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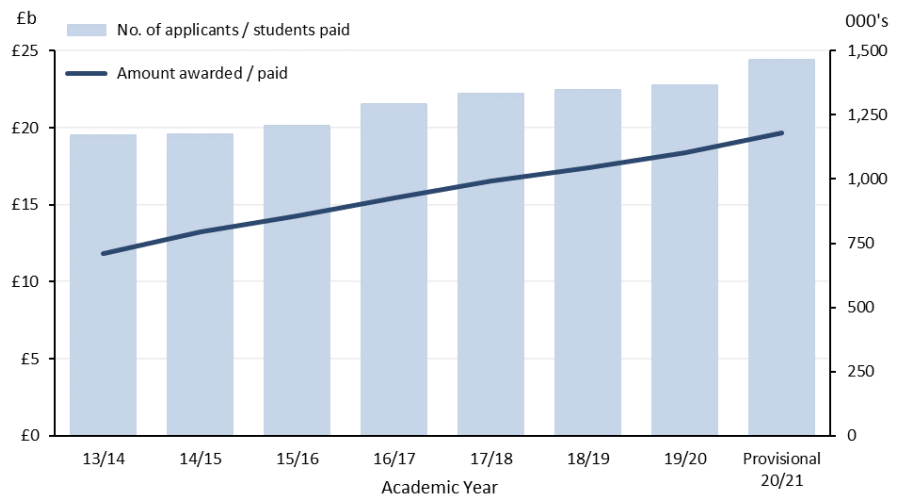
Coverage: England

Theme: Children, Education  
and Skills

# Student Support for Higher Education in England 2021: 2020/21 full year and 2021/22 early in year

## Higher education student support reaches £19.6 billion in academic year 2020/21

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



The total amount paid out / awarded in student support across full-time, part-time and postgraduate students reached £19.6 billion in academic year 2020/21. This is up 7.0% from 2019/20 which saw the amount paid / awarded at £18.4 billion. This increase is higher than the 5.4% increase seen in the previous academic year. *See Table 2*

The number of students paid / awarded increased by 7.1% from 1.4 million students in academic year 2019/20 to 1.5 million in 2020/21 – a notably higher increase than in the previous academic year when levels increased by just 1.5%.

Average full-time Maintenance Loans paid to England-domiciled students increased by 1.8% from £6,740 in 2019/20 to £6,860 in academic year 2020/21. By comparison, average Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of full-time students have remained relatively constant. This is due to full-time tuition fees remaining capped at academic year 2019/20 levels. The 5.3% increase in the amount paid out can be attributed to the 5.8% increase in the number of students taking out full-time Tuition Fee Loans.

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## 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 emerging trends of any new policy products. The publication covers applicants and students domiciled in England 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 England.

## 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 England 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 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). Payments within the most recent academic year, 2020/21 are provisional partly due to the alternative provider subset having later course start dates. Although the majority of payments / awards are captured by this point, the figures are finalised a year later and updated in the following years' publication.

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. 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 Grant etc. are reported as awards.

## 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 income.

### Maintenance Loans reach 99.9% of the total maintenance support package paid, as the last eligible Maintenance Grant students conclude their studies

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

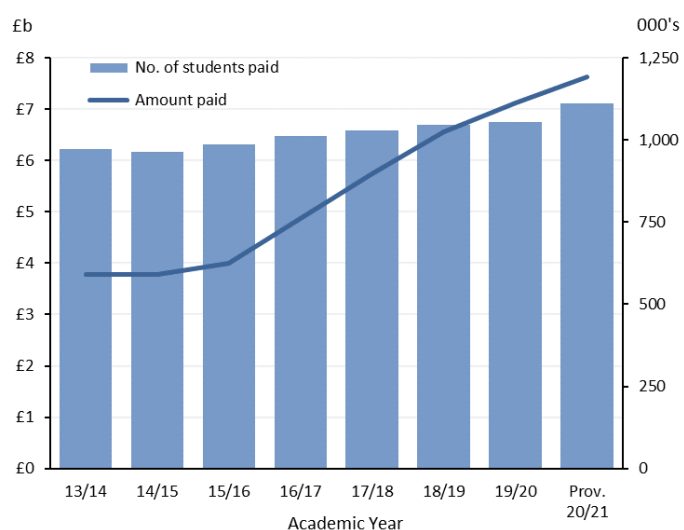
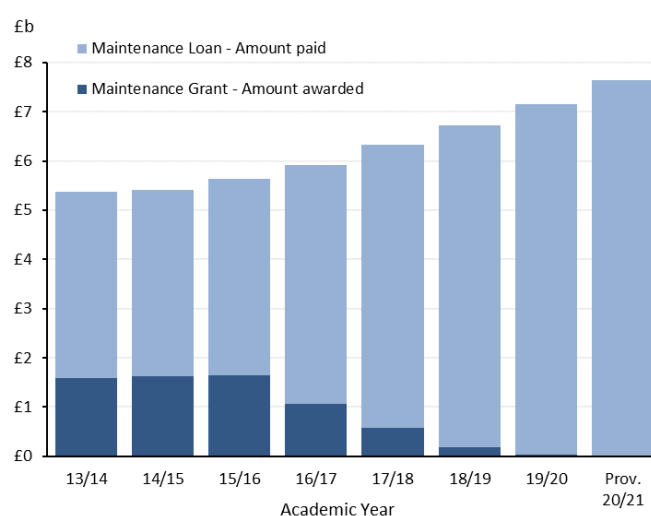


Figure 3: Amount paid in higher education full-time Maintenance Loans vs. amount awarded in Maintenance Grants



Academic Year 2020/21 saw a 7.3% (£516.9 million) increase in the total paid out in the form of Maintenance Loans to full-time higher education students in comparison to the previous year, to £7.6 billion. See Table 4A

The number of students in receipt of the loan increased by 56,000 students (+ 5.3%) to 1.1 million.

Since 2013/14, the amount paid out in Maintenance Loans has increased by 101.7%. This is predominantly due to the continuing effect of the policy change made in academic year 2016/17 which saw non-repayable Maintenance Grants replaced by increased Maintenance Loans for eligible students.

As a result, Maintenance Grant payments have reduced from £1.6 billion awarded in 2013/14, to just £10.0 million in 2020/21.

From 2016/17 onwards Maintenance Grants were no longer made available to new students. Therefore, since this time all amounts paid relate to full-time students in continuing study from earlier years / cohorts.

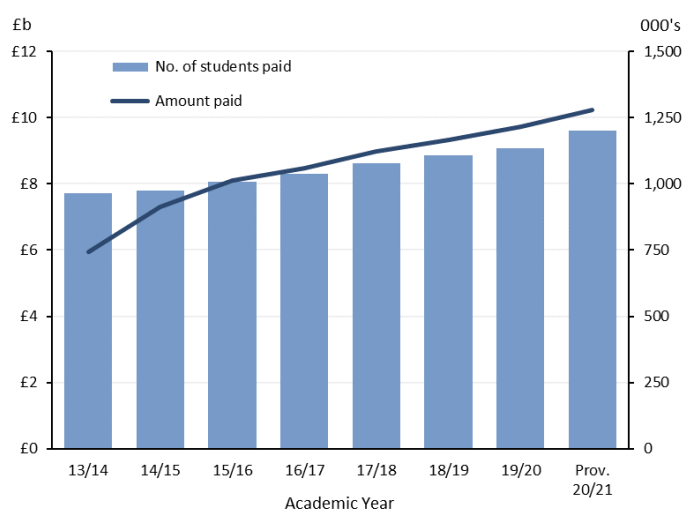
Due to the discontinuation of these grants, the % maintenance support attributed to loans has increased from 70.9% in academic year 2015/16 to 99.9%. This now nears 100% as the last eligible grant students will have reached the end of their courses.

## 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.

### Marked increase in number of Tuition Fees Loans issued on behalf of full-time students

Figure 4: Number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of full-time England and EU (outside UK) domiciled students and amount paid



Numbers taking out full-time Tuition Fee Loans in 2020/21 increased by 5.8%, to 1.2 million. This is a markedly higher increase than in the two previous academic years (of 2.9% and 2.5% respectively). See Table 3B (i)

A 5.8% increase is shown in loans paid on behalf of England-domiciled students, and a 6.2% increase on behalf of EU (outside UK) students. Both increases are considerably higher than the 2.5% and 1.7% seen in the previous year respectively.

In comparison to the previous academic year, the amount paid out in full-time Tuition Fee Loans increased by 5.3% to £10.2 billion. This is also higher than the increases seen in the previous two academic years of 4.0% and 4.1% respectively.

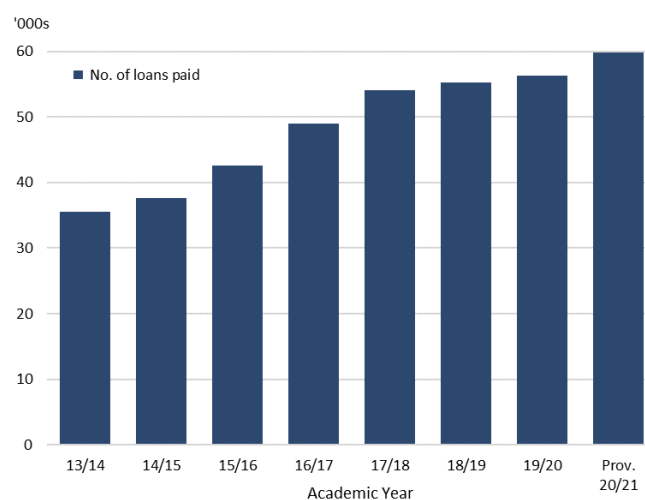
The number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of EU (outside UK) domiciled increased by 3,500 (+ 6.2%) in academic year 2020/21 to 59,800.

This increase was unexpected when referencing the early-in-year figures (at 31 October 2020) for the 2020/21 academic year published in the 2020 edition of this **publication**, as the total number of EU (outside UK) students in receipt of undergraduate finance, at that position was 7.5% lower than in the previous year.

The final months of 2020 saw a large influx of EU (outside UK) applications. This may be attributed to academic year 2020/21 being named as the final academic year in which EU (outside UK) domiciled students were eligible for tuition fee funding.

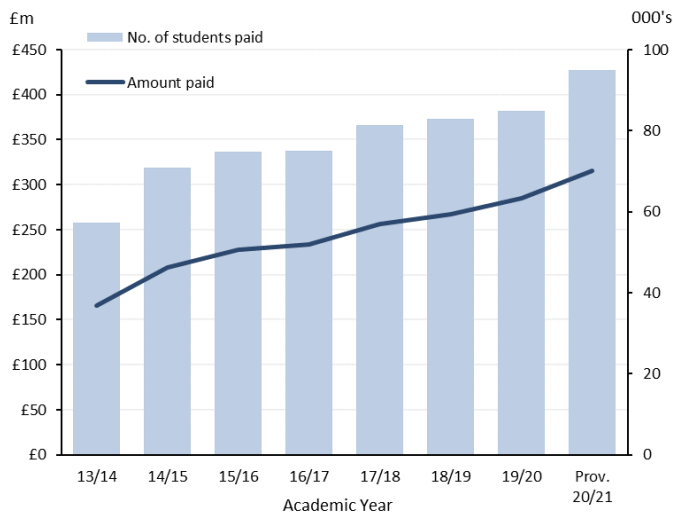
The later submission of these applications could be related to the 31 December 2020 deadline to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme for UK residency (for more information please see [here](#)), along with travel-limitations and later recruitment by higher education providers as a result of the COVID19 pandemic.

Figure 5: Number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of full-time EU (outside UK) domiciled students.



## Substantial increase in Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of part-time students in academic year 2020/21

Figure 6: Number of students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) receiving part-time Tuition Fee Loans and amount paid



The number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of part-time students reached 95,000 in 2020/21. This is a 10,200 increase on the previous year (+ 12.0%, significantly higher than the 2% increase seen in both of the previous two academic years). See Table 5A

This increase will be, in part due to an additional 10,000 entrants engaging in part-time Open University courses. This could be as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting some employment sectors.

England-domiciled students increased by 12.1% (+ 10,000), significantly higher than the 2.3% in 2019/20. EU (outside UK) domiciled students taking out this loan increased by 8.3% (+ 200); an opposing trend to that seen in the previous year, when numbers decreased by 1.4%.

£315.2 million was paid out in Tuition Fee Loans on behalf of part-time students in academic year 2020/21. This is 10.7% more than in the previous year. Payments made on behalf of England-domiciled students increased by 11.0% whilst EU (outside UK) student figures remained relatively constant (+ 0.6%) for the second year running (- 0.1% in 2019/20).

The average paid on behalf of an England-domiciled student remained relatively stable at £3,310 (from £3,340, - 0.9%), whilst the average paid on behalf of an EU (outside UK) domiciled student decreased from £4,100 to £3,810 (- 7.1%). See Table 2

## Second year of Tuition Fee Loans for accelerated degrees sees sizable % increase in academic year 2020/21

Accelerated degrees are full-time courses taught in a time period of at least one year less than the length of the equivalent standard course. To qualify these courses must lead to an honours, ordinary or integrated master's degree. For courses that meet the eligibility to be classed as accelerated degrees, higher education providers can now charge 20% extra on the maximum standard fee for that course whereas previously they could only charge the same as the equivalent standard course.

In comparison to the first year of availability, the number of loans paid out for accelerated study increased by 1,440 to 2,240 in academic year 2020/21 (+ 178.8%). The total amount paid increased by 189.5% (+ £14.1 million) to £21.6 million. See Table 3B (iii).

The average paid out on behalf of England-domiciled students increased by 4.2% (from £9,310 to £9,700) and EU (outside UK) students saw a 2.2% decrease in comparison to the first academic year (from £9,180 to £8,980).

As a % of the total of full-time undergraduates taking full-time Tuition Fee Loans in 2020/21, those studying on accelerated degrees make up approximately 0.2%.

## Provisional figures indicate a change in trend in both students taking either only full-time Tuition Fee Loans, or only Maintenance Loan in AY 2020/21

Figure 7: Tuition Loan only students as % of all loan borrowers

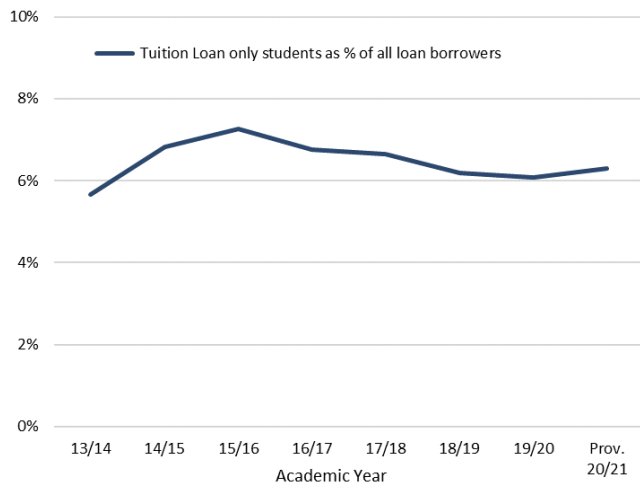
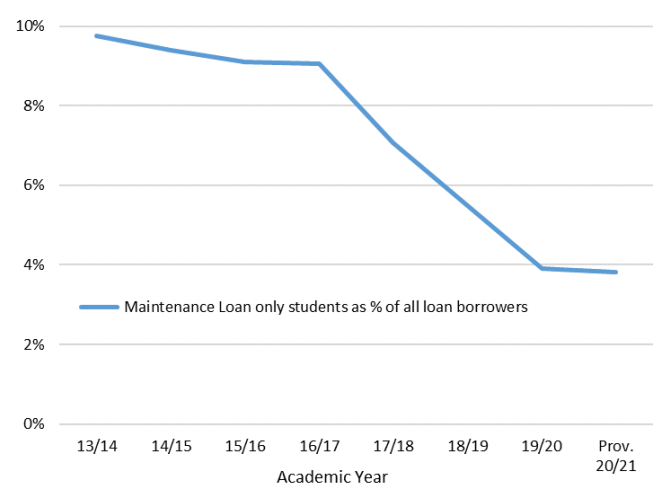


Figure 8: Maintenance Loan only students as % of all loan borrowers



Since academic year 2015/16, levels of those who receive only a Tuition Fee Loan (no Maintenance Loan) have reduced year-on-year; from 77,200 to 68,000 in 2019/20 (-11.9%). However, a change in trend is evident in the provisional figure for academic year 2020/21 where numbers identify an increase of 6,600 to 74,600 (+ 9.7%). See Table 3D

This small increase could be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic where students remained at their parental home due to temporary provider-closures and therefore the need for maintenance support was lower than in previous years.

Numbers of those taking purely Maintenance Loans (no Tuition Fee Loan) have also seen a change in trend in 2020/21. Since academic year 2016/17, numbers have significantly reduced; from 98,300 down to 43,900 (- 55.4%) in academic year 2019/20. Yet similarly to Tuition Fee Loan-only students, the provisional figures for 2020/21 are showing an increase, where numbers have increased by 1,200 to 45,000 (+ 2.7%).

As a % of all loan borrowers, both those taking only Tuition Fee loans and those taking only Maintenance Loans have remained relatively constant. For Tuition Fee only, just a 0.2% increase on 2019/20 (from 6.1% to 6.3%) and for Maintenance Loan only, a 0.1% decrease (from 3.9% in 2019/20 to 3.8%).

## Postgraduate loans

A Postgraduate Master's and 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 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.

### Significant increase in Postgraduate Master's Loans for England & EU (outside UK)-domiciled students

Figure 9: Number of students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) receiving Postgraduate Master's Loans

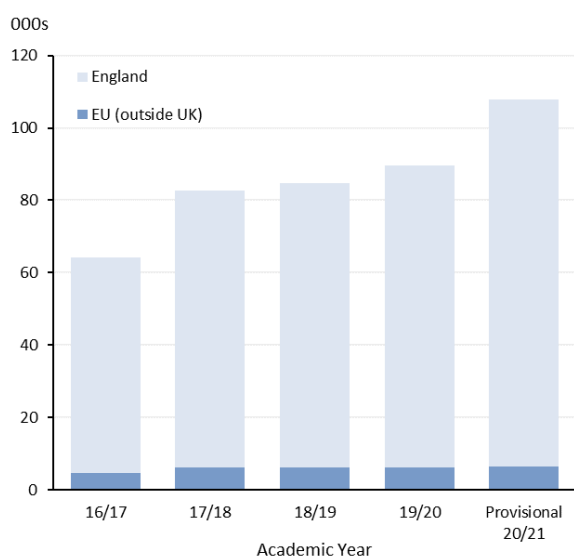
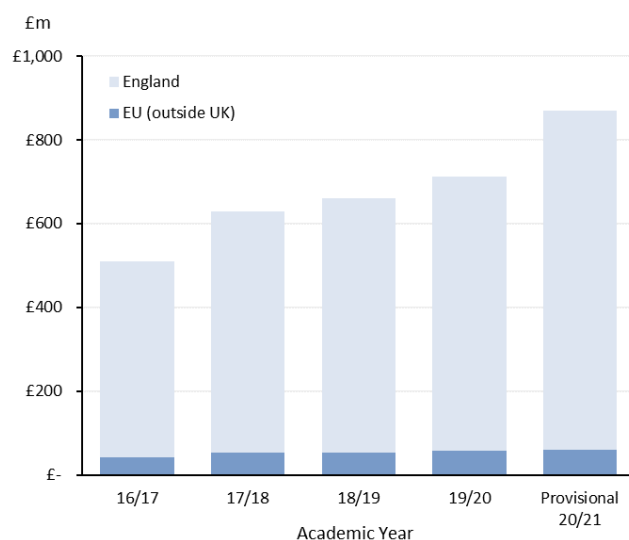


Figure 10: Amount paid to students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) receiving Postgraduate Master's Loans



Academic year 2020/21 saw a 20.4% increase in the number of students taking out a Postgraduate Master's Loan in comparison to the previous year (+ 18,300). This is significantly higher than the 5.9% increase seen in 2019/20. The amount paid out has similarly increased by 21.9% (+ £156.2 million) to £868.5 million. This is also notably higher than the 7.8% seen in the previous year. *See Table 6A (i)*

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

The number of England-domiciled students paid increased by 21.6% (+ 18,000) in comparison to academic year 2019/20. This is a considerably higher increase than seen in the previous year (+ 6.1%). EU (outside UK) domiciled increased by 3.8% (+ 240) in line with the previous academic year (of 3.2%).

In regard to the amount paid out, payments to England-domiciled students increased by 23.5% (+ £153.9 million), notably higher than in 2019/20 where this increased by 7.8%. Payments to EU (outside UK) domiciled students increased by 4.0% (+ £2.3 million), a lower increase than in the previous year of 7.9%.



## Continued increase in Postgraduate Doctoral loans for both England and EU (outside UK)-domiciled students in third year of availability

Figure 11: Number of students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) receiving Postgraduate Doctoral Loans

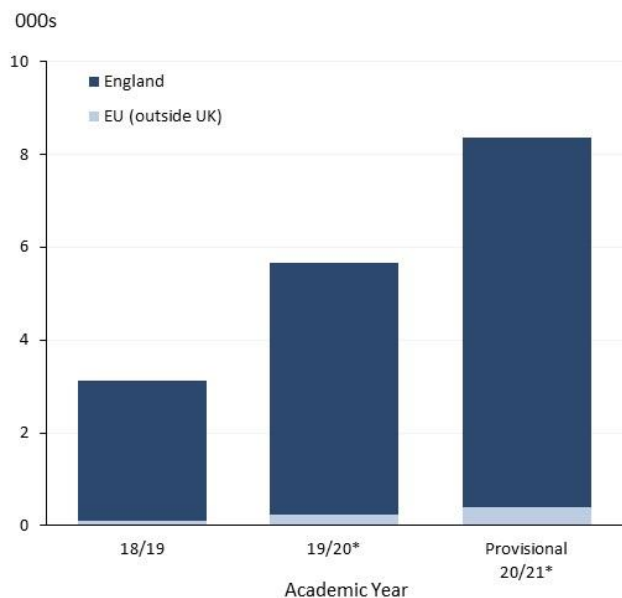
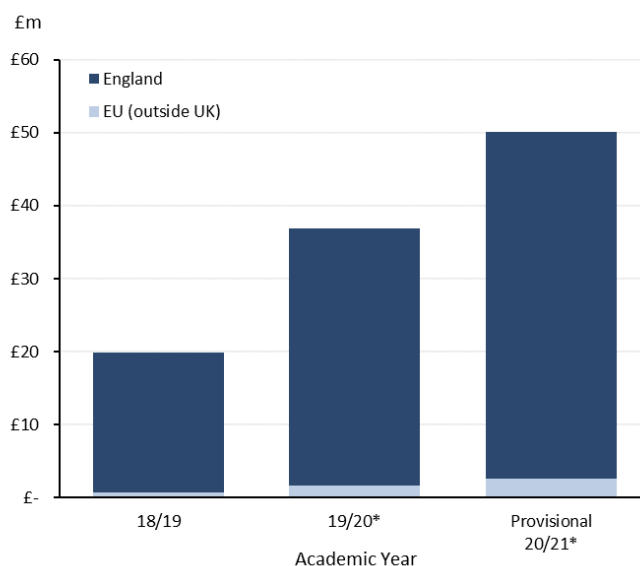


Figure 12: Amount paid to students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) receiving Postgraduate Doctoral Loans



\* Academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21 figures include returning students from the first academic year of Postgraduate Doctoral Loans.

In academic year 2018/19, Postgraduate Doctoral Loans were made available to both England and EU (outside UK)-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) 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 the Postgraduate Doctoral Loan has increased to 8,400 in academic year 2020/21. This is a 47.4% increase on the 5,700 recorded in academic year 2019/20. This is however a slower increase than that seen in the previous academic year (+ 83.9%). England-domiciled students increased by 46.9% (+ 2,500) and EU (outside UK)-domiciled students by 67.7% (+ 160). See Table 6A (ii)

The total amount paid out to Doctoral students increased by £13.2 million to £50.1 million in academic year 2020/21. This is an 35.8% increase on the £36.9 million paid in academic year 2019/20, yet a slower increase than seen in the previous academic year (+ 86.1%)

£47.5 million was paid to England-domiciled students. This was an increase of 34.7% (+ £12.2 million) on academic year 2019/20. £2.7 million was paid to EU (outside UK) students; an increase of 58.8% (+ £1.0 million).

These levels of increase are typical within the first three years of a new student support product's existence.

## 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 5.3% to 64,400, in comparison to the previous academic year. The amount paid out increased by £5.5 million (+ 4.8%) to £120.1 million. *See Table 4B*

### Change in spend-category trends for full-time undergraduate Disabled Students' Allowance in academic year 2019/20

Figure 13: % change in amount paid in 'Non-Medical Helpers' & 'Travel' DSA for full-time students by Academic Year

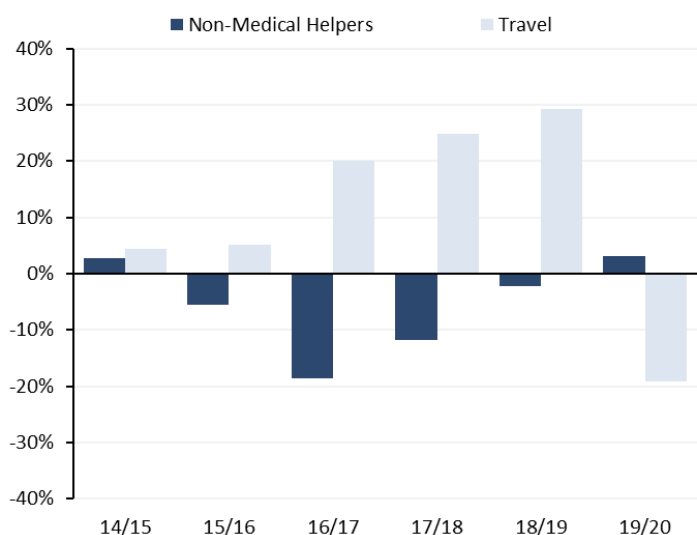


Figure 13 indicates the first reported decrease in 'Travel' DSA expenditure in comparison to the previous year with the amount paid out having reduced by 19.1% (- £1.8m).

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

'Non-Medical Helpers' expenditure has seen the first increase in comparison to previous year since 2014/15 with the amount increasing by 3.2% (+ £1.5 million). This is due to an increase in the number of claimants in this category (+ 1,300). The average amount claimed has remained constant.

As at 31 August 2021, a total of £121.4 million has been paid for academic year 2020/21 for full-time students. This is 13.1% higher than the £107.3 million paid by the same point for 2019/20.

This provisional position for 2020/21 shows that 'Travel' payments are 61.3% lower than the same point for 2019/20 (- £4.6 million) - this may again be attributed to the continued disruption at higher education providers owing to the pandemic. This was offset by a £7.6 million increase in 'Non-Medical Helpers' expenditure (+ 17.4%).

## Childcare Grant

Childcare Grants are awarded to students to assist with the costs for childcare while they attend University or college. The awards are based on the household income and the students' own circumstances. In academic year 2019/20, Childcare Grant payments changed from being paid to students (new and continuing) based on estimated costs, to being paid to childcare providers directly via a third-party system, based on actual costs incurred. This was done in partnership with a third-party partner, the Childcare Grant Payment Service (CCGPS).

### 16.1% increase in the number of Childcare Grant claims made by full-time students in academic year 2020/21

Figure 14: Number of Childcare Grant awards & payments made on behalf of full-time students

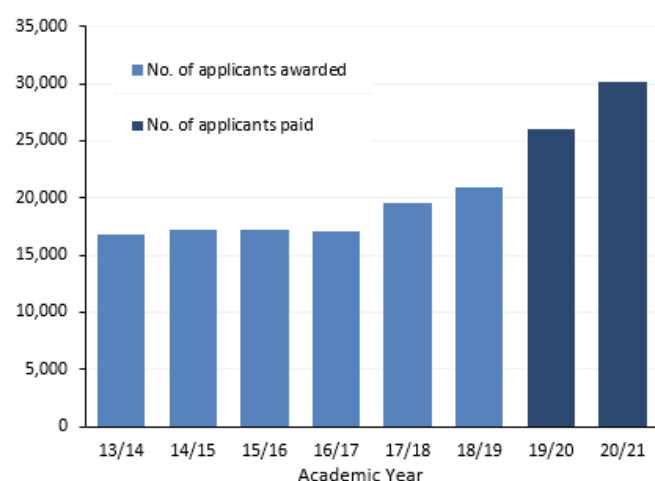
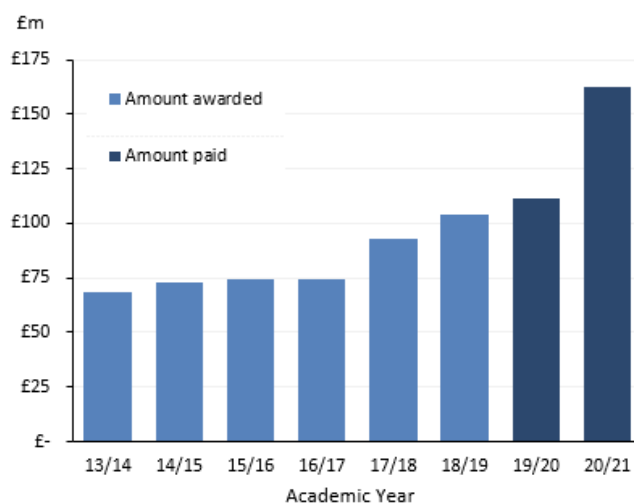


Figure 15: Amount awarded & paid in Childcare Grant to full-time students



As a result of the change from being paid to students (new and continuing) based on estimated costs, to being paid to childcare providers directly via a third-party system, there is a break in the time series when reporting Childcare Grants. Up until academic year 2019/20, Childcare Grant was reported as 'awards' based on the number of students applying, and the student's given financial estimates for the year (see *Table 4C (i)* - formerly *Table 4C*), which were then finalised a year later in the subsequent publication. From 2019/20 actual payments are reported (see *Table 4C (ii)*), as with all loan products shown in this publication.

As at 31 August 2021, childcare providers have been paid on behalf of 32,000 full-time students for the 2020/21 academic year. This is a 16.1% increase in comparison to the same point in 2019/20 (+ 4,200). See *Table 4C (ii)*

The amount paid out by end-August 2021 was £162.2 million. This is a 45.5% increase (+ £50.7 million) in comparison to the previous year of £111.4 million. The significant increase in 2020/21 can be predominantly attributed to the several-month long childcare provider closures due to the pandemic in academic year 2019/20, along with that being the first academic year of the transition to the new payments scheme.

For more information regarding awards versus payments, please see our **Things you need to know** section.

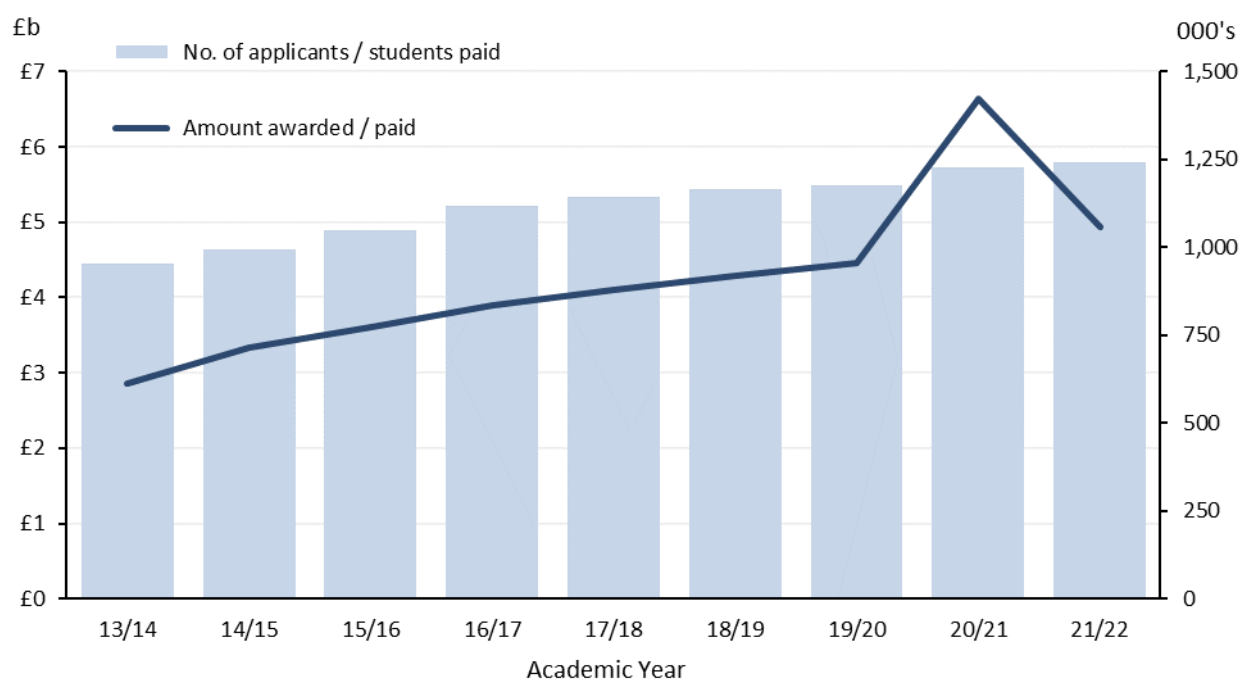
## Early in year overview – academic year 2021/22

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 1.24 million undergraduate and postgraduate students have been paid / awarded a total of £4.9 billion for AY 2021/22

Figure 16. Early in year - number of students receiving funding and the amount awarded / paid



In comparison to the same point in the 2020/21 academic year, the number of students awarded / paid student finance has increased by 1.3% to 1.2 million. The amount paid / awarded has decreased by 25.6%.

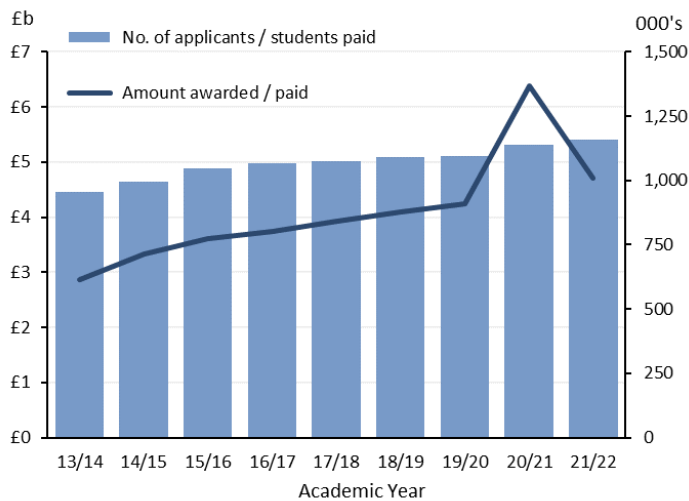
This significant decrease in the amount paid / awarded between this point in time in academic year 2020/21 and the same point in 2021/22 can predominantly be attributed to the early payment of the second instalment of undergraduate tuition fees payments made to higher education (HE) providers for the 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.

## Small increase in number of undergraduate students paid / awarded student finance by end-October for academic year 2021/22

Figure 17. Early in year - number of full & part-time undergraduate students awarded / paid and amount awarded / paid



Two months into the 2021/22 academic year, a total of £4.7 billion had been paid / awarded to 1.2 million undergraduate students.

Numbers are slightly above those seen at the same point in 2020/21 (+ 1.9%), yet the amount paid / awarded decreased by £1.7 billion (- 26.4%).

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 only a small (+1.6%) increase can be seen in full-time students paid / awarded, the number of part-time students increased by 9.0% in comparison to the previous academic year.

This can be attributed to the additional 10,000 entrants engaging in part-time Open University courses in academic year 2020/21, continuing their study in academic year 2021/22.

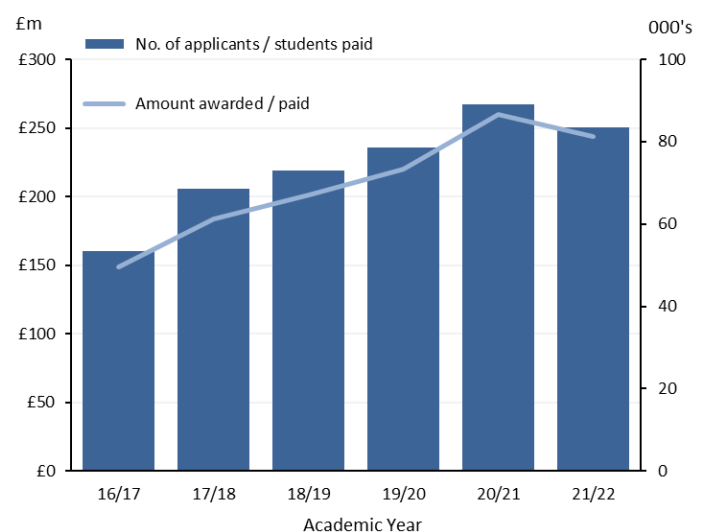
## 83,500 postgraduate students awarded finance by end-October for academic year 2021/22

This very early look at the 2021/22 academic year indicates a total of £243.4 million has been paid to 83,500 postgraduate students. In comparison to the same point in 2020/21, there has been a 6.2% (- 5,500) decrease in the number paid and a 6.3% (- £16.4 million) decrease in the amount paid out.

A potential decrease was evident at the same point in academic year 2020/21 in comparison to the previous year however, by end-August 2021 an overall increase of 18,300 (+ 20.4%) students was reported for 2020/21.

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 18. Early in year - number of postgraduate students receiving funding and the amount awarded / paid



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

Figure 19. Early in year - number of undergraduate & postgraduate students domiciled in EU (outside UK) receiving funding and the amount awarded / paid

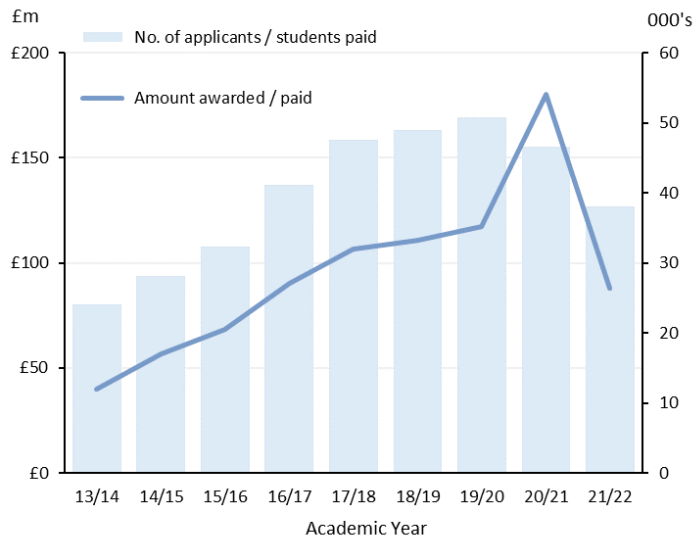


Figure 19 includes both undergraduate and postgraduate students domiciled in EU (outside UK).

As at end-October 2021, 38,000 EU (outside UK) students have been paid a total of £88.0 million.

In comparison to the same point in academic year 2020/21, the number of students paid has reduced from 46,600 (- 18.4%). This is likely due to new EU (outside UK) domiciled students in academic year 2021/22 no longer being eligible for tuition fee funding.

The amount paid reduced by 51.2% from £180.2 million. This larger decrease will also be as a result of the early payment of the second instalment of undergraduate tuition fee payments in academic year 2020/21 (see **Additional Information** section).

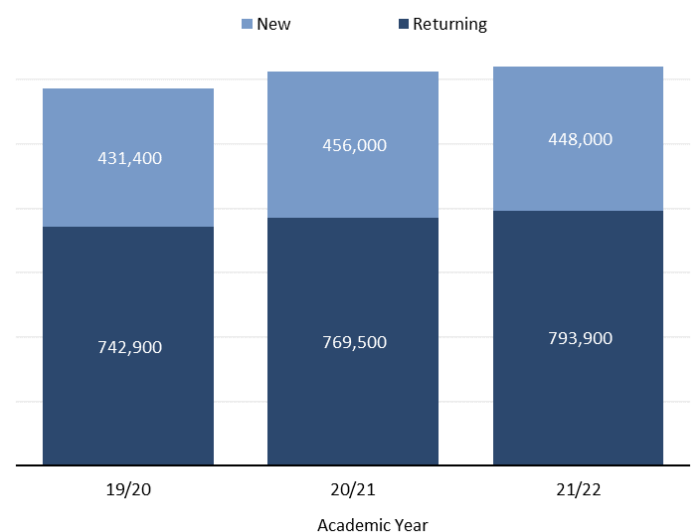
## New table introduced to indicate 'new' and 'returning' students in academic year 2021/22, along with two comparable years

As shown in *Table 7C (ii)*, as at 31 October 2021, the number of students in receipt of funding from Student Finance England for academic year 2021/22, who also applied in 2020/21 (defined as a returning student) increased by 3.2% in comparison to the previous year.

New students (defined as those who did not apply for any student finance in the previous academic year, but not necessarily in their first year of study) decreased by 1.7%.

When comparing the previous year, the number of returning students in 2020/21 was 3.6% higher than in 2019/20 and new students, 5.7% higher.

Figure 20: Early in year - total number of new and returning students by academic year



There was minimal (+ 0.2%) change in the number of new undergraduate students in 2021/22 in comparison to 2020/21, whilst returning students increased by 2.8%.

New postgraduate students in 2021/22 decreased by 12.2%, whilst returning students increased by a significant 19.0%.

Figure 21 shows the % movement of new students by student support type.

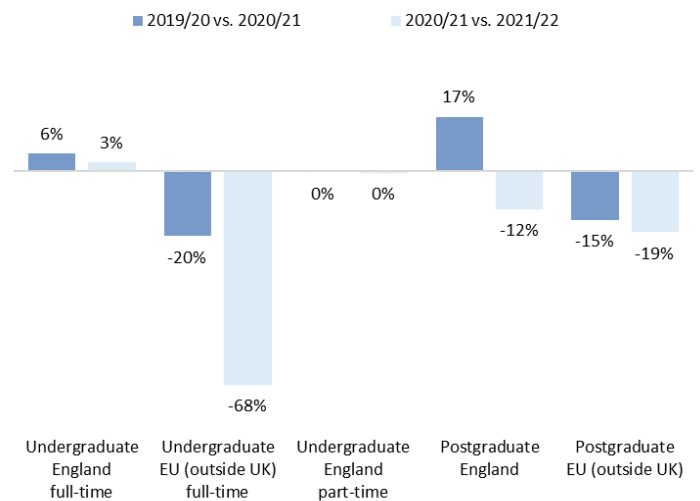
New full-time England-domiciled postgraduates in receipt of student finance saw a 17.4% increase in 2020/21, yet numbers have decreased by 11.9% in 2021/22.

The number of new EU (outside UK) full-time undergraduate students in 2021/22 reduced by 67.7%, a considerably higher reduction than seen in the previous year where numbers reduced by 20.5% compared to 2019/20.

New EU (outside UK) postgraduate students reduced by 19.2% in comparison to 2020/21, a more significant reduction than seen in the previous year (- 15.4%).

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.

Figure 21: Early in year - % change in new students to prior year by student support type



## 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 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

SLC publish statistics on higher education funding for Wales 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 England'. The **latest release** of this series, covering tax year 2020-21 was published 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](#).