

SLC SP06/2021

25 November 2021

Coverage: Wales

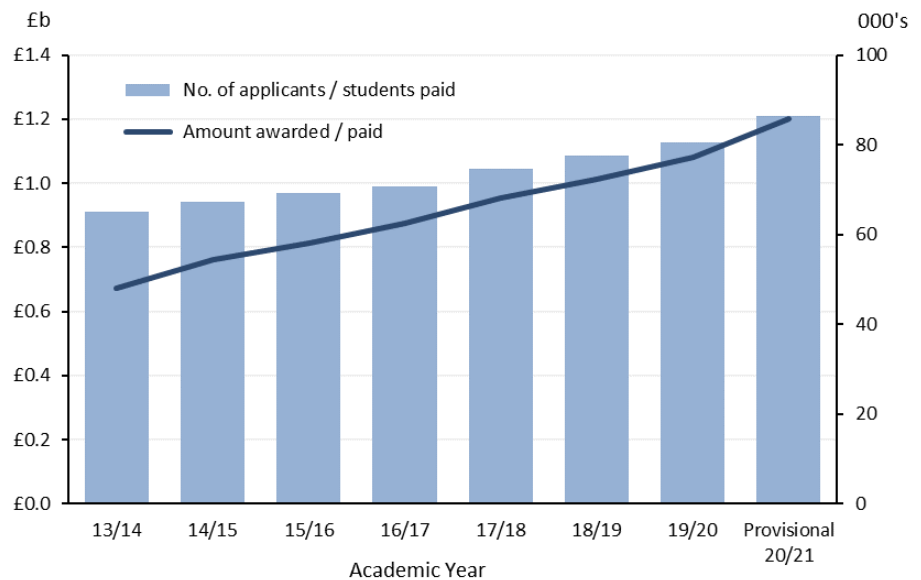
Theme: Children, Education  
and Skills

# Student Support for Higher Education in Wales 2021:

2020/21 full year and 2021/22 early in year

**Higher education student support increased by 11.2% to £1.2 billion for academic year 2020/21**

Figure 1: Number of students domiciled in Wales and EU (outside UK) receiving higher education support and amount awarded / paid



**Issued by:**

The Student Loans Company  
100 Bothwell Street  
Glasgow  
G2 7JD

**Press Office:**

✉: [press\\_office@slc.co.uk](mailto:press_office@slc.co.uk)

**Lead official for statistics:**

Louise Miller  
✉: [enterprise\\_data\\_analytics@slc.co.uk](mailto:enterprise_data_analytics@slc.co.uk)

**Online: SLC Statistics**

The amount paid out and awarded in supporting full-time, part-time and postgraduate higher education students was £1.2 billion in academic year 2020/21, up 11.2% from £1.1 billion in 2019/20. See Table 2

The number of students paid / awarded funding increased to 86,300 students, up 7.1% from 80,600 in academic year 2019/20.

Since academic year 2013/14, the amount paid / awarded in higher education funding has increased by 78.7%, from £671.6 million whilst the number of students paid / awarded has increased by 32.8%, from 65,000.

In the final year of available funding, the number of EU (outside UK) domiciled students decreased by 2.8% to 2,900 and the amount paid out by 1.6% down to £26.4 million.

## Table of contents

Introduction	3
What can you use these statistics for?	3
Things you need to know	3
Undergraduate Maintenance Loans	4
Welsh Government Learning Grant	6
Undergraduate Tuition Fee Loans	8
Postgraduate loans & grants	10
Disabled Students' Allowance	12
Early in year overview - Academic year 2020/21	13
Additional information	17

## 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 eight academic years up to and including 2020/21. Section 7 gives a high-level, early indication of academic year 2021/22 figures, along with any emerging trends of new policy products.

The publication covers applicants and students domiciled in Wales 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 Wales.

## 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 2020/21, along with an early view of academic year 2021/22.

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 Wales over the course of each academic year. This is effectively what is paid in regard to Maintenance Loans, Tuition Fee Loans, postgraduate loans and targeted support such as Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

Awards differ from payments as they refer to the amount which will be paid if the applicant's attendance is confirmed 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).

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

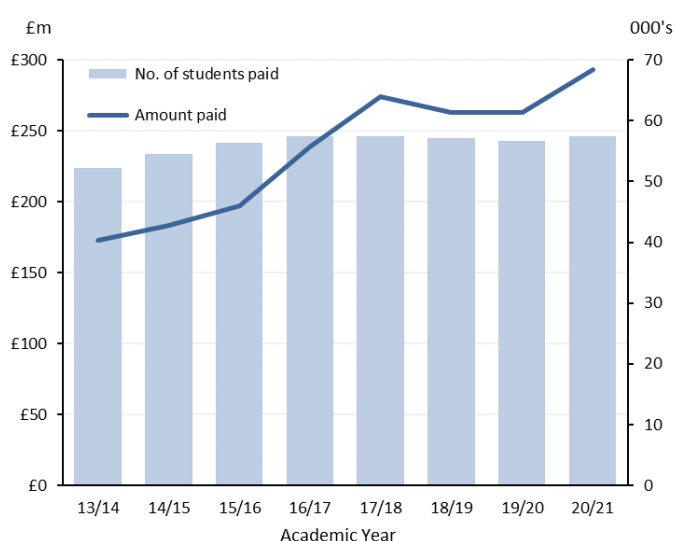
For all new types of support an early indication of what has been paid / awarded two months into the latest academic year (in this publication, 2021/22) is provided in section 7 of the tables. The number of payments / awards made will change markedly between this point and the end of the academic year as current students will receive further payments and additional students apply for student support.

## 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 or part-time basis. The amount awarded is dependent on household residual income.

### Significant increase in total amount of Maintenance Loan paid out, due to increased maximum maintenance loan available for academic year 2020/21

Figure 2: Number of students domiciled in Wales receiving full-time Maintenance Loans and amount paid



The number of students in receipt of a Maintenance Loan increased by 1.4% in academic year 2020/21, from 56,600 to 57,400. This is the first increase since 2016/17. See Table 3A (i)

The total amount paid out in Maintenance Loans has increased by a significant 11.5% in comparison the previous academic year; from £263.2 million to £293.4 million.

This can be attributed to the increase in the maximum maintenance loan available in comparison to academic year 2019/20.

The amount available to post-2018/19 students increased by 7.1% (from £8,225 to £8,810 for the 'Elsewhere' rate).

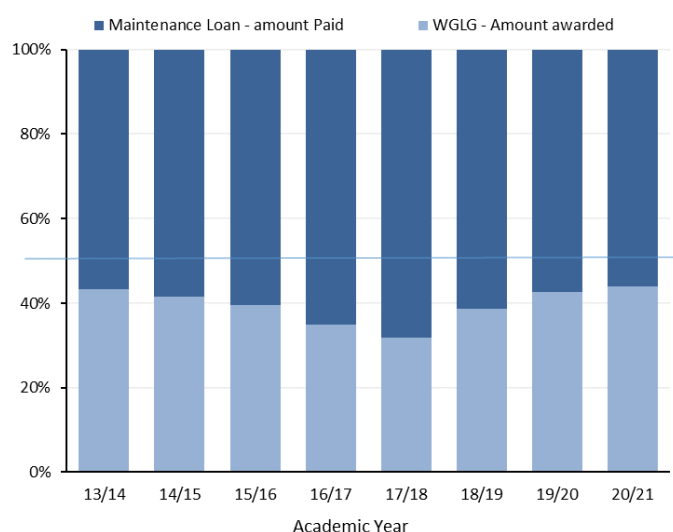
Figure 3 indicates Maintenance Loan payments and Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG) awards as a percentage of the full maintenance package paid / awarded to full-time students.

The % attributed to Maintenance Loans peaked in 2017/18 at 68.2% and has since reduced, year-on-year to 56.0% in academic year 2020/21.

The increasing % attributed to WGLG awards is as a result of a Welsh student funding review which stated that from academic year 2018/19, a minimum amount of £1,000 of WGLG was awarded to every new full-time student, regardless of their household residual income.

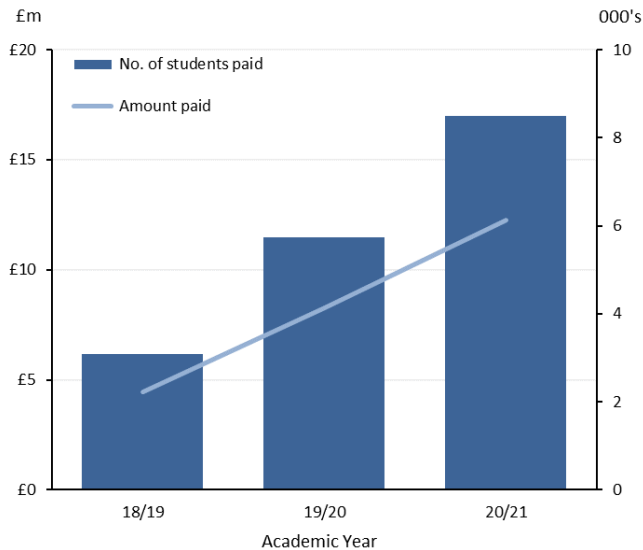
For more information, please see page 6.

Figure 3: Percentage of full-time total maintenance package for students domiciled in Wales by product



## Third year of the availability of Maintenance Loans for part-time students sees a continued significant increase in take-up

Figure 4: Number of students domiciled in Wales receiving part-time Maintenance Loans and amount paid



Maintenance Loans for part-time higher education students were introduced for new students domiciled in Wales in academic year 2018/19.

Combined with the part-time Welsh Government Learning Grants, this formed the 2020/21 maintenance package for Welsh part-time students - up to a maximum of £5,433.75.

In academic year 2020/21, 8,500 part-time students were in receipt of a Maintenance Loan. *See Table 5A*

This was a 47.9% increase from the 5,700 in 2019/20. In comparison to the first year of availability, this is an additional 175.7% (+ 5,400).

The total amount paid out increased by 47.9% from £8.3 million in 2019/20 to £12.2 million in academic year 2020/21. In comparison to the first year of availability, this is an additional £7.8 million (+ 174.2%).

It is typical for new student support products to show this level of uplift in their third year, as they increase in popularity.

# Welsh Government Learning Grant

The Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG) is funding to help with day-to-day costs, such as rent or food, whilst studying. WGLG's are available to both full-time and part-time higher education students studying at an eligible higher education provider and are studying an eligible undergraduate, initial teacher training or postgraduate certificate of education. The amount awarded is dependent on household residual income and is a non-repayable grant. Students can take both WGLG and a Maintenance Loan as a combined maintenance package to cover living expenses.

## Increase in students awarded full-time Welsh Government Learning Grant continues in third year of £1,000 minimum award

Figure 5: Number of students domiciled in Wales receiving full-time Welsh Government Learning Grant and amount paid

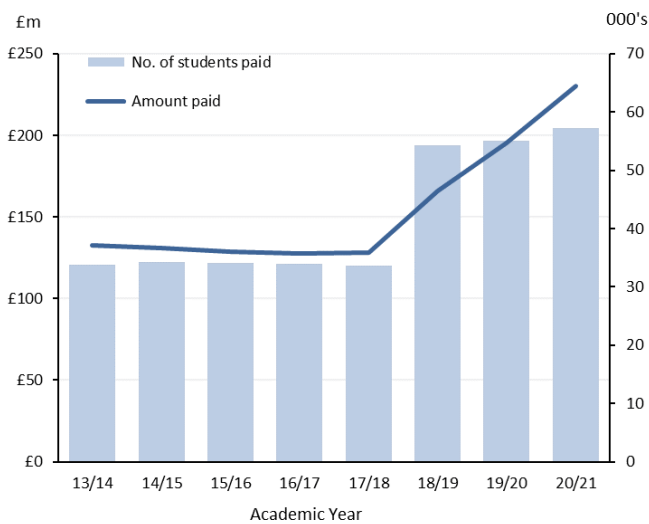
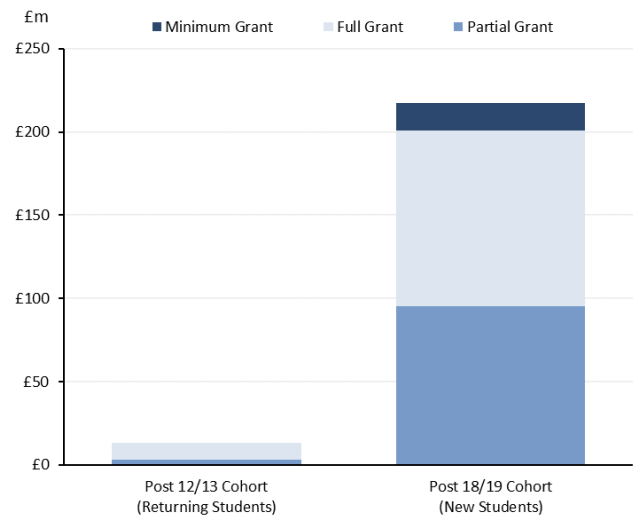


Figure 6: Amount paid in Welsh Government Learning Grant in academic year 2020/21 by level of level of grant support



As a result of the Diamond review of Welsh student funding, from academic year 2018/19, a minimum amount of £1,000 in Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG) was awarded to every new full-time student, regardless of their household residual income.

This change in policy caused a significant increase in take-up in its first year (+ 61.4%) with 54,400 grants paid out to full-time students. In academic year 2020/21, the number of grants paid increased to 57,200 (+ 3.9%) in comparison to the previous academic year. In the first year of the policy change, the amount paid out increased by 29.7% to £165.9 million. In academic year 2020/21, this increased by 18.0% to £230.4 million in comparison to 2019/20. *Table 4A*

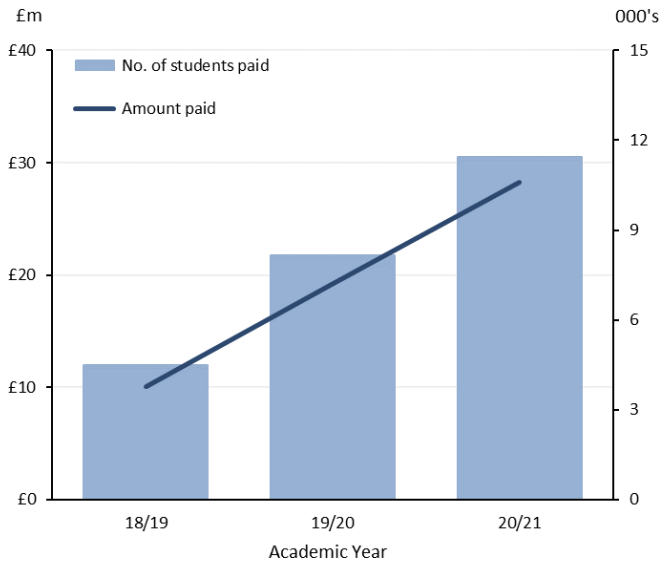
Prior to the review, in academic year 2017/18 the 'nil' (eligible but not entitled) category students made up more than one third of full-time WGLG population. The 'minimum' category – receiving £1,000 in 2020/21 made up 32% of the population. This bracket amounted to a total of £16.3 million, 7.5% of the amount paid out for post 2018/19 cohort students (new students in 2018/19 onwards) in 2020/21 and 7.1% of all students paid (all cohorts).

When comparing figures to pre-Diamond review levels, it is evident that numbers of full-time awards have increased by 62.9% and the amount awarded by 80.1%.

For more information on the Diamond Review, please see [here](#).

## Substantial increase in Welsh Government Learning Grants for part-time students continues in third year of availability

Figure 7: Number of students domiciled in Wales receiving part-time Welsh Government Learning Grant and amount paid



Academic year 2020/21 was the third year in which Welsh Government Learning Grants (WGLG) were available to new higher education part-time students domiciled in Wales.

The maximum amount a student could be awarded in 2020/21 was £4,500.

This, combined with the part-time Maintenance Loan, formed a maximum maintenance support offering of £5,433.75.

As with the full-time WGLG, the amount awarded is dependent on household residual income and course intensity.

In the first year of the part-time WGLG (academic year 2018/19), 4,500 students were awarded the grant, in the sum of £10.0 million. By academic year 2020/21, numbers had increased to 11,400 students and the total awarded to £28.3 million. *See Table 5B*

In comparison to the previous academic year (2019/20), an additional 40.5% students (+ 3,300) were awarded grants in academic year 2020/21 and an additional 47.2% (+ £9.1 million) was awarded.

## 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 residual income.

### Tuition Fee Loans reach 95% of the tuition fee support package as the remaining eligible Tuition Fee Grant students conclude their studies

Figure 8: Number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of full-time Wales and EU (outside UK) domiciled students and amount paid

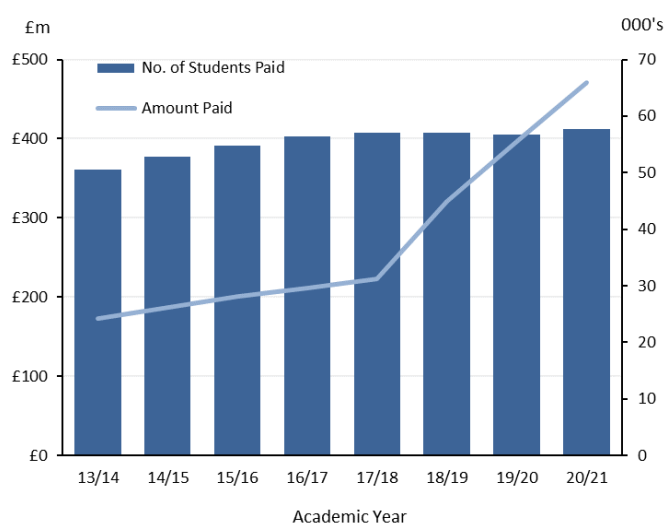
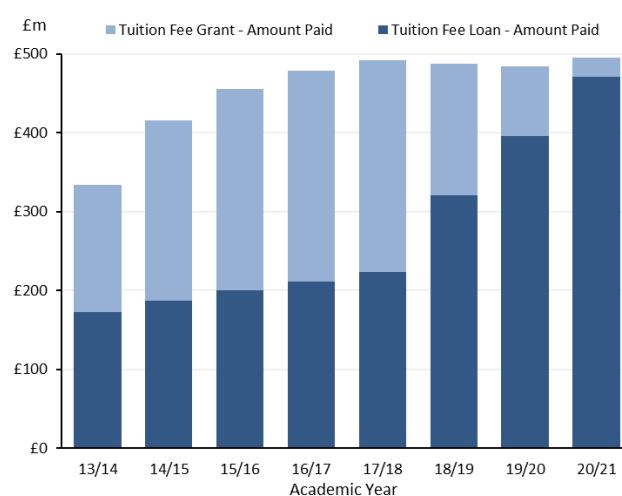


Figure 9: Amount paid in full-time tuition fee support split by Tuition Fee Loan and Tuition Fee Grant



In academic year 2020/21 the total amount paid out on behalf of full-time undergraduates in the form of Tuition Fee Loans increased by 18.8% from £396.1 million in 2019/20 to £470.8 million. See *Table 3B (i)*

The number of loans paid however has remained relatively constant (+ 1.6%) at 57,700.

Although the overall sum paid in tuition fee support for full-time courses remains constant, this is now made up of a far higher percentage of loans than grants in comparison to previous academic years.

Prior to the Diamond Review in academic year 2017/18, Tuition Fee Loans made up just 45% of the total tuition fee package (55% attributed to grants). By 2020/21, this had increased to 95% loans as new students in the final year of the availability of the grant, on a four-year or less study period would have now completed their studies. See *Table 4D*

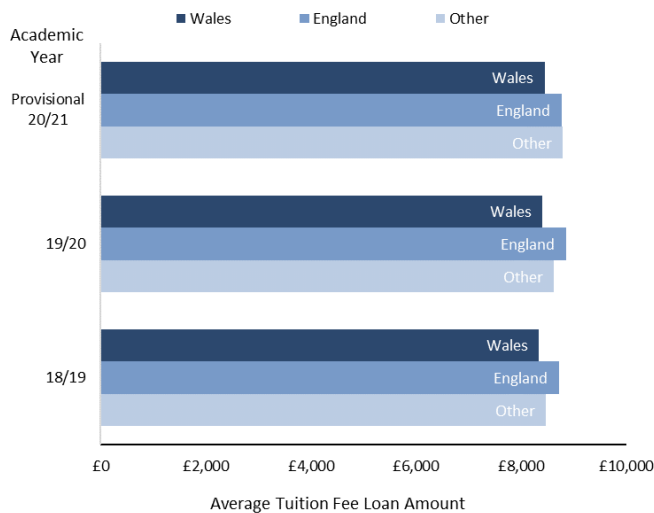
The average full-time Tuition Fee Loan paid on behalf of a Wales domiciled student increased from £7,000 to £8,180 (+ 16.9%) in academic year 2020/21. This is as a result of a larger proportion of the student population being from the 2018 cohort who are not eligible for Tuition Fee.

The increase in amount paid has driven the increase in the average amount. See *Table 2*



## Continued increase in overall average Tuition Fee Loan paid driven by Tuition Fee Grant discontinuation

Figure 10: Average full-time Tuition Fee Loans funded by Student Finance Wales by country of study (Post 2018/19 entry cohort funding)



The average amount paid in full-time undergraduate Tuition Fee Loans differs dependent on the country and type of provider that the student chooses to study in. This is due to differing amounts that each country / provider type in the UK charge for tuition fees.

The average amounts across all countries of study increased from £6,980 to £8,160 in academic year 2020/21 (+ 16.9%). See Table 3C(i).

The removal of Tuition Fee Grants from academic year 2018/19 has caused a significant increase in the amount paid out in loans (+ 18.8%).

Wales-domiciled students studying in Wales who entered under the academic year 2020/21 funding rules continued to have the lowest average loan amount (£8,450). Provisional figures for 2020/21 indicate that the highest average can be attributed to 'Other' (£8,790) - this includes Wales-domiciled students studying in either Northern Ireland and Scotland.

## Steady increase in part-time Tuition Fee Loan uptake for third year-running

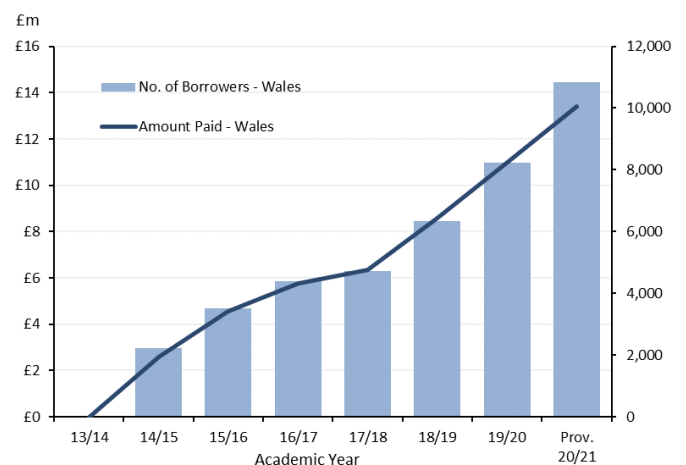
The number of students accessing part-time Tuition Fee Loans increased from 8,200 to 10,800 (+ 31.9%) in academic year 2020/21. See Table 5A

This increase in comparison to 2019/20 is due to an additional 2,600 entrants engaging in part-time Open University courses in academic year 2020/21.

The total amount paid out totalled £13.4 million, up 22.0% on the £11.0 million paid out in the previous academic year.

This could be as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting some employment sectors and/or encouraging remote-learning due to temporary provider closures; plus the discontinuation of part-time Tuition Fee Grants.

Figure 11: Number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of part-time Wales and EU (outside UK) domiciled students and amount paid

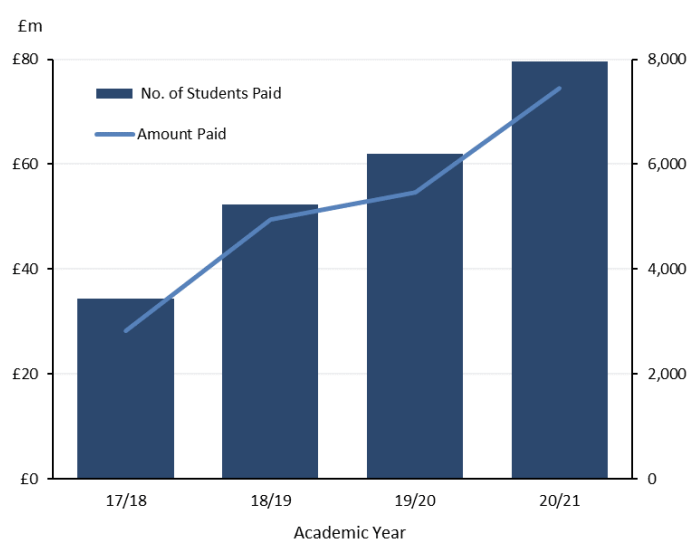


## Postgraduate loans & grants

A Postgraduate Master's or Doctoral 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 residual 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. From academic year 2019/20, Postgraduate Master's students are also entitled to a means-tested grant.

### Significant increase in take-up of Postgraduate Master's Loans in academic year 2020/21

Figure 12: Number of students domiciled in Wales and EU (outside UK) receiving Postgraduate Master's loans



Academic year 2020/21 saw a 28.4% increase in the number of students taking out a Postgraduate Master's Loan in comparison to the previous year (+ 8,000). This is notably higher than the 18.4% increase seen in 2019/20. See *Table 6A (i)*

The amount paid out has similarly increased by 36.4% (+ £19.9 million). This is significantly higher than the 10.3% seen in the previous year.

This could be as a result of perceived reduced employment availability due to the COVID-19 pandemic, encouraging either undergraduates to continue to postgraduate level, or non-students to return to study.

The average loan paid to a Welsh-domiciled student increased by 6.3% (to £9,290) and the average paid to an EU (outside UK)-domiciled student increased by 3.1% to £11,290. See *Table 2*

### Second year of the Postgraduate Master's Grants, introduced for academic year 2019/20

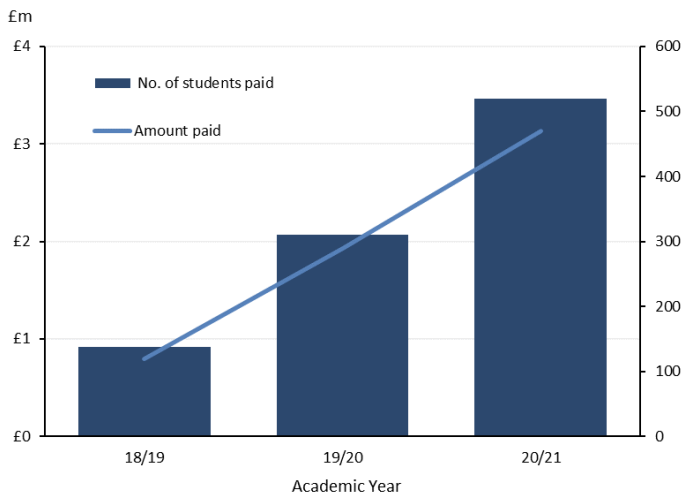
From 1 August 2019, students ordinarily resident in Wales and those from the EU (outside UK) studying at a Welsh institution have been entitled to a combination of loan and grant as a contribution to costs, for completing a postgraduate master's degree course. A maximum means-tested contribution to costs grant of £6,885 was made available to eligible postgraduate master's students. As with the Welsh Government Learning Grant for undergraduate students, there is a £1,000 non-means-tested contribution to costs grant available to all eligible students.

In the grant's first year, 5,300 postgraduate master's students were awarded. In academic year 2020/21, this increased by 53.2% to 8,200. A total of £18.8 million was awarded in academic year 2019/20 - in 2020/21, this increased to £26.7 million (+ 42.1%). See *Table 6D*

The average grant awarded to a Welsh-domiciled student decreased by 7.9% (to £3,260) whereas the average awarded to an EU (outside UK)-domiciled student increased by 10.1% to £3,480. See *Table 2*

## Third year of Postgraduate Doctoral Loans available to SFW students sees continued increase in take-up

Figure 13: Number of students domiciled in Wales and EU (outside UK) receiving Postgraduate Doctoral Loans and amount paid



In academic year 2018/19, Postgraduate Doctoral Loans were made available to both Wales and EU (outside EU) domiciled students who commenced an eligible doctoral degree.

Students must be undertaking a full Level 8 doctoral course which must last between three and eight academic years. These loans are paid directly to the student and can be used for both tuition and / or maintenance costs.

Eligible students apply for the loan amount they will require for the entire duration of their course (up to a maximum of £26,445 in academic year 2020/21 regulations) and also provide an estimate of the number of years in which they will study (this can change at any time). Each academic year's instalment is capped at a maximum rate (£11,222 for 2020/21 applicants).

The number of doctoral students in receipt of Postgraduate Doctoral Loans has increased to 520 in academic year 2020/21. This is a 67.7% increase on the 310 students recorded in academic year 2019/20. See Table 6B

In the first year of Postgraduate Doctoral Loans, £0.8 million was paid out to doctoral students to support their tuition and / or maintenance costs. By academic year 2020/21, this had increased to £3.1 million. This is a 62.7% increase on the £1.9 million paid out in academic year 2019/20.

## Disabled Students' Allowance

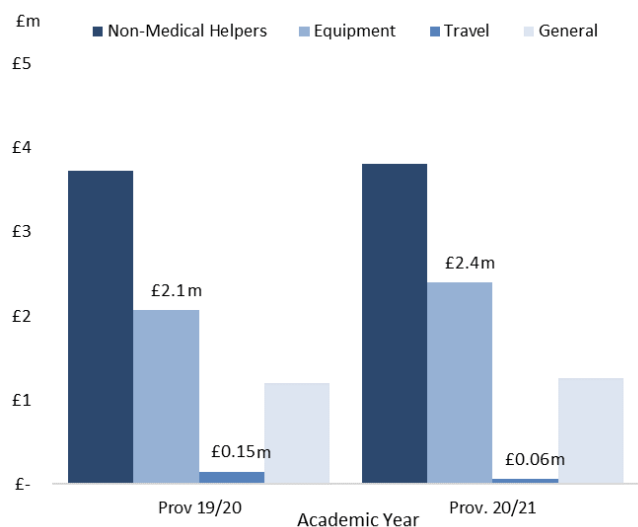
Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is an additional part of the student finance package and helps pay for extra costs a student might incur in higher education as a direct result of their disability. This includes long-term health conditions, mental health difficulties, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia etc. The allowance is non repayable and does not depend on household income. The individual's condition must meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2010. Generally, Disabled Students' Allowance is 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 of DSA 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.

The total number of claimants receiving full-time Disabled Students' Allowance for the 2019/20 academic year increased by 1.6% to 3,600, in comparison to the previous academic year. Despite this, the amount paid out decreased by 4.2% (to £8.0 million). See Table 4B

### Increase in 'Equipment' spend, offset by decrease in 'Travel' spend for full-time undergraduate Disabled Students' Allowance in academic year 2020/21

Figure 14: Amount of DSA paid on behalf of full-time students by category and academic year (provisional)



As at 31 August 2021, a total of £7.5 million has been paid for academic year 2020/21 for full-time students. This is 5.4% higher than the £7.1 million paid by the same point for 2019/20.

This provisional position for 2020/21 shows that 'Travel' payments are 57.2% lower than the same point for 2019/20.

This may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, as most charges to this category would be for private hire vehicles to and from the higher education provider, of which the majority were operating via remote-learning.

The total paid out in regard to 'Equipment' is 15.6% higher than at the same point for the previous academic year.

This may again be attributed to the continued disruption at higher education providers, owing to the pandemic resulting in more home-based learning and therefore reduced access to provider-based equipment.

In terms of the numbers claiming these categories of DSA support, 'Travel' claimants reduced by 50 claimants to 45 (- 52.6%). 'Equipment' claimants increased by 120, to 1,700 (+ 7.7%).

The number claiming any category of DSA for academic year 2020/21 is 100 higher than at the same point for the 2019/20 academic year (+ 2.4%) at 3,600.

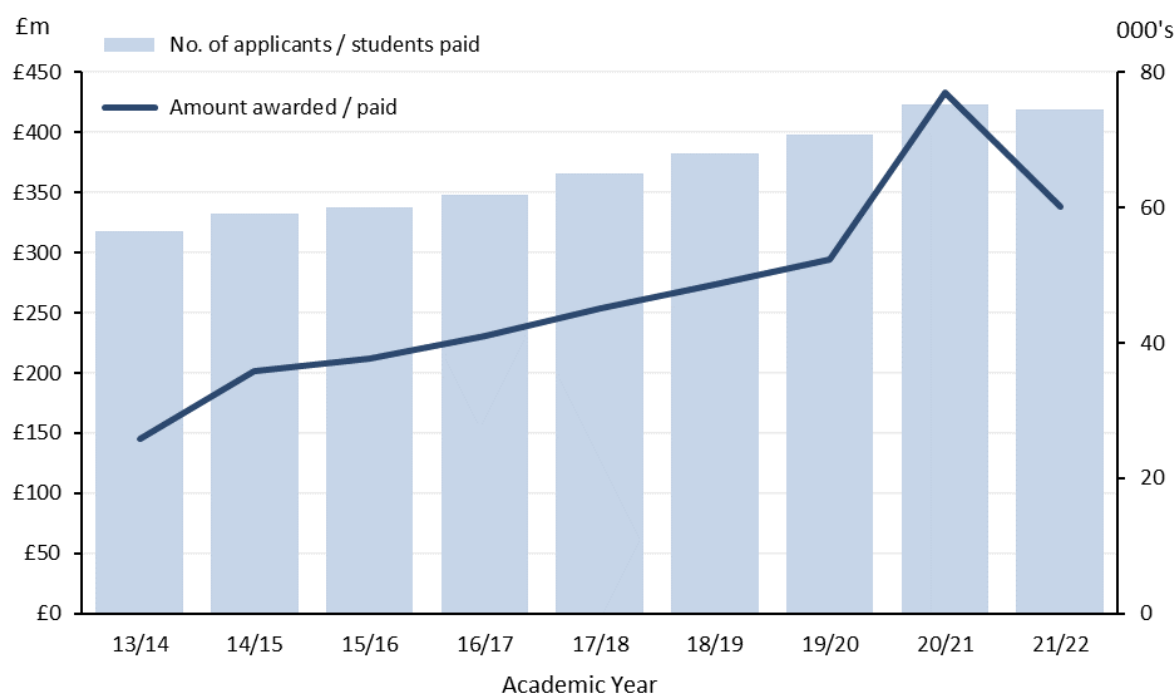
## Early in year overview – academic year 2021/22

Table 7C (i) shows an early view of academic year 2021/22 at effective date 31 October 2021. This would be approximately two months into a typical academic year.

These figures will be near-finalised in Table 2 of the publication due to be released in November 2022.

### By end-October 2021, a total of 74,500 undergraduate and postgraduate students have been paid / awarded a total of £338.0 million for AY 2021/22

Figure 15. Early in year - number of undergraduate and postgraduate students awarded / paid and amount awarded / paid



In comparison to the same point in the 2020/21 academic year, the number of students awarded / paid student finance has remained relatively constant (- 1.0%). In contrast, the amount paid / awarded has decreased by 22.0%.

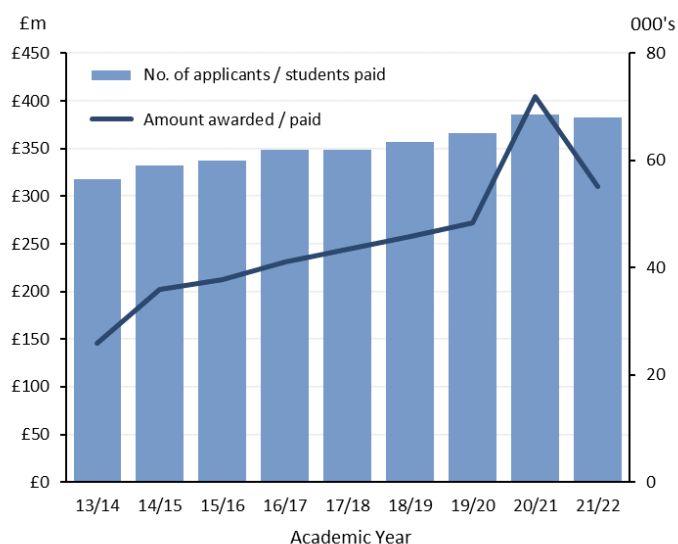
This significant decrease between this point in time in academic year 2020/21 and the same point in 2021/22 can predominantly be attributed to the early payment of the second instalment of undergraduate tuition fees payments made to higher education (HE) providers for the 2020/21 academic year. In October 2020, two payments were made instead of the second being made in February 2021.

As a result, variances in amounts awarded / paid for undergraduates are less representative in comparison to previous years.

For more information on factors affecting 2020/21 early-in-year figures, please see the **Additional Information** section of this document.

## Early figures indicate a notable increase in part-time undergraduate students paid in comparison to full-time for academic year 2021/22

Figure 16. Early in year - number of full & part-time undergraduate students awarded / paid and amount awarded / paid



As at 31 October 2021, a total of £310.2 million had been paid / awarded to 68,000 undergraduate students for the 2021/22 academic year.

Numbers of those paid / awarded are in line with the end-October position in academic year 2020/21 (- 0.9%), yet the amount paid / awarded decreased by £94.8 million (- 23.4%).

The variance in the amount paid / awarded can again be predominantly attributed to the previously mentioned factors affecting the early 2020/21 undergraduate figures.

Whilst full-time students paid / awarded numbers have reduced slightly (- 2.1%), the number of part-time students increased by 7.6% in comparison to the previous academic year.

This is likely attributed to the additional 2,600 entrants enrolling in part-time Open University courses in academic year 2020/21.

## Early position indicates potential reduction in postgraduate student numbers in academic year 2021/22

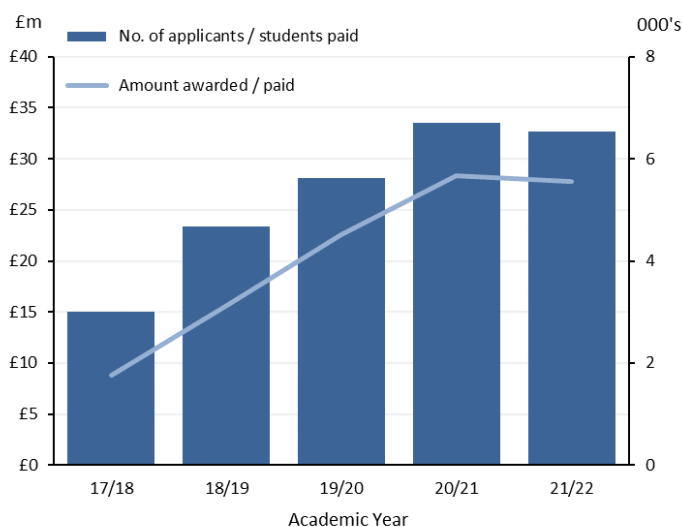
This early look at the 2021/22 academic year indicates a total of £27.8 million has been paid to 6,500 postgraduate students so far.

In comparison to the same point in 2020/21, there has been a 2.7% (- 200) decrease in the number of postgraduates paid and a 2.1% (- £28.4 million) decrease in the amount paid out.

This is in direct contrast to the 19.4% increase in the number of postgraduates paid seen at the same point in the previous academic year.

Due to the later start-dates of postgraduate courses in comparison to undergraduate courses, an enhanced picture of the academic year 2021/22 will not be evident until much later and will feature in *Table 2* and *Section 6* of the 2022 version of this publication.

Figure 17. Early in year - number of postgraduate students awarded / paid and amount awarded / paid



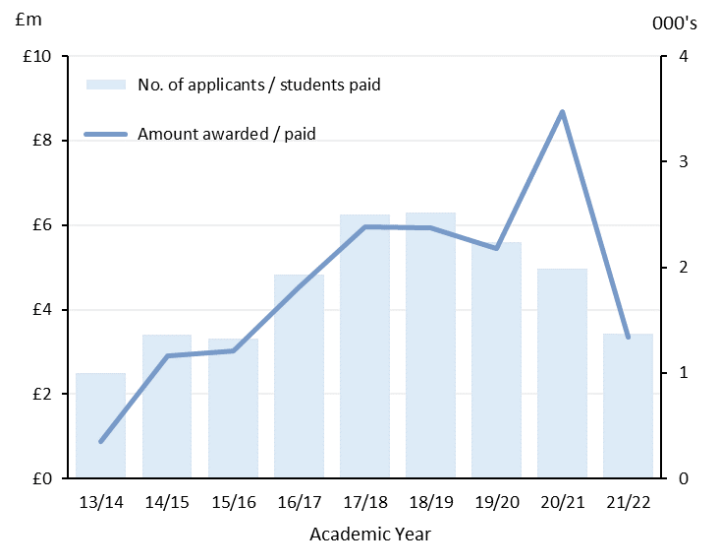
## Early look at the first academic year of new policy indicates sizable reduction in number of EU (outside UK) students paid

As at end-October 2021, 1,400 EU (outside UK) students have been paid either undergraduate or postgraduate funding. This is 30.7% less than the 2,000 students paid at the same point in academic year 2020/21.

The total amount paid out so far has reached £3.3 million for the 2021/22 academic year. This is 61.5% less than the £8.7 million paid out at the same point for 2020/21.

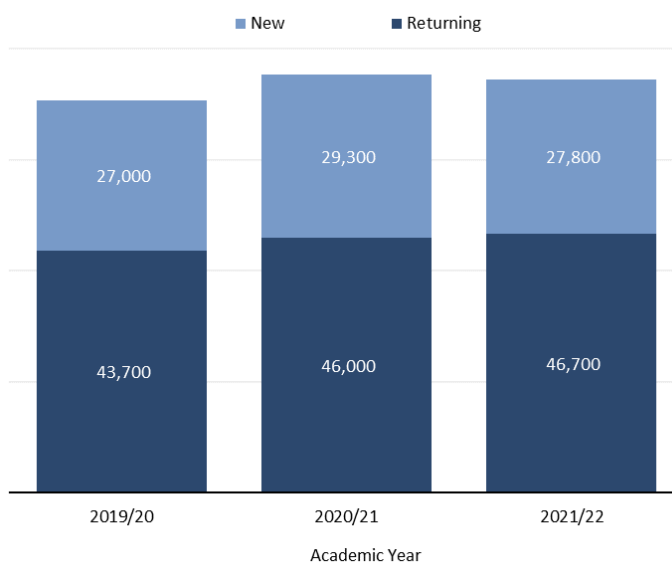
Whilst this reduction will be affected by the early payment of the second instalment of undergraduate tuition fee payments in academic year 2020/21 (see **Additional Information** section), it should also be noted that new EU (outside UK) domiciled students in academic year 2021/22 were no longer eligible for tuition fee funding.

Figure 18. Early in year - number of undergraduate and postgraduate students domiciled in EU (outside UK) paid and amount paid



## New table introduced to indicate 'new' and 'returning' students in academic year 2021/22, along with two comparable years

Figure 19: Early in year - total number of new and returning students by academic year



As shown in *Table 7C (ii)*, as at 31 October 2021, the number of students in receipt of funding from Student Finance Wales for academic year 2021/22, who also applied in 2020/21 (a returning student) increased by 1.6% in comparison to the previous year.

New students (defined as those who did not apply for any student finance in the previous academic year i.e. not necessarily in their first year of study) decreased by 5.2%.

When comparing the previous year, the number of returning students in 2020/21 was 5.2% higher than in 2019/20 and new students, a significant 8.4% higher.



New undergraduate students in 2021/22 decreased by 4.8% in comparison to 2020/21, whilst returning applicants increased slightly (+ 1.3%).

New postgraduate students in 2021/22 decreased by 6.7% whilst returning increased by a significant 11.9%.

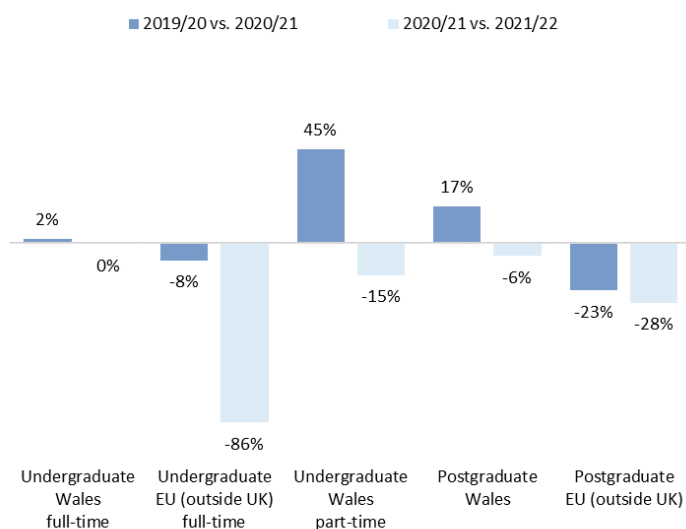
Figure 20 shows the % movement of new students by student support type.

The most significant % change in movement can be seen within new part-time Wales undergraduate numbers, which increased considerably in 2020/21 (+ 44.6%) and reduced by 15.4% in 2021/22.

Other notable variances to the previous year relate to new EU (outside UK) students.

The number of new EU (outside UK) full-time undergraduate students in receipt of student finance in 2021/22 reduced by 85.5%, a considerably higher reduction than seen in the previous year where the % reduced by 8.2% compared to 2019/20.

Figure 20: Early in year - % change in new students to prior year by student support type



New EU (outside UK) postgraduate students reduced by 28.4% in comparison to 2020/21, higher than the reduction in the previous year (- 22.5%).

These significant decreases can be attributed to the policy change in which EU (outside UK) domiciled students starting their courses in academic year 2021/22 were no longer eligible for tuition fee funding.



## Additional Information

### Available student financial support

Details on student support available in academic year 2020/21 and 2021/22 can be found [here](#).

### Factors affecting early in year figures 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 revised 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 2020, instead of first paid October 2020 and second in February 2021), while ensuring that students were not impacted by the change. The normal schedule resumed in academic year 2021/22.

These early in year figures for academic year 2020/21 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 [gov.uk](#).

### Definitions

For definitions of terms used in our publication, please see [here](#).

### Data Sources

This publication uses data from Student Loans Company (SLC) 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 Northern Ireland 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](#).

Student Loans Company also publish statistics on the repayment of student loans for higher education in the series 'Student Loans in Wales'. The **latest release** of this series, covering tax year 2020-21 was published added on 10 June 2021.

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 September 2021 covering academic session 2020/21.

## 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. For more information, please see **here**.