. At this point the account was re-calculated using the repayment information supplied and interest backdated and applied. This would be reported within this publication in the following financial year data.

With the introduction of MFDS and repayments information more readily available, interest is also calculated and applied to the accounts more readily. **This has resulted in a change in time series for financial year 2019-20 for interest applied**, as almost two years' worth of customer PAYE repayments and interest calculations are included (those processed by SLC in both FY 2018-19 and 2019-20). The time series should normalise in financial year 2020-21, as will include just one financial year of repayments information and resulting interest calculations (those processed by SLC in FY 2020-21).

From financial year 2019-20 Plan 2 customers interest is calculated at RPI rate only, for repayments information received within the same financial year for which it applies. The variable interest rate (VIR) portion (0-3%) of the interest rate is applied to the accounts once the year end repayment amount is known from the end of year file. This is supplied by HMRC annually usually after the end of financial year. This means the VIR portion of the interest calculation will be in the following reporting financial year within this publication. For further information on VIR, please see [here](#).

Self Assessment Data

Self Assessment repayment data is supplied from HMRC to SLC via a different process to PAYE. As a result, this will still be provided annually after the end of the financial year (and not weekly as for PAYE

customers). This will therefore still show in the financial year in which it was posted to the customer's account, as in previous years. For this reason, financial year 2019-20 will mostly comprise of Self Assessment repayments data from the previous financial year. This will also be true of the interest calculations being applied for these borrowers.

In previous years we have had to mark the figures relating to Self Assessment repayments as 'estimated' due to this being provided later than anticipated. For 2018-19 and 2019-20 this has been provided as expected, allowing this to be included as final figures.

Rounding, Totals and Averages

All borrower numbers and amounts have been rounded to the nearest 100 and £100,000, the nearest 1 decimal point on the data tables given. Average amounts are rounded to the nearest £10. Totals and averages are calculated from un-rounded numbers, these therefore may differ from adding up rounded components.

Effective Dates

The effective dates used in this publication are as follows:

Table 1 and 2: 31st March

Table 3, 4 and 5: 30th April

Tables 3, 4 and 5 reports on information which requires annual PAYE end of year data supplied by HMRC to SLC, even after the introduction of MFDS. This is received after the financial year ends hence the later effective date.

Changes included in this publication

Table 1 - In line with our Student Support publication series, we have removed data prior to financial year 2013-14. Data prior to 2013-14 is available in all previous year versions of this publication.

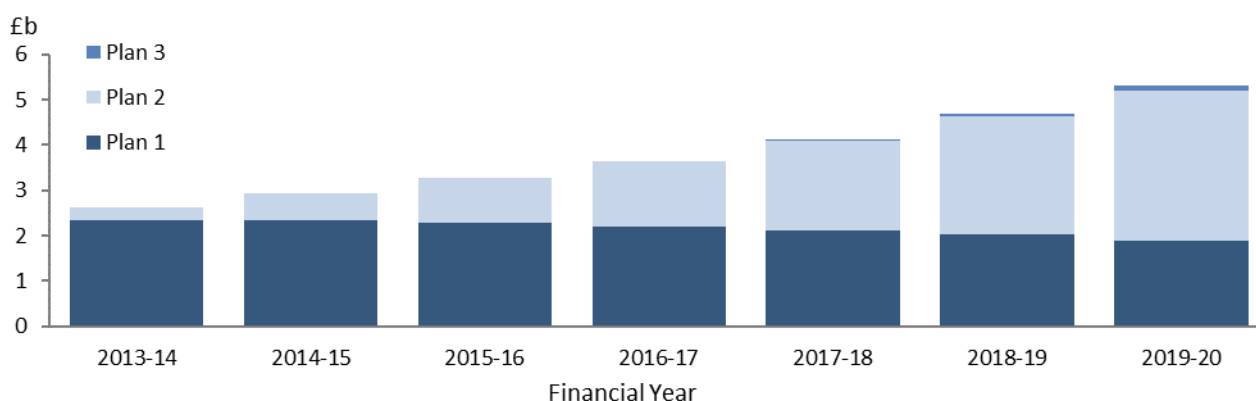
Table 1a – Plan 3 Postgraduate borrowers are now fully split by Postgraduate Masters and Postgraduate Doctoral. This allows for repayments, interest and write-off amounts to be shown for each product as well as outlay which was shown last year. In order to facilitate this in the table design, the outlay for Postgraduate Masters and Postgraduate Doctoral for financial year 2018-19 has had to be removed and this is shown as an overall total. The outlay split for Postgraduate Masters and Doctoral can be found in last year's publication.

Tables 5a & 5b - We have removed the Tax Year columns prior to 2006-07 and resulting Repayment Cohorts rows prior to 2007. This table is becoming increasingly large and more difficult to view when printed. The removal of this data also brings the home + EU tables in line with the EU-only tables. There is no statistically significant variance year-on-year in these earlier years and historic data can be found in previous years publications. The total row displayed still shows the total of **all** ICR borrowers (inclusive of now omitted rows).

Income Contingent Student Loan Balance by Repayment Plan

In financial year 2019-20, there were three Repayment Plans. Students who began their course prior to 1 September 2012 are on Repayment Plan 1, those who began their course on or after 1 September 2012 are on Repayment Plan 2 and students who have taken out Postgraduate loans are on Repayment Plan 3. Borrowers are able to be 'multi-Plan' should they have studied multiple courses.

Figure 2: Total Balance of Income Contingent Student Loans at the end of Financial Year 2013-14 to 2019-20 by Repayment Plan (£ billion)



The above graph indicates the changing proportion of the loan balance in respect to Repayment Plans. At end financial year 2013-14, Repayment Plan 1 loans equated to 89.8% of the entire loan balance and by the end of financial year 2019-20, this had reduced to 35.3%.

By contrast, at end financial year 2013-14, 10.2% of the balance was attributed to Repayment Plan 2 loans which has since increased to 62.4% by the end of financial year 2019-20.

Following their introduction in 2017-18, Repayment Plan 3 (Postgraduate loans), now make up 2.3% of the Higher Education loan balance. In 2017-18 this was purely Postgraduate Masters loans and from 2018-19 onwards Postgraduate Doctoral loans were also introduced into this Repayment Plan type.

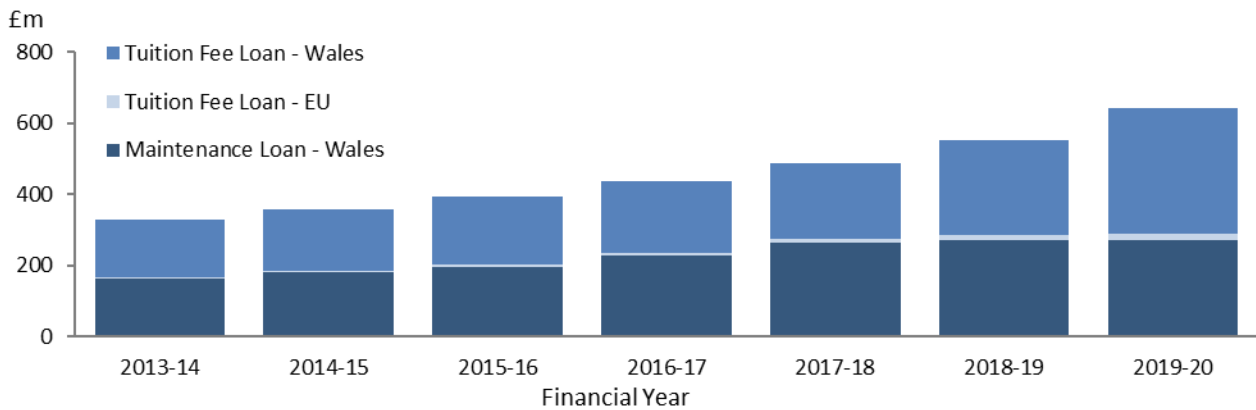
For more information on repayment plans, please refer to the relevant section within **Additional Information** of this publication.

Total Amount Lent to Student Borrowers

Loans discussed in this section include Tuition Fee Loans and Maintenance Loans for Undergraduates, Masters and Doctoral Loans for Postgraduates.

Amount lent to all Higher Education borrowers increased by 17.1% to £698.6 million in Financial Year 2019-20

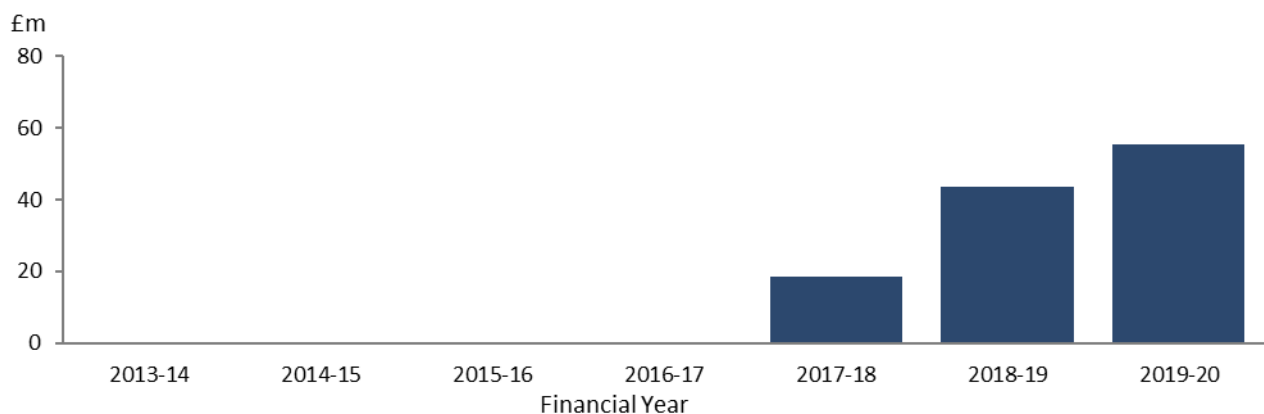
Figure 3: Total Amount Lent to Higher Education Undergraduate Loans Borrowers in Financial Years 2013-14 to 2019-20 (£ million)



The amount lent to Higher Education Undergraduate borrowers in financial year 2019-20 was £643.4 million. This was a £90.2 million increase in comparison to the previous financial year. £370.4 million in Tuition Fee loans was lent in 2019-20, 31.5% more than in 2018-19. This is a larger increase than in the previous financial year, when a further 25.8% was lent in comparison to 2017-18, partially owing to the removal of Tuition Fee Grants from Academic Year 2018/19. Of the amount lent in Tuition Fee loans in 2019-20, a total of £16.8 million was lent to EU borrowers; a £2.4 million (16.5%) increase on 2018-19. The EU increase has therefore slowed on the prior year's increase 28.6%.

£273.0 million was lent to Higher Education Undergraduate borrowers in the form of Maintenance Loans – relatively static to the previous year (+ £1.5 million / 0.5%). 2018-19 saw an increase of 3.2% with the inclusion of Part Time Maintenance Loans for the first time. The amount of Maintenance Loans paid out to Full Time borrowers decreased from the previous year by 1.1%. This change in trend can be attributed the increased Maintenance Grants now available.

Figure 4: Total Amount Lent to Higher Education Postgraduate Borrowers in Financial Years 2013-14 to 2019-20 (£ million)



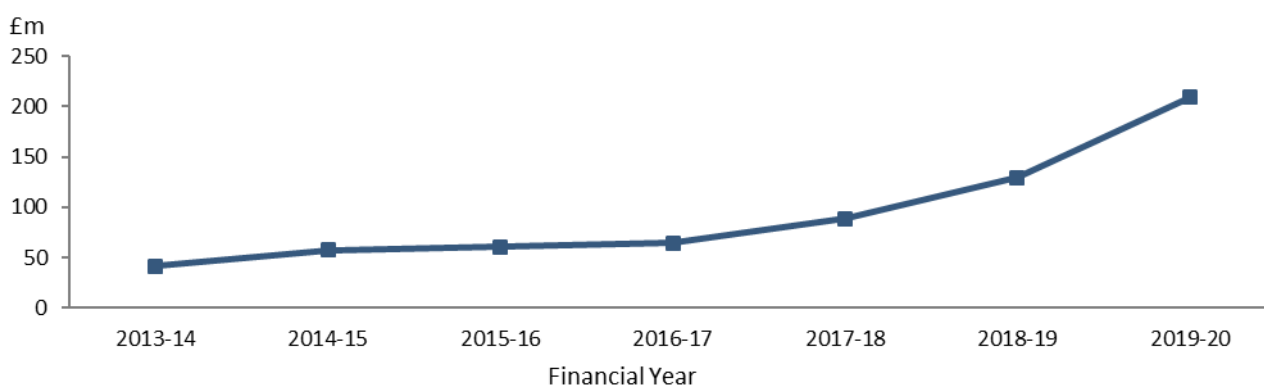
The amount lent for Higher Education Postgraduate education was £55.3 million which was a £11.7 million increase on 2018-19 (26.9%).

Interest Added to Income Contingent Loans

The interest charged on loans is dependent on the Repayment Plan Type the loans falls under. In financial year 2019-20, there were three Plans. Students who began their course prior to 1 September 2012 are on Repayment Plan 1, those who began their course on or after 1 September 2012 are on Repayment Plan 2 and students who have taken out Postgraduate loans are on Repayment Plan 3. Borrowers are able to be 'multi-Plan' should they have studied multiple courses.

£208.9 million interest added to Higher Education Loans in Financial Year 2019-20

Figure 5: Total Amount of Interest Added to Higher Education Loans in Financial Years 2013-14 to 2019-20 (£ million)



The total interest added to Higher Education loan accounts in financial year 2019-20 was £208.9 million. This was £79.4 million (61.3%) higher than in the previous financial year. By comparison, between financial years 2017-18 and 2018-19 the interest added increased by £40.8 million (46.0%).

The greater increase between 2018-19 and 2019-20 is predominantly due to '**More Frequent Data Share**' - the more readily available data provided to SLC by HMRC. This has meant that effectively, almost two years' worth of customer PAYE repayments and resulting interest calculations (those processed by SLC in both FY 2018-19 and 2019-20) being included in the 2019-20 financial year. Prior to MFDS, repayments and interest shown in a given financial year were mainly for the year before. The time series should normalise in financial year 2020-21, as this will include just one financial year of repayments information and resulting interest calculations (those processed by SLC in 2020-21).

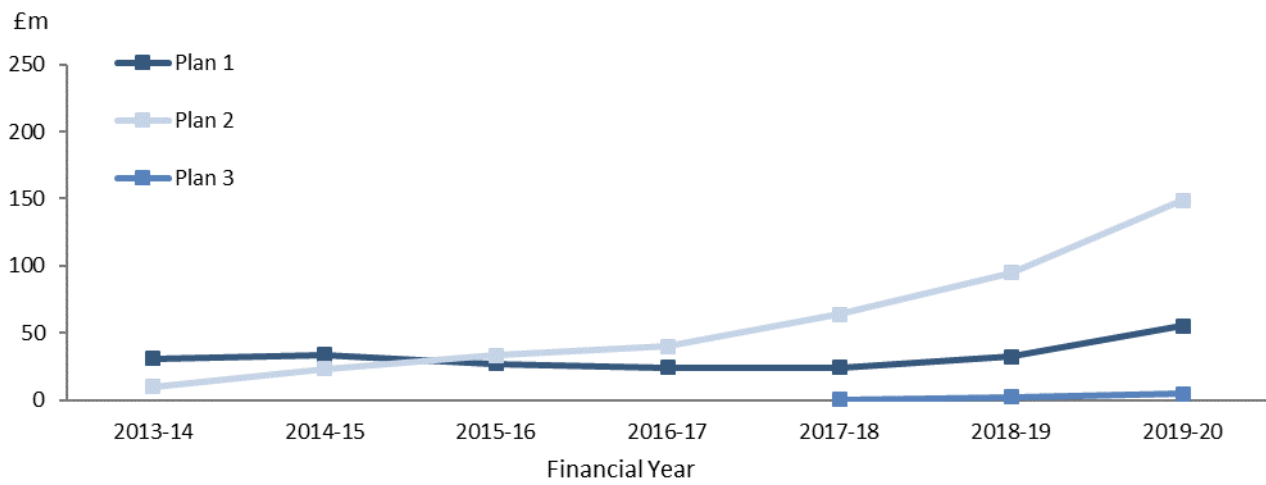
It should be noted that **this has not adversely affected the borrower's balance** and effectively brings a more up-to-date representation of loan balances at. For further detail on the effect of MFDS, please refer to the **Things You Need to Know** section of this publication.

In financial year 2019-20, total Plan 1 interest has increased at a higher rate than that of repayment Plan 2 borrowers. Plan 1 interest increased by 70.7% (£22.9 million), whereas Plan 2 interest increased by 56.8% (£53.9 million).

Contributing factors towards this are that the Plan 1 repayment threshold is considerably less than that of Plan 2 (£18,935 for Plan 1 in 2019-20 vs. £25,725 for Plan 2 in 2019-20); multi-Plan borrower's repayments are allocated to their Plan 1 balance in the first instance and that the variable part of Plan 2 interest is not reported in the year it is accrued. Plan 3 interest increased by 111.8% between financial year 2018-19 and 2019-20. This is due to the first cohort of HMRC repayment data reported by SLC.

The graph below indicates the amount of interest added by financial year, split by Repayment Plan type:

Figure 6: Total Amount of Interest Added to Higher Education Loans in Financial Years 2013-14 to 2019-20 by Repayment Plan (£ million)



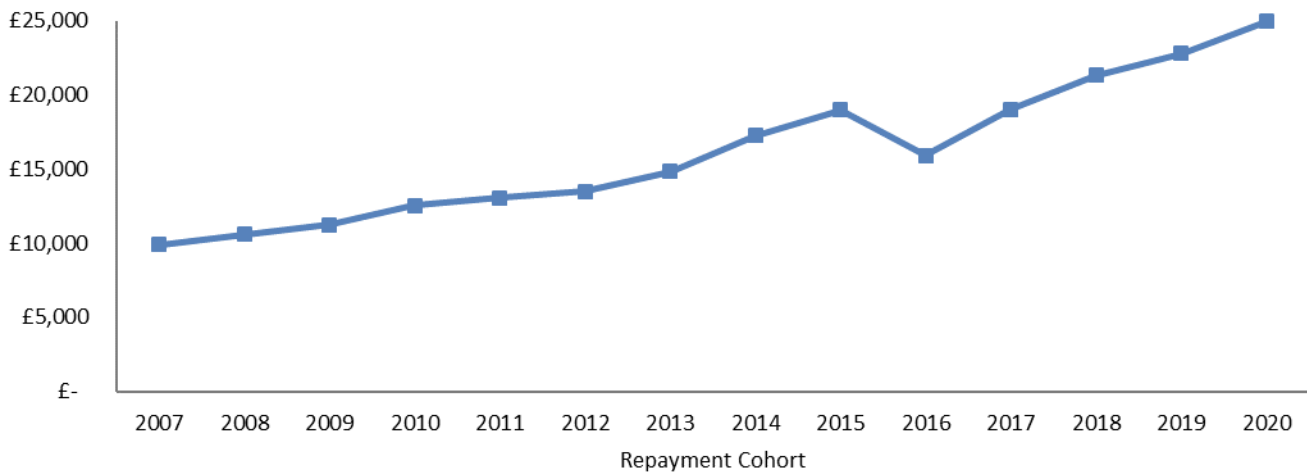
For more information on interest rates and calculations, please refer to the relevant section within **Additional Information** of this publication.

Average Income Contingent Loan Balances

This section looks at the average loan balance for borrowers at the point where their liability to repay first began (usually the April following the completion, or withdrawal from their course). The average loan balance reflects the amount paid to borrowers, plus interest added whilst they were studying, minus any voluntary repayments made by borrowers prior to them becoming liable to repay.

Average Higher Education Borrower's Loan Balance on Entry into Repayment increases to £24,960

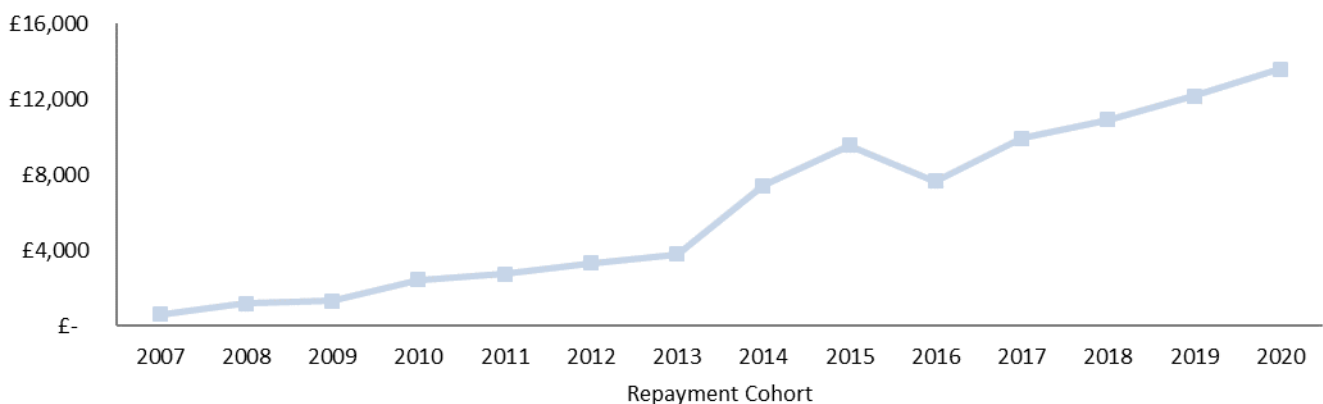
Figure 7: Average Loan Balance on Entry into Repayment by Repayment Cohort as at the beginning of the Financial Year 2020-21: Wales & EU



The average loan balance for the 2020 repayment cohort on entry to repayment was £24,960. This is a £2,180 (9.6%) increase on the previous repayment cohort (2019).

Full-time students completing three- or four-year courses are included in these averages but are diluted by other borrower types in the same repayment cohort such as those on longer or shorter courses, part time study and students that have withdrawn before completing their studies.

Figure 8: Average Loan Balance on Entry into Repayment by Repayment Cohort as at the beginning of the Financial Year 2020-21: EU Only



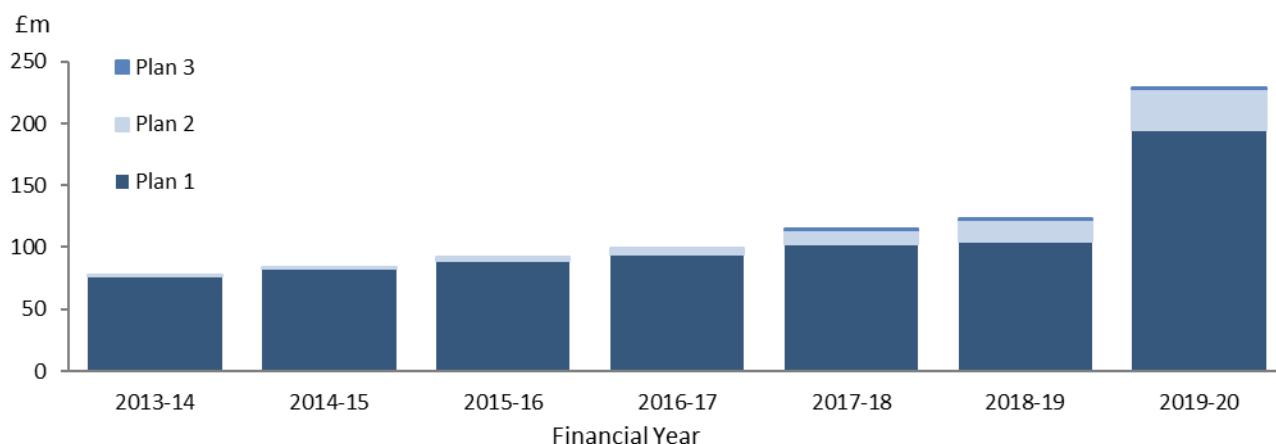
For EU borrowers, the average balance for the 2020 repayment cohort on entry to repayment increased from £12,180 to £13,590 (+11.6%). EU borrowers consistently have a lower average balance. This is predominately due to non-Wales domiciled student being entitled to Tuition Fee loans only.

Income Contingent Loan Repayments

Borrowers normally become liable to make repayments from the April following the completion, or withdrawal from their course. Repayments are either made via HMRC (either PAYE and Self-Assessment) or directly to Student Loans Company in a scheduled or voluntary basis. Repayment terms including thresholds and interest rates differ depending on the Repayment Plan type the loan falls under – further detail can be found [here](#).

Higher Education borrowers repaid £228.7 million in Financial Year 2019-20

Figure 9: Total Amount Repaid by Higher Education Borrowers in Financial Years 2013-14 to 2019-20 by Repayment Plan Type (£ million)



The amount repaid in respect of Higher Education income contingent loans totalled £228.7 million in financial year 2019-20. This was £106.6 million (87.4%) more than in the previous financial year.

This significant increase between 2018-19 and 2019-20 is predominantly due to '**More Frequent Data Share**' - the more readily available data provided by HMRC. This has meant that effectively, almost two years' worth of customer PAYE repayments and resulting interest calculations (those processed by SLC in both FY 2018-19 and 2019-20) being included in the 2019-20 financial year. Prior to MFDS, repayments shown in a given financial year were mainly for the year before. Further detail on 'More Frequent Data Share' can be found [here](#). This time series should normalise in financial year 2020-21, as this will include just one financial year of repayments information and resulting interest calculations (processed in by SLC in 2020-21).

It should be noted that this has not adversely affected the borrower's balance and effectively brings a more up-to-date representation of loan balances at this point in time.

Plan 1 (loans issued prior to Sep-12) repayments increased by £90.7 million (86.9%) to £195.2 million and Plan 2 (loans issued Post Sep-12) repayments increased by £15.1 million (87.0%) to £32.5 million. Part-time repayments more than trebled in 2019-20, from £0.2 million to £0.8 million. Plan 3 (Postgraduate) repayments more than trebled in financial year 2019-20 to £1.0 million. Along with from the effect of **MFDS**, the Plan 3 increase can be attributed to the first cohort of repayment data reported by SLC originating from HMRC. Any payments in previous financial years were made directly to Student Loans Company.

89.7% of the Higher Education repayments were received via HMRC and were made 10.3% directly to SLC (split does not take into account refunds made).

For more information on repayment plans, please refer to the **[Additional Information](#)** section.

Additional Information

Income Contingent Student Loan Repayment Plans

Repayment Plan 1 (Prior to 1 September 2012)

Repayments for Repayment Plan 1 loans are at the rate of 9% of income above the income threshold. The table below shows the change in income threshold for Plan 1 by financial year:

Period Applicable	6-Apr-00 to 5-Apr-05	6-Apr-05 to 5-Apr-12	6-Apr-12 to 5-Apr-13	6-Apr-13 to 5-Apr-14	6-Apr-14 to 5-Apr-15	6-Apr-15 to 5-Apr-16	6-Apr-16 to 5-Apr-17	6-Apr-17 to 5-Apr-18	6-Apr-18 to 5-Apr-19	6-Apr-19 to 5-Apr-20
Annual Income Threshold	£10,000	£15,000	£15,795	£16,365	£16,910	£17,335	£17,495	£17,775	£18,330	£18,935

Further details on the calculation of Plan 1 interest can be found [here](#).

Repayment Plan 2 (Post 1 September 2012)

Repayments for Repayment Plan 2 loans are at the rate of 9% of income above the income threshold. The table below shows the change in income threshold for Plan 2 by financial year:

Period Applicable	6-Apr-16 to 5-Apr-17	6-Apr-17 to 5-Apr-18	6-Apr-18 to 5-Apr-19	6-Apr-19 to 5-Apr-20
Annual Income Threshold	£21,000	£21,000	£25,000	£25,725

Borrowers normally become liable to make repayments from the April following the completion, or withdrawal from their course, however borrowers with Repayment Plan 2 loans did not first become liable to repay until April 2016 as repayments could not be taken through the tax system. Where borrowers also have an outstanding Plan 1 loan, repayments are allocated based on 9% of the difference between the Plan 1 and Plan 2 thresholds; this is irrespective of a borrower's actual income. Any repayments made prior to a borrower's Plan 2 Statutory Repayment Due Date (SRDD) will be allocated in whole to a borrower's Plan 1 loan. Further details on the calculation of Plan 2 interest can be found [here](#).

Repayment Plan 3 (Postgraduate loans)

Repayments for Repayment Plan 3 loans are at the rate of 6% of income above the income threshold. The first borrowers with Repayment Plan 3 loans became liable to repay from April 2019. The annual income threshold for 2019-20 was £21,000. Where borrowers also have an outstanding Plan 1 or Plan 2 loan, repayment of the two loans will be made concurrently, totalling 15% of earnings above the threshold (9% for the Plan 1 or Plan 2 loan, plus 6% for the Plan 3 loan). Further details on the calculation of Plan 3 interest can be found [here](#).

Repayment Plan 1 & 2 Partial Cancellation

Students who took out a Maintenance Loan from Student Finance Wales from academic year 2010/11 may receive a Partial Cancellation of up to £1,500 from the Welsh Government. The cancellation is applied on receipt of the first repayment against the loan. If a student has loans for more than one academic year the cancellation is only applied to the first year's loan.

Interest Rates and Calculations

Whilst in repayment the annual Retail Price Index (RPI) from March to March is always used as the basis for the interest rate for all types of student loan from the following September to August.

Repayment Plan 1 Loans

For Repayment Plan 1 ICR loans, the interest charge is affected by a cap at the bank base rate of +1%. The interest rate is the lower of the RPI at the preceding March, or 1% above the highest base rate of a nominated group of banks calculated regularly during the year. The interest rate does not affect the

monthly repayment amount of Income Contingent Loans; it will affect the time taken to repay. The RPI at March 2014 was 2.5% so the cap was applied from 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015 where the interest rate was 1.5%. The RPI at March 2015 was 0.9% so the cap did not apply between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016 where the interest rate was 0.9%. The table below shows interest rate by year:

Period Applicable	1-Sep-12 to 31-Aug-13	1-Sep-13 to 31-Aug-14	1-Sep-14 to 31-Aug-15	1-Sep-15 to 31-Aug-16	1-Sep-16 to 31-Aug-17	1-Sep-17 to 31-Aug-18	1-Sep-18 to 31-Aug-19	1-Sep-19 to 31-Aug-20
RPI @ March	3.6%	3.3%	2.5%	0.9%	1.6%	3.1%	3.3%	2.4%
Plan 1 - Interest Rate	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	0.9%	1.25%	1.5%	1.75%	1.75%

Repayment Plan 2 Loans

The Repayment Plan 2 interest charge is set each year from 30 September to 31 August. The interest rate whilst studying is RPI +3% and remains so up until the borrower's Statutory Repayment Due Date (SRDD) April following the completion, or withdrawal from their course. Once borrowers are due to repay, interest will be variable and income contingent.

A Variable Interest Rate (VIR) is an interest rate dependent upon the borrower's earnings once they become liable to repay. It was a system introduced for loans taken out by Wales and England-funded entrants from 2012/13 onwards. The interest rates are based on the UK Retail Price Index (RPI) plus the VIR and are added to the amount owed from the day of first payment until the loan is repaid in full. The RPI part of the interest rate is updated once a year in September, using the RPI from March of that year. Until the SRDD is reached the VIR part of the interest is 3%. The earliest SRDD for Plan 2 loans was April 2016 so the first financial year where the interest actually started varying was 2016-17.

The table below shows the maximum interest rates for this Plan by year:

Period Applicable	1-Sep-12 to 31-Aug-13	1-Sep-13 to 31-Aug-14	1-Sep-14 to 31-Aug-15	1-Sep-15 to 31-Aug-16	1-Sep-16 to 31-Aug-17	1-Sep-17 to 31-Aug-18	1-Sep-18 to 31-Aug-19	1-Sep-19 to 31-Aug-20
RPI @ March	3.6%	3.3%	2.5%	0.9%	1.6%	3.1%	3.3%	2.4%
Plan 2 - Max. Interest Rate	6.6%	6.3%	5.5%	3.9%	4.6%	6.1%	6.3%	5.4%

Those earning £25,000 or less were charged at the rate of inflation (RPI), interest rates for those earning between £25,000 and £41,000 will be on a sliding scale from RPI to RPI +3%; and those earning £41,000 or more will accrue interest at RPI +3%.

Borrowers who do not respond to requests for information or evidence become 'Non-Compliant' and incur the highest interest rates of RPI +3% irrespective of income, until all required information is received. The table below indicates the % of Plan 2 borrowers incurring the variable part of the interest in force at the end of financial year 2018-19:

Tax Year Ending	Variable Part of Interest Rate Incurred (Plan 2 Only)					Of those incurring 3%	
	0%	0.01 - 0.99%	1.00 - 1.99%	2.00 - 2.99%	3%	Compliant	Non-Compliant
2018-19	80.0%	12.7%	4.4%	1.4%	1.6%	49.9%	50.1%

The majority of Plan 2 borrowers in financial year 2018-19 earned less than the Plan 2 earnings threshold of £25,000 per year and so incurred an interest rate of RPI + 0%.

Repayment Plan 3 Loans (Wales & England only)

The Repayment Plan 3 interest charge is also set each year from 30 September to 31 August. The interest rate whilst studying is RPI +3% and remains so throughout repayment.

The table overleaf shows the interest rates for this Plan by year:

Period Applicable	1-Sep-12 to 31-Aug-13	1-Sep-13 to 31-Aug-14	1-Sep-14 to 31-Aug-15	1-Sep-15 to 31-Aug-16	1-Sep-16 to 31-Aug-17	1-Sep-17 to 31-Aug-18	1-Sep-18 to 31-Aug-19	1-Sep-19 to 31-Aug-20
RPI @ March	3.6%	3.3%	2.5%	0.9%	1.6%	3.1%	3.3%	2.4%
Plan 3 - Interest Rate	6.6%	6.3%	5.5%	3.9%	4.6%	6.1%	6.3%	5.4%

Office for National Statistics decision on Student Loans

In December 2018 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reached a decision to partition UK student loans into lending (government assets) and expenditure (government spending) on the Government accounts. Up until this point they had been classed entirely as lending. This decision was implemented in September 2019.

This decision was based on the fact that repayments associated with ICR loans, are conditional on a borrower’s future income, and under certain conditions the loan obligation itself may be cancelled. These cancellation conditions are reported on Table 1 and 2 of this publication.

It has been calculated that the treatment of student loans in this manner will better reflect the government’s financial position. Government revenue will no longer include interest accrued that will never be paid due to the conditional nature of ICR repayments. Government expenditure related to the cancellation of student loans is also accounted for in the periods that loans are issued, rather than decades afterwards. The ONS decision on student loans has no effect on the figures produced within this publication. Further information on the ONS decision and the methodology used to partition student loans can be found on the [ONS website](#).

Data Sources

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

Data Quality

SLC 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.

Revisions and estimates

Revisions within the data are denoted with an [r]. Further details can be found on our [revisions policy](#). In previous years we have had to mark the figures relating to self-assessment repayment as estimated [e] due to this being provided later than anticipated. For both 2018-19 and 2019-20, this was provided as expected allowing this to be included as final 2018-19 and 2019-20 figures.

Related Statistics Publications

SLC publish statistics on the repayment of Student Loans for Higher Education for England, Northern Ireland and Scotland as part of the same series this publication belongs to. These are published at the same time as part of the series **Student Loans for Higher and Further Education**. SLC also publish statistics Higher Education Funding in the series **Student Support for Higher Education**. The **latest release** of this series was published on the 21 November 2019 covering Academic Year 2018/19.

The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) 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 29 October 2019 covering Academic Session 2018/19.

The Welsh Government also publish statistics on student finance. These are held on a designated **website**.

Notes on Policy

The statistics on student loans in this release were compiled by the Student Loans Company (SLC). They include public sector loans only, which are repaid on an Income Contingent basis. Responsibility for the Income Contingent Loan balance was transferred to the Welsh Government in 2006.

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 was awarded National Statistics status in October 2011 following a full assessment against the Code of Practice, which can be found on the Statistics Authority **website**. Tables 3, 4 and 5 were awarded National Statistics status in April 2014 having initially been assessed as a separate publication, which can also be found on the **website**. These tables were subsequently merged into this publication.

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:

- **Postgraduate Loans** - An additional breakdown for Plan 3 postgraduate loans has been added, as loan payments have been made to borrowers in this education sector from September 2016
- **Direct repayments** – From 2017 onwards we have included tables to show borrower numbers for borrowers repaying directly to SLC. In 2018 we disaggregated these tables further to show borrower numbers for those making scheduled and voluntary payments.

Definitions

Account repaid in full	The borrower has repaid the account in full without it being cancelled or written off. It includes accounts with trivial balance write-offs. Also includes accounts closed under the Repayment of Teacher Loans (RTL) Scheme.
Balance transfers	Transfers which can occur between different portfolios of loans.
Cancelled loan	The borrower no longer has any liability to repay as provided for in the loan's regulations. A borrower's liability shall be cancelled: On the death of the borrower; On reaching the age cancellation criteria for their loan (age 65 or after 25 or 30 years depending on the type of loan and year taken out); or If borrower is in receipt of a disability related benefit and permanently unfit for work.
EU Borrower	A borrower who was originally domiciled in an EU country prior to entering higher education in Wales. Such borrowers are eligible from academic year 2006/07 and for Tuition Fee Loan only.
In Arrears	Borrowers who have at least one loan on which repayments are overdue. Arrears arise when a borrower moves overseas and fails to repay SLC according to their repayment schedule. Additionally, any borrower who moves overseas and fails to provide the information required to agree the appropriate repayment schedule will also be placed in arrears.
Income Contingent Loan	Also known as Income Contingent Repayment (ICR) Loan. Introduced in 1998, repayment is 9% of income above the income threshold. Includes ICR Maintenance Loans, Tuition Fee Loans, Hardship Loans and part-time loans. Hardship Loans and part-time loans ceased to be issued after 2003/04.
Income Threshold	The income level at which borrowers liable to repay will make repayments. In the case of repayments deducted by employers under Pay As You Earn (PAYE) the term "earnings threshold" is also used.
Liable to repay	The borrower has reached their Statutory Repayment Due Date (SRDD). See definition of SRDD.
Losses through phishing	Losses through phishing are write offs for loan payments re-directed by a fraudster that would otherwise have gone to a student. Phishing is a fraudulent attempt to obtain from customers information such as usernames, passwords and bank details by masquerading as a reliable entity in an electronic communication such as e-mail or instant messaging. If a student responds to the phishing email, payments that would otherwise go to that student may be redirected by the fraudster.
Maintenance Loan	Maintenance loans are loans to cover living costs.
New borrowers	Borrowers who had no loans at the beginning of the financial year and took out new loans during the financial year.

No live employment at Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC)	Borrowers in the UK tax system where HMRC does not have a record of any current employment when the data cut is taken for these statistics and SLC does not yet have information to determine an alternative status.
Overdue Debt	That part of the Loan Balance that is overdue for those borrowers who are in arrears.
Partial Cancellation	Partial cancellation is a policy introduced by the Welsh Government for students receiving Maintenance Loans in 2010/11 or after, whereby a cancellation of up to £1,500 may be applied on receipt of the first repayment against the first of those loans.
Postgraduate Loan	Postgraduate loans are loans towards tuition and living costs.
Refunds of Income Contingent Repayments	Where over-repayment is identified, a refund is provided to the borrower by SLC.
Repayment Cohort	A borrower is placed in a single repayment cohort. In some circumstances the repayment cohort may change, i.e. withdrawal from course of study. The repayment cohort is based on the year of the earliest Statutory Repayment Due Date (SRDD). See definition of SRDD below.
Repayment Plan	From 1 September 2012, the ICR Loan scheme has been separated into two different repayment arrangements called Repayment Plan 1 and Repayment Plan 2. They differ in the earnings threshold used to trigger repayment and the interest rate applied to outstanding balances. Repayment Plan 1 is applicable to students who started their course before 1 September 2012 while Repayment Plan 2 is applicable to students who started their course from 1 September 2012 onwards.
Statutory Repayment Due Date (SRDD)	The point a borrower becomes liable to begin repaying a loan, the April after graduating or otherwise leaving their course. After the SRDD borrowers are required to make repayments if their income is above the threshold.
Tuition Fee Loan	Tuition Fee Loans are loans to cover all or part of the cost of tuition. They are paid directly to the Learning Provider.
Written off loan	The borrower remains liable to repay but recovery is deemed unlikely by the loan administrator or not possible by legal judgement.