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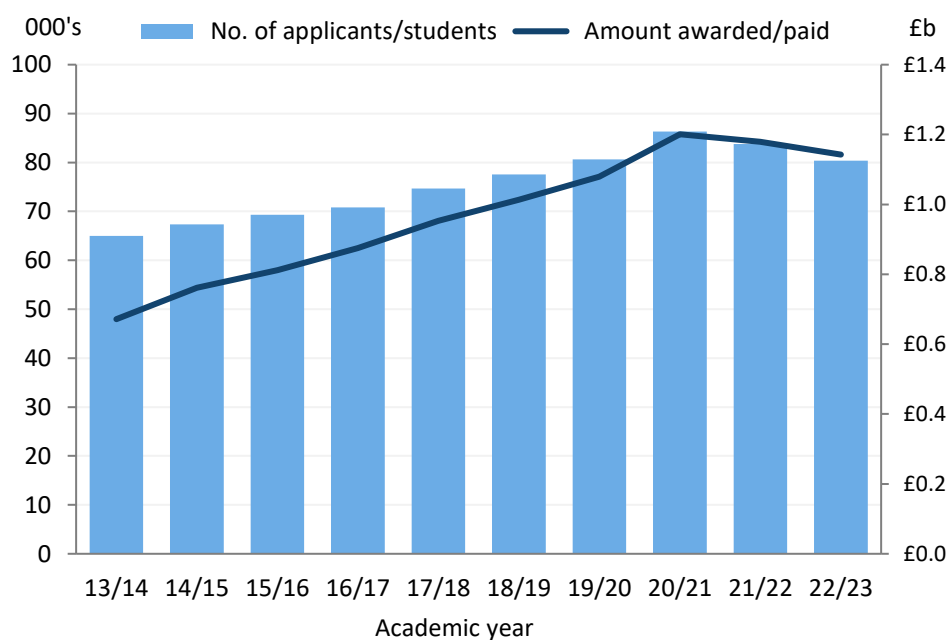
Student Support for Higher Education in Wales 2023:

2022/23 full year and 2023/24 early in year

3.1% decrease in higher education student support paid out in academic year 2022/23, at £1.14 billion

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

The columns in this chart depict the number of applicants/students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount awarded/paid against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 2**

Download the data for Figure 1 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 1 shows that 65,000 full-time, part-time and postgraduate applicants/students were awarded/paid student finance in academic year 2013/14. Numbers increased by an average of 3.7% per year up until 2020/21, when a significant 7.1% increase was reported with numbers peaking at 86,300.

This was likely a result of the perceived reduced employment opportunity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, encouraging new students to pursue higher education and current students to continue their education. This was made up of a 4.8% increase in undergraduates and a significant 30.8% increase in

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postgraduates receiving funding.

In academic year 2021/22, there was a 3.0% reduction in the number awarded/paid as figures normalised against an outlying year.

2022/23 indicates a further decrease of 4.0%, down to 80,400. This is made up of a 3.2% decrease in undergraduates and an 11.9% decrease in postgraduates receiving funding.

Figure 1 also shows that the total amount awarded/paid in student support across full-time, part-time and postgraduate students in academic year 2013/14 was £0.67 billion. Following a notable 13.4% increase in the following year, increases slowed to an average of 7.2% to reach £1.08 billion by 2019/20.

In 2020/21 the amount increased by a significant 11.2% to peak at £1.20 billion – made up of a 9.2% increase in undergraduate funding and a significant 38.2% increase in postgraduate funding. As previously mentioned, this was likely a result of the perceived reduced employment opportunity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, encouraging new students to pursue higher education and current students to continue their education. In academic year 2021/22, a small decrease of 1.8% was reported as figures normalised against an outlying year bringing the total awarded/paid to £1.18 billion.

Academic year 2022/23 indicates a further decrease of 3.1%, down to £1.14 billion.

The average full-time Maintenance Loan paid to a Wales-domiciled student in 2013/14 was £3,310 increasing to £3,500 by 2015/16. There was a sharp increase of 18.9% to £4,160 in 2016/17 owing to the first notable increase in the maximum maintenance loan available, with similar occurring in the following year. The first, and only decrease in the average loan borrowed was reported in 2018/19 (down by 3.4%), likely due to the notable increase in the maximum full-time Welsh Government Learning Grant available to new students (increases of between 33% and 96% dependant on where the student resided whilst studying). The average has since increased to peak at £6,250 in academic year 2022/23, a 9.3% increase on the previous year.

For more information on maximum loans and grants available, please refer to **Table 1A**. For more detail on **Maintenance Loans** please refer to the relevant section later in this publication.

The average full-time Tuition Fee Loan paid on behalf of a Wales-domiciled student in 2013/14 was £3,410, increasing steadily by an average of 3.5% per year to reach £3,920 by 2017/18. A sharp increase of 43.6% was reported in academic year 2018/19 as a result of the Welsh funding review in which Tuition Fee Grants were discontinued to new students, resulting in the average loan taken out increasing to £5,630. Annual increases have since slowed, down to 0.4% in the most recent year, bringing the average amount to peak at £8,410.

For more information of **Tuition Fee Loans** please refer to the relevant section later in this publication.

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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 ten academic years up to and including 2022/23. The early-in-year section (Tables 7A to 7C) gives a high-level, early indication of academic year 2023/24 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.

Accessibility

Public Sector Accessibility Regulations mean that all public sector organisations have a legal duty to make their websites accessible for everyone, including those with disabilities. As part of SLC's ongoing commitment to improving accessibility of our websites and content, we've made changes to the way we publish our statistics.

The changes in this publication mainly affect the way we provide visual information. This includes:

- including descriptive information of the full time-series for each graph within the main body of the statistics publication.
- providing data used to form each graph in accessible/downloadable tables.
- changing the way we present charts and graphs to be more accessible, including changes to colour, labels and legends.

We create our statistics publications in a way that helps to ensure that the department's statistical outputs are accessible, while continuing to meet the statistical needs of our users.

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 2022/23, along with an early view of academic year 2023/24.

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

Changes included in this publication

With ten academic years' worth of data displayed in the 2023 version of this publication, some tables are becoming too large to view on one screen or print on a single page. As a result, the main data tables (with the exception of Table 4B and 5C) have been restructured. The tables have been divided each into separate sections below one another i.e., the number of applicants/students, followed by the amount awarded/paid, then the average paid.

The changes make these tables easier to read and align them with the tables within our '**Student Loans for Higher Education**' publication series.

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 regarding 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, 2023/24) is provided in the early-in-year section of the accompanying excel tables (Tables 7A to 7C (ii)). 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.

Executive summary – 2022/23 full year and 2023/24 early in year

For more detail, please click on the individual headline...

- 3.1% decrease in **higher education student support** paid out in academic year 2022/23, at £1.14 billion
- 3.9% decrease in the number of **Maintenance Loans** paid out to **full-time students**
- Maintenance Loans form 63.3% of the **total full-time maintenance support package** paid out in academic year 2022/23
- 10.5% increase in the number of **Maintenance Loans** paid to **part-time** students in academic year 2022/23 – the fourth consecutive year of growth
- Mirroring the trend in Maintenance Loan numbers, **full-time Welsh Government Learning Grant** take-up reports a second year of decline, down by 4.7%
- Small reduction in the proportions of eligible full-time students awarded both full and partial **Welsh Government Learning Grants**
- 6.2% increase in **part-time Welsh Government Learning Grant** take-up, consistent growth to the previous year
- 4.8% decrease in the number of **Tuition Fee Loans** paid out on behalf of **full-time** students
- Tuition Fee Loans make up almost 100% of the full-time **Tuition Fee Support package** in 2022/23
- Small reductions in the **average full-time Tuition Fee Loan** paid out by Student Finance Wales, across all UK countries of study
- Small increases in the number of **Tuition Fee Loans** paid on behalf of **part-time** students continue to reach 11,700
- 2022/23 reports the second year of decrease in **Postgraduate Master's Loan** take-up, down by a further 14.4%
- In line with master's loans, 2022/23 records the second year of reduced take-up for **Postgraduate Master's Grant**, 16.5% lower than in the previous year
- Continued increase in take-up of **Postgraduate Doctoral Loans**, up by a further 5.6% on the previous year
- 11.6% decrease in the amount paid out in full-time students **Disabled Students' Allowance** in academic year 2021/22
- By end-October 2023, a total of 69,500 **undergraduates** and **postgraduates** have been awarded/paid a total of £333.1 million for **academic year 2023/24**
- Early figures indicate a potential 3.2% reduction in the number of '**new**' students receiving student finance in **academic year 2023/24**

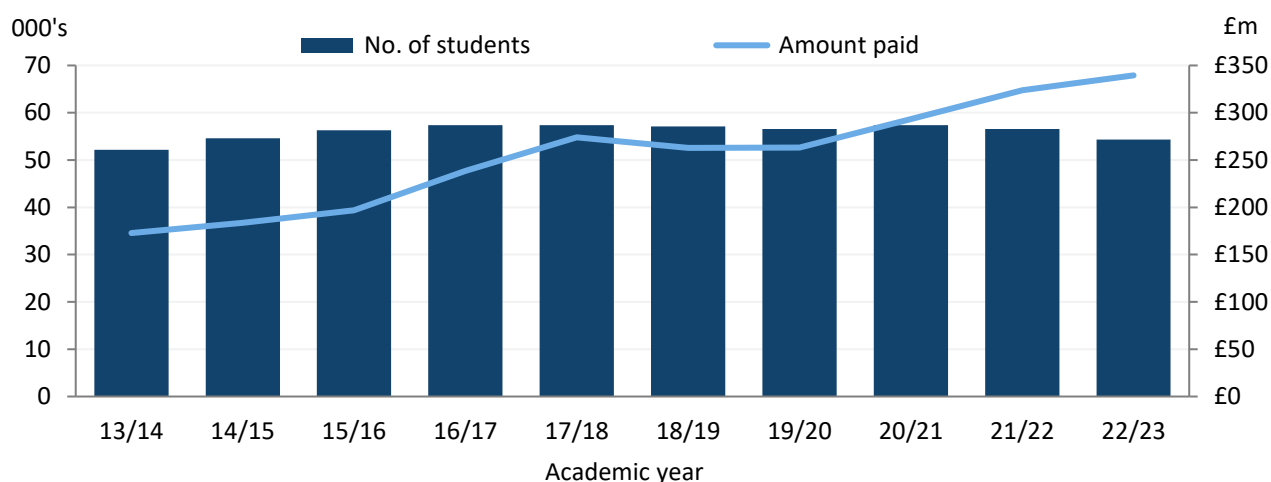
Undergraduate Maintenance Loans

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.

3.9% decrease in the number of Maintenance Loans paid out to full-time students in academic year 2022/23

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

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount paid against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 3A (i)**

[Download the data for Figure 2 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 2 shows the number of full-time students in receipt of a Maintenance Loan in academic year 2013/14 was 52,100. Following an initial increase of 4.7% in 2014/15, annual increases have slowed year-on-year until 2017/18 when numbers remained relatively constant at 57,400. The following two academic years saw small reductions (of 0.6% and 0.9% respectively), before a small outlying increase in academic year 2020/21, reverting the total number paid out back to 2017/18 levels.

The two most recent academic years reported small decreases, more significantly in 2022/23 (by 3.9%) down to 54,300.

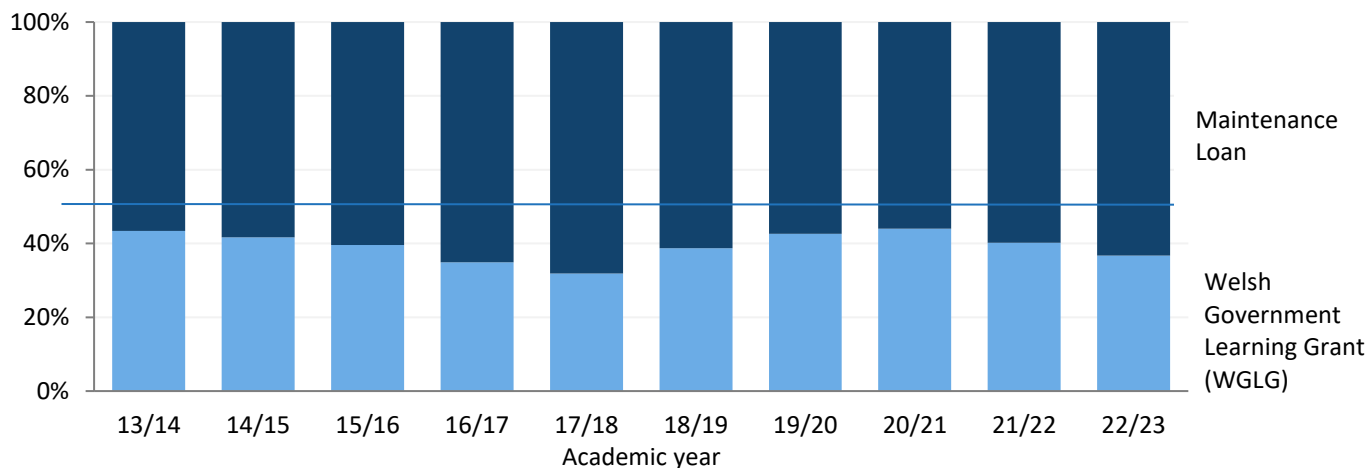
£172.8 million was paid out in the form of Maintenance Loans in 2013/14. There was a gradual increase until 2016/17 when the rise accelerated to a significant 21.1% reaching £238.6 million. This was as a result of the first notable increase in the maximum maintenance loan available ('Elsewhere' rate up 15.0% from £5,376 to £6,183). A similar increase in the maximum loan was reported in the following year (up 12.0% to £6,922). For more information on maximum loans available please refer to **Table 1A**.

The first, and only decrease in the amount paid out was reported in 2018/19 (down 4.1%). This was due to a small reduction in the number of loans paid out, coupled with a 3.5% decrease in the average Maintenance Loan taken. In 2019/20, the amount paid out remained relatively stable, followed by two consecutive years of notable increases (averaging 10.9%). In the most recent year, the amount paid out increased by 4.9% to £339.5 million. These latest increases were predominantly as a result of year-on-year increases in the average loan taken out (increasing by an average of 10.3% each year).

Maintenance Loans form 63.3% of the total full-time maintenance support package paid out in academic year 2022/23

Figure 3: Maintenance Loans paid and Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG) awarded as a % of the total maintenance package paid out for students domiciled in Wales (full-time)

The line indicates the 50% point.



Source: **Table 3A (i) and 4A (i)**

[Download the data for Figure 3 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

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

The percentage attributed to Maintenance Loans was 56.6% in 2013/14. This increased to peak at 68.2% in 2017/18, then due to the change in policy following the **Diamond Review**, the percentage reduced year-on-year down to 56.0% in 2020/21.

In academic year 2021/22 this trend reversed, with the loan percentage increasing to 59.9%, then again in 2022/23 up to 63.3%.

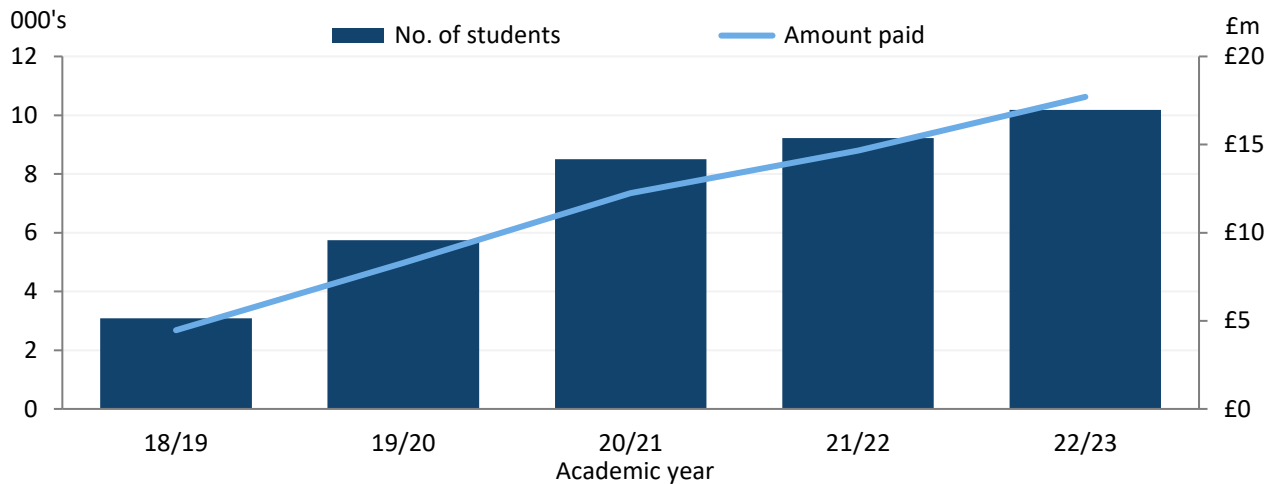
This is due to the annual increases in the maximum Maintenance Loan available versus a freeze in the maximum WGLG available. For example, in academic year 2018/19 the maximum loan available was £8,000 (based on the elsewhere rate), £100 lower than the maximum WGLG available. By 2022/23, the maximum loan had increased to £9,710, whereas the maximum WGLG remains at £8,100.

For more information on maximum loans and grants available, please refer to **Table 1A**. For more detail on the Welsh Government Learning Grant, please refer to **page 10**.

10.5% increase in the number of Maintenance Loans paid to part-time students in academic year 2022/23 – the fourth consecutive year of growth

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

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount paid against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 5A**

[Download the data for Figure 4](#) (ODS, 6KB)

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 Grant, this forms the part-time maintenance package. For academic year 2022/23 this is up to a maximum of £5,929.

Figure 4 shows that in the first year of availability 3,100 part-time loans were issued. The take-up rapidly increased in the second year (characteristically for a new student support type) by 86.3% up to 5,700. This year-on-year growth has since slowed to 10.5% in academic year 2022/23, to peak at 10,200 borrowers.

In 2018/19, £4.5 million was paid out in the form of part-time Maintenance Loans. This increased by 85.4% to £8.3 million in the following year. As reported with the number of loans issued, increases have since slowed yet remained notable, averaging 20.2% in the two most recent years. In the academic year 2022/23 a total of £17.7 million was paid to part-time students.

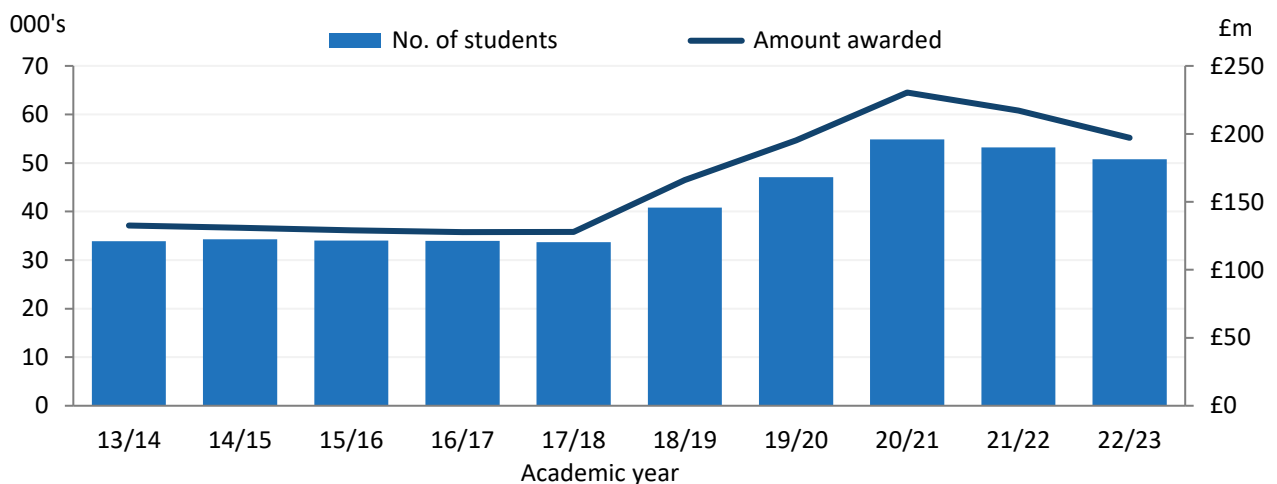
Welsh Government Learning Grant

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 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.

Mirroring the trend in Maintenance Loan numbers, full-time Welsh Government Learning Grant take-up reports a second year of decline, down by 4.7%

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

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount awarded against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 4A**

[Download the data for Figure 5 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 5 shows that the number of full-time students in receipt of a Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG) in academic year 2013/14 was 33,900. Numbers remained relatively constant, circa. 34,000 until 2017/18.

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 to be awarded to every new full-time student, regardless of their household residual income. This change in policy caused a significant increase in take-up (up 21.2%) in the first year with 40,800 grants awarded. Increases continued in the subsequent two years (up 15.4% and 16.5% respectively), to peak at 54,900.

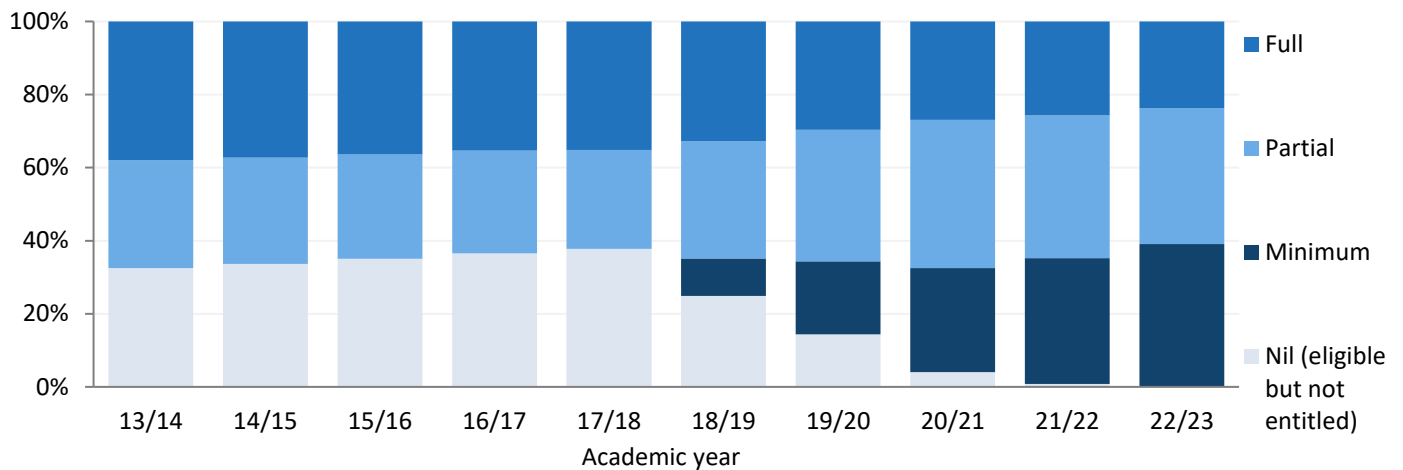
In academic year 2021/22, for the first time since the funding review, the number of grants awarded decreased by 3.0% to 53,200. A further decrease of 4.7% was recorded in the most recent year, bringing the total number of grants awarded down to 50,700 in 2022/23.

The total amount awarded in full-time WGLG was £132.5 million in academic year 2013/14. Following a very small increase in the following year, the amount awarded reduced down to its lowest point at £127.7 million by 2016/17. In line with the number of grants awarded, the amount awarded increased significantly to peak at £230.4 million in 2020/21. In the following year, the first decrease was reported (down 5.8% to £217.1 million). A further decrease of 9.2% was reported in the most recent year, down to £197.0 million.

Small reduction in the proportions of eligible full-time students awarded both full and partial Welsh Government Learning Grants in 2022/23

Figure 6: Proportion of full-time Welsh Government Learning Grants awarded by level of grant support

The legend follows the same order as the stacks in the columns.



Source: **Table 4A**

[Download the data for Figure 6](#) (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 6 shows how the changes in Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG) policy have affected the proportions of full-time Wales-domiciled students receiving different levels of support.

Between academic year 2013/14 and 2017/18, the split of WGLG awarded by the level of support averaged at 36% for a full grant, 28% for partial grant and 35% who were eligible, but not entitled to a grant.

Over the four academic years following the **Diamond review** in 2018/19, it is evident that the majority of the previously eligible but not entitled students ('nil' category) concluded their studies, as this proportion reduced down to just 1% of all grant-eligible students. As a result, by academic year 2022/23 almost all full-time students were in receipt of some level of WGLG (99.8%).

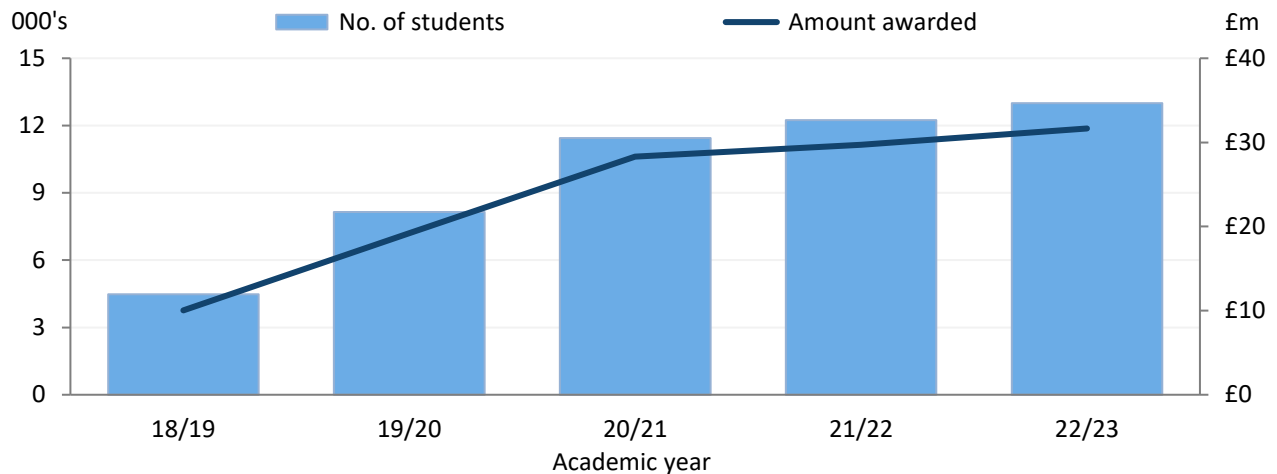
In the first-academic year post-Welsh funding review, just 10% of all those awarded a full-time WGLG received the minimum £1,000. By academic year 2022/23, this has increased to 39%. In terms of the total amount awarded, the 'minimum' category of entitlement equated to £5.6 million in 2018/19, by 2022/23 this has increased to £19.8 million.

Since the funding-review, by academic year 2022/23 the percentage of eligible full-time Wales-domiciled students receiving a full grant has reduced to 24% (down from 26% in the previous year) whereas those receiving a partial grant has increased to 37% (down from 39% in the previous year).

6.2% increase in part-time Welsh Government Learning Grant take-up, consistent growth to the previous year

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

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount awarded against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 5A**

[Download the data for Figure 7 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 7 shows that in academic year 2018/19 (the first year of availability), the part-time Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG) was awarded to 4,500 students. Characteristically large increases (typical for a new student support type) were reported in both the second and third years (of 81.8% and 40.5% respectively) to reach 11,400.

Whilst the rate of increase has since slowed, the number of part-time grants awarded has continued to rise, to peak at 13,000 in 2022/23 (up 6.2% on the previous year).

In 2018/19, the first year of the part-time WGLG £10.0 million was awarded. With similar growth rates to that of the number of grants awarded, the total amount awarded has increased to £31.7 million by 2022/23.

The maximum amount of WGLG a part-time student could be awarded in 2022/23 was £4,500. This, combined with the part-time Maintenance Loan formed a maximum maintenance support offering of £5,929.

As with the full-time Welsh Government Learning Grant, the amount awarded is dependent on household residual income and course intensity.

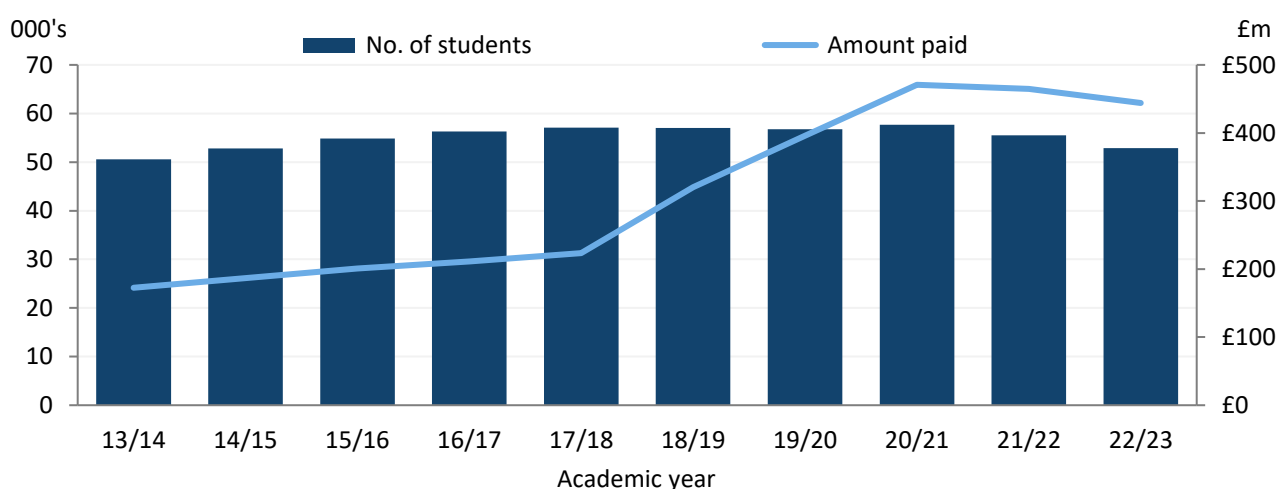
Undergraduate Tuition Fee Loans

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.

4.8% decrease in the number of Tuition Fee Loans paid out on behalf of full-time students in academic year 2022/23

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

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount paid against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 3B (i)**

[Download the data for Figure 8 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 8 shows that the number of Tuition Fee Loans paid out on behalf of full-time students in 2013/14 was 50,600. This number gradually increased to 57,100 by 2017/18. Numbers then reduced slightly over the subsequent two academic years (by 0.1% and 0.5% respectively) and following an outlying increase to peak at 57,700 in 2020/21, numbers have since reduced (down 4.8% in 2022/23 to 52,900 in comparison to the previous year).

The amount paid out in the form of full-time Tuition Fee Loans in 2013/14 was £172.6 million. This rose steadily to £223.6 million by 2017/18.

From academic year 2018/19 the maximum Tuition Fee Loan available increased significantly to accommodate the change to policy in which new full-time students could be charged a maximum of £9,250 in Tuition Fees (in line with England-domiciled students). This was considerably more than the £4,296 charged to all full-time students in the previous year (+ 115%). Continuing students in 2018/19 however, would remain on the 2012/13 cohort arrangement for the duration of their studies e.g., charged £4,450 for academic year 2018/19 (and increasing by circa. 3% per academic year).

This change in policy resulted in the amount paid out in the form of Tuition Fee Loans increasing by a considerable 43.3% to £320.5 million. A further contributing factor to this increase was the discontinuation of Tuition Fee Grants to new full-time students in 2018/19 following the **Diamond Review**.

Notable increases were also evident in the following two years to peak at £470.8 million in 2020/21. These further increases can be attributed to the reducing proportion of students who remained eligible for the lower Tuition Fee Loans and/or the Tuition Fee Grant (pre-2018/19 students).

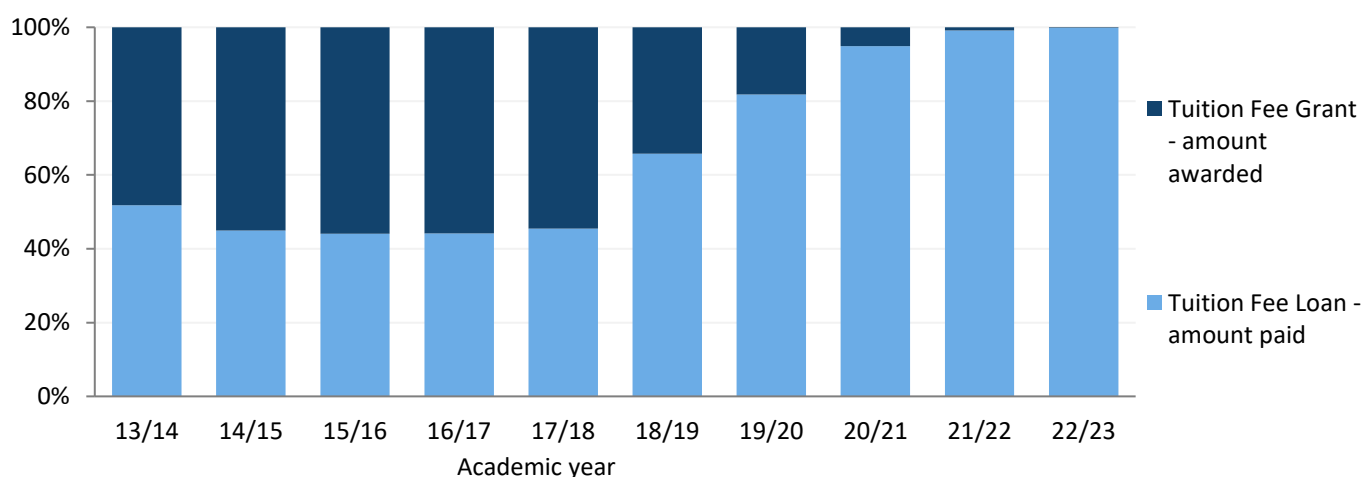
In academic year 2021/22 the first, albeit small decrease was reported (down 1.2%). This was followed by a more substantial decrease of 4.5% in 2022/23, down to £443.9 million.

More information on the Diamond Review can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Tuition Fee Loans make up almost 100% of the full-time Tuition Fee Support package in academic year 2022/23

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

The legend follows the same order as the stacks in the columns.



Source: **Table 3B (i) and 4D**

[Download the data for Figure 9 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 9 illustrates the changing proportion of Tuition Fee Loans vs. Tuition Fee Grants between academic years 2013/14 and 2022/23.

In academic year 2013/14, Tuition Fee Loans made up 51.7% of the total tuition fee support package. By 2022/23, this had increased to 99.8% loans as any remaining Tuition Fee Grant-eligible students will have concluded their studies (pre-2018/19 students).

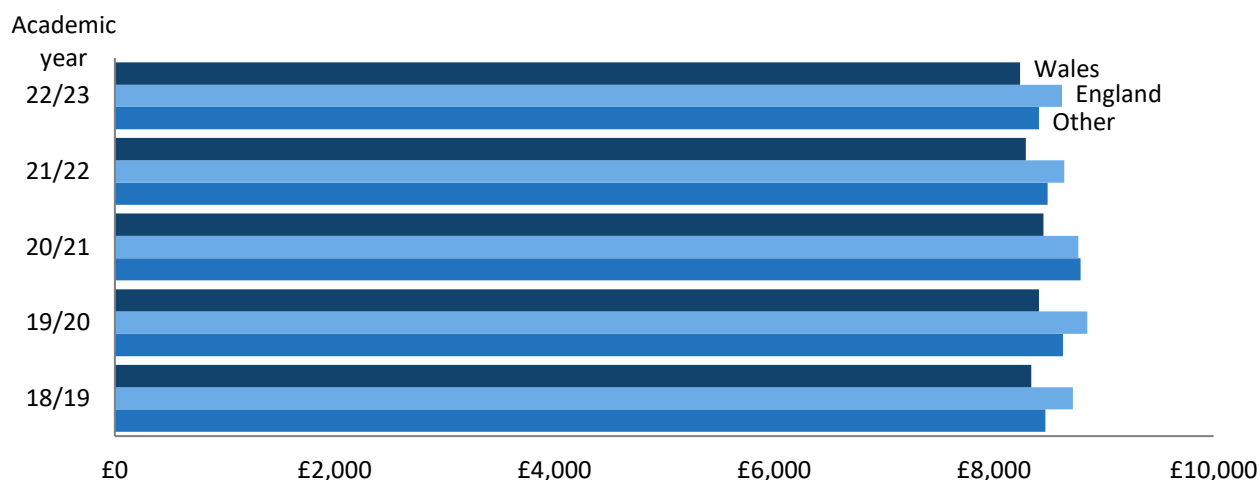
The diminishing proportion of full-time students eligible for the grant is particularly evident between academic years 2017/18 and 2020/21 as there was minimal change in the total number of full-time students accessing tuition fee support, yet the proportion attributed to grants decreased considerably (from 54.5% to just 5.1%).

By 2022/23 Tuition Fee Grants made up just 0.2% of the total tuition fee support package.

Small reductions in the average full-time Tuition Fee Loan paid out by Student Finance Wales, across all UK countries of study

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

First cluster labelled.



Source: **Table 3C (i)**

[Download the data for Figure 10 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 10 displays the average amount paid in full-time undergraduate Tuition Fee Loans between academic years 2018/19 and 2022/23, based on the country in which the undergraduate is studying.

The amount differs depending on the country and type of provider that the student chooses to study in. This is due to the differing amounts that each country/provider-type in the UK charges for tuition fees.

The figure also indicates that Wales-domiciled students studying in Wales have consistently had the lowest average loan amount when compared to those studying in either England and 'Other' (outside of England and Wales).

The average full-time Tuition Fee Loan for a Wales-domiciled student studying in Wales increased from £8,340 in 2018/19 to £8,450 by 2020/21. This has since reduced to £8,240 by 2022/23 (a £50 decrease in the most recent year).

The average full-time loan for a Wales-domiciled students studying in England increased from £8,720 in 2018/19 to £8,850 in 2019/20 then has since decreased year-or-year down to £8,620 by 2022/23 (a £20 decrease in the most recent year).

The average full-time loan for a Wales-domiciled student studying outside of Wales or England ('Other') increased from £8,470 in 2018/19 to £8,790 in 2020/21, since decreasing to £8,410 by 2022/23 (an £80 decrease in the most recent year).

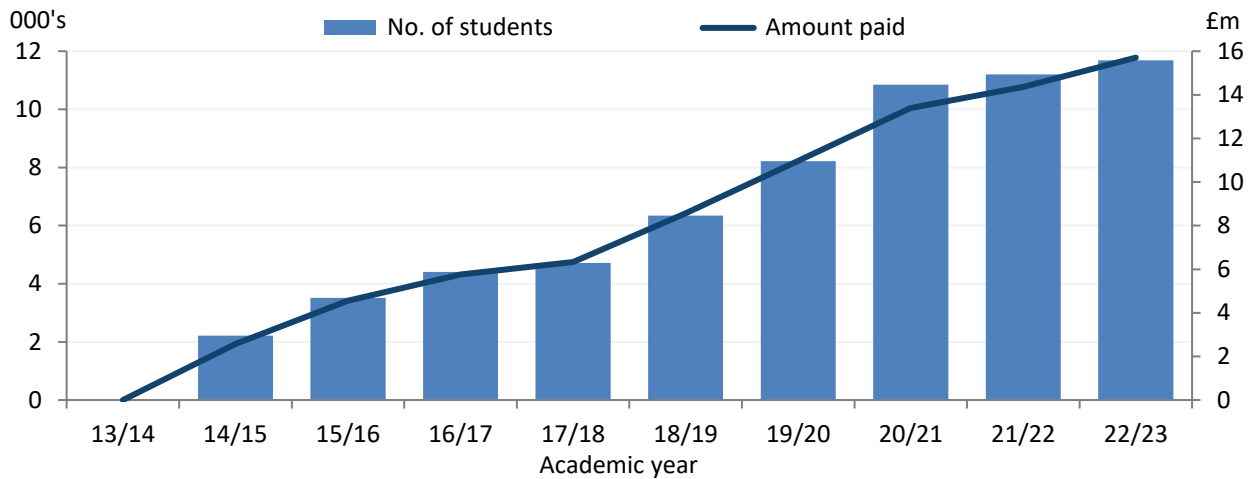
The figure also demonstrates that Wales-domiciled students studying in Wales have consistently had the lowest average loan amount when compared to those studying outside of Wales.

The overall average across all UK countries of study marginally increased by £30 from £8,370 to £8,400 in academic year 2022/23 (up 0.4%). This is the lowest reported annual increase and is as a result of the overwhelming proportion of borrowers being entitled to post-2018 funding levels, coupled with the continued freeze of the maximum amounts UK providers can charge in tuition fees.

Small increases in the number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of part-time students continue in academic year 2022/23 to reach 11,700

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

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount paid against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 5A**

[Download the data for Figure 11 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Tuition Fee Loans were made available to part-time students studying in Wales in academic year 2014/15.

Figure 11 shows that, in the first year of availability Tuition Fee Loans were paid on behalf of 2,200 part-time students. Take-up significantly increased in the second year (characteristic for a new student support-type), up 58.8% to 3,500. Typically, growth slowed to 7.2% by 2017/18.

A subsequent period of significant increase began in 2018/19 (averaging at 28.4% per year) reaching 10,800. This could be attributed to the discontinuation of the part-time Course Grant to new students in academic year 2017/18.

From 2021/22 increases again slowed, falling to 4.3% in the most recent year, to peak at 11,700 students.

Showing a consistent trend to that of the number of loans paid out, in the first year of the part-time Tuition Fee Loan, £2.6 million was paid on behalf of students. This increased to reach £13.4 million by 2020/21. Smaller increases are evident in the latest two years, most recently up 9.3% in 2022/23 reaching £15.7 million.

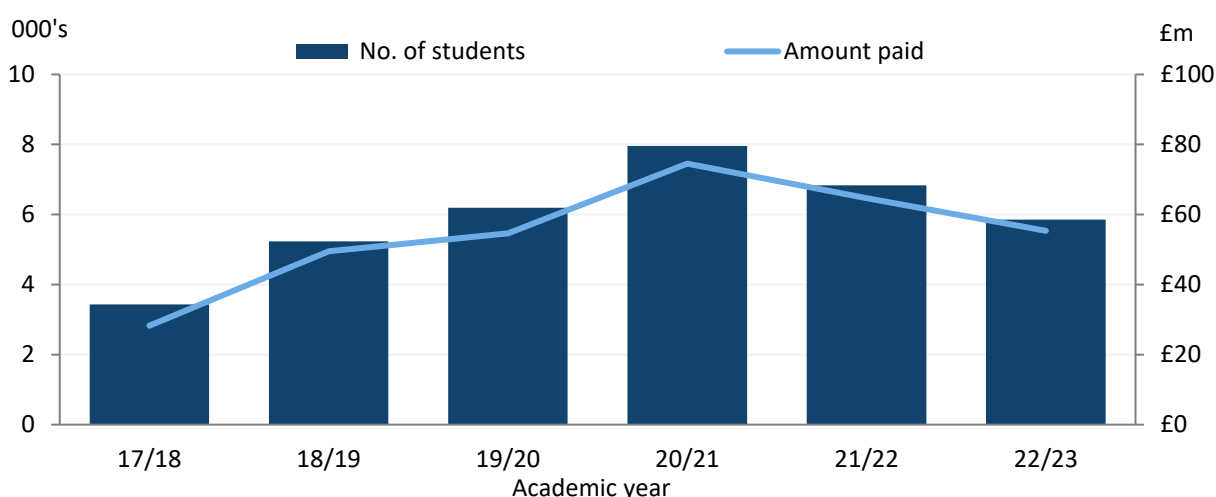
Postgraduate loans & grants

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.

2022/23 reports the second year of decrease in Postgraduate Master's Loan take-up, down by a further 14.4%

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

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount paid against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 6A**

[Download the data for Figure 12 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 12 indicates that in the first year of availability, 3,400 students received a Postgraduate Master's Loan. Typically for a new student support-type, in the second year, numbers notably increased to reach 5,200 (up 52.5%). In 2019/20 an additional 18.4% received a master's loan.

Academic year 2020/21 reported a more significant increase in take-up (28.4% higher) to reach 8,000. This could be attributed to the perceived reduced employment opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, either encouraging undergraduates to continue to postgraduate level or non-students to return to study.

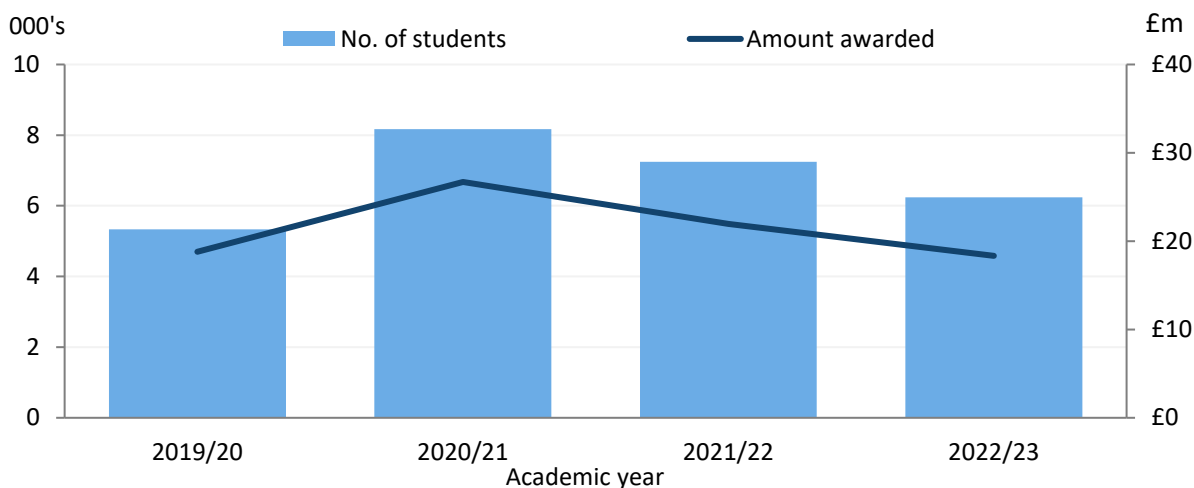
In 2021/22, figures normalised resulting in the first decrease in take-up (down 14.1% to 6,800). Academic year 2022/23 shows a further reduction of 14.4%, down to 5,900.

The amount paid out in Postgraduate Master's Loans follows a near identical trend. In the first year, £28.3 million was paid out, increasing to peak at £74.5 million by 2020/21. In the two most recent years, however, this has reduced (by 13.2% and 14.5% respectively) to arrive at £55.3 million by 2022/23.

In line with master’s loans, 2022/23 records the second year of reduced take-up for Postgraduate Master’s Grant, 16.5% lower than in the previous year

Figure 13: Number of students domiciled in Wales and EU (outside UK) receiving Postgraduate Master’s Grant and amount awarded

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount awarded against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 6D**

[Download the data for Figure 13 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

From 1 August 2019, eligible students ordinarily resident in Wales and those from the EU (outside UK) studying at a Welsh institution have been entitled to a Postgraduate Master’s Grant in addition to the Postgraduate Master’s Loan as a contribution towards costs whilst completing a postgraduate master’s degree course.

The maximum grant available has remained unchanged at £6,885. As with the Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG) for undergraduate students, there is a minimum £1,000 non-means-tested contribution available to all eligible students.

Figure 13 shows that in the first year of availability, 5,300 postgraduate master’s students were awarded a grant. In the following year, this increased by 53.2% to peak at 8,200.

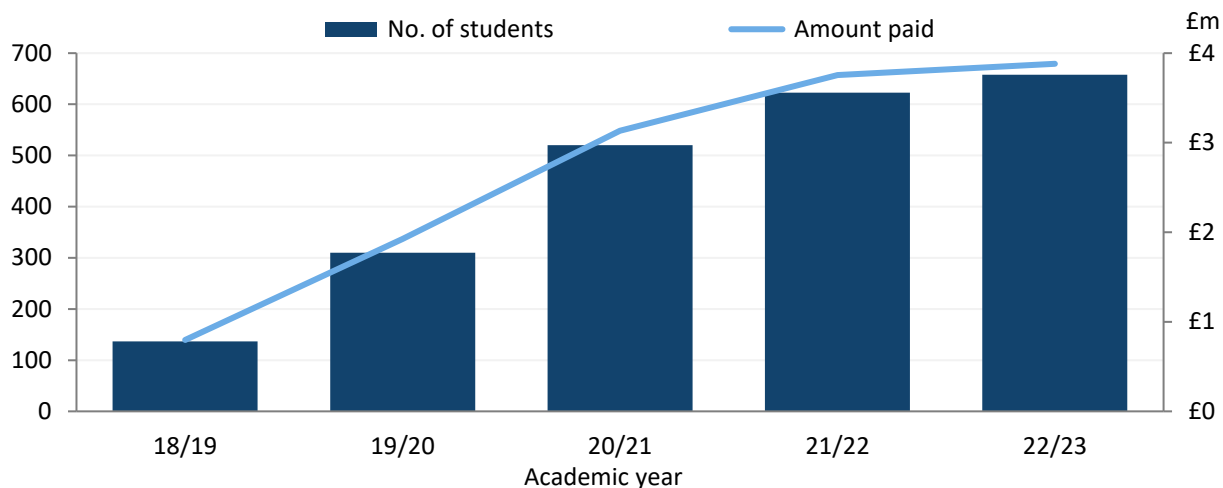
In 2021/22 numbers began to decline, down 11.4% to 7,200. This was followed by a further reduction in 2022/23, down 13.8% to 6,200.

A total of £18.8 million in Postgraduate Master’s Grants was awarded in academic year 2019/20. Following a significant 42.1% increase to peak at £26.7 million in 2020/21, the amount awarded decreased in the subsequent two years (by 17.8% and 16.5% respectively) down to £18.3 million by 2022/23.

Continued increase in take-up of Postgraduate Doctoral Loans in 2022/23, up by a further 5.6% on the previous year

Figure 14: Number of students domiciled in Wales and EU (outside UK) receiving Postgraduate Doctoral Loans and amount paid

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount paid against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 6B**

[Download the data for Figure 14 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

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

Students can apply for the loan amount they will require for the entire duration of their course (up to a maximum of £27,892 in academic year 2022/23) whilst also providing an estimate of the number of years over which they will study (this can be changed at any time). Each academic year's instalment is capped at a maximum rate (at £11,570 for 2022/23 applicants).

Figure 14 indicates that in the first year of availability, 137 postgraduates received a doctoral loan. In the second year, numbers considerably increased (up 126.3%) followed by a further significant increase in 2020/21 (of 67.7%) reaching 520. These levels of increase are characteristic for a new student support-type.

In the following two academic years, numbers continued to increase yet at a slowing rate, down to a 5.6% increase reaching a total of 658 doctoral loans paid in academic year 2022/23.

Academic year 2018/19 reported a total of £0.8 million paid out to eligible students. Mirroring the trend in loan numbers, in the second year the amount paid out increased significantly (up 141.7%) followed by a further notable increase in 2020/21 (of 62.7%) reaching £3.1 million.

In 2021/22, the amount paid out continued to increase but at a lesser rate (up 19.8%), followed by a much lower increase in 2022/23, of 3.3% reaching £3.9 million.

This lesser rate of increase is potentially driven by a 2.2% reduction in average loan borrowed. This could be attributed to Doctoral students opting to take higher amounts of their maximum annual rate in the first years of their Doctoral course, and lesser amounts in subsequent years of their course.

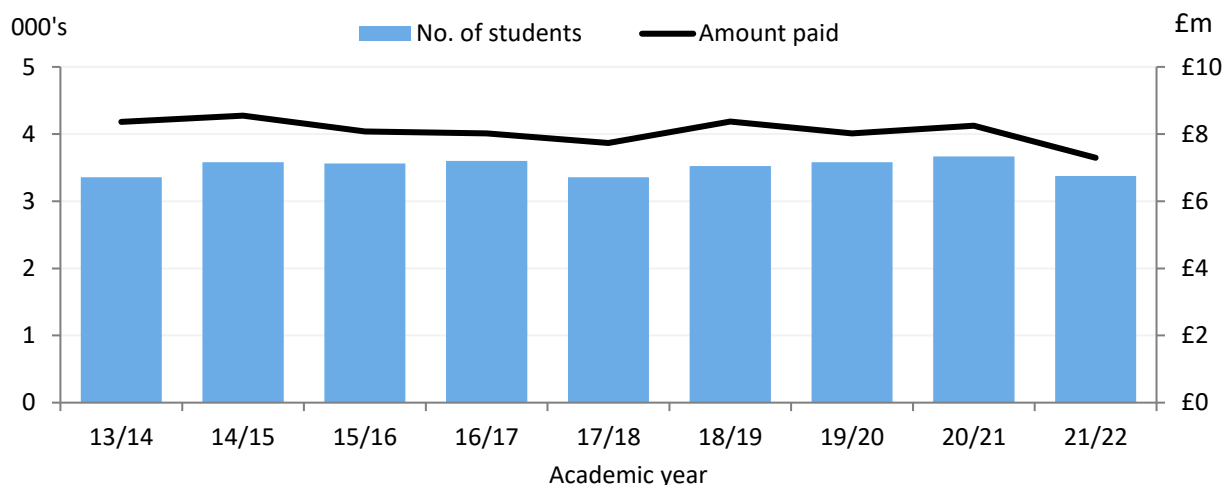
Disabled Students' Allowance

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.

11.6% decrease in the amount paid out in full-time students Disabled Students' Allowance in academic year 2021/22

Figure 15: Amount of DSA paid on behalf of full-time students by category and academic year (effective one year later)

The columns in this chart depict the number of students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount paid against the right-hand axis.



Source: **Table 4B**

[Download the data for Figure 15 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

The vast majority of DSA is paid to suppliers once the Student Loans Company receive the invoices for equipment or services. As invoices continue to be received well after the end of the academic year, we capture a more finalised position by quoting figures an academic year later than much of this publication.

Figure 15 shows that the total number of full-time students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) for the 2013/14 academic year was 3,400. Numbers increased by 6.6% in 2014/15 then remained at 3,600 through to 2017/18 when the number of students claiming reduced, returning to 2013/14 levels at 3,400. Between 2018/19 and 2020/21 numbers increased steadily to peak at 3,700. Numbers again returned to 3,400 for academic year 2021/22, a 7.9% reduction in comparison to the previous year.

The total amount claimed in full-time DSA was £8.4 million for the 2013/14 academic year. This has fluctuated over the years with the first decrease reported in 2015/16 (- 5.5%), potentially due to the change in policy by which students were required to contribute £200 towards the cost of equipment coming into effect in that academic year. The amount increased most significantly in 2018/19 (up 8.2% to £8.4 million). 2021/22 reported an 11.6% decrease in comparison to the previous year, down to £7.3 million.

As at 31 August 2023, a total of £7.2 million has been paid for academic year 2022/23 for full-time DSA. This is a 9.1% increase on the £6.6 million paid by the same point for 2021/22.

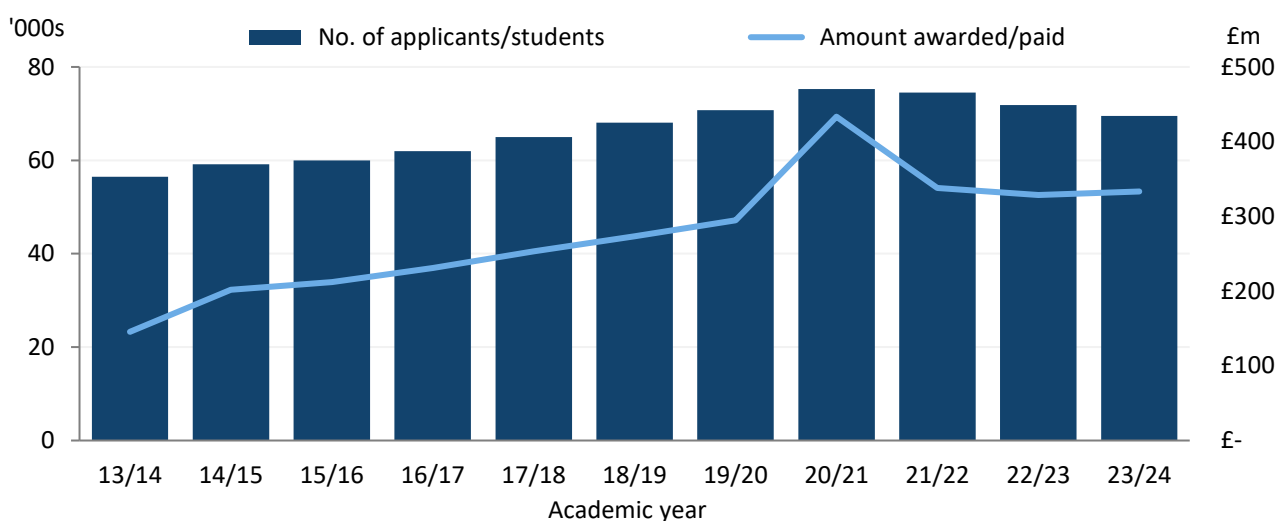
Early in year overview – academic year 2023/24

Table 7C (i) shows an early view of academic year 2023/24 at effective date 31 October 2023. This would be approximately two months into a typical academic year. These figures will be near-finalised in Table 2 of the next update of this publication, due to be released in November 2024.

By end-October 2023, a total of 69,500 undergraduates and postgraduates have been awarded/paid a total of £333.1 million for academic year 2023/24

Figure 16. Early-in-year: Number of students domiciled in Wales and EU (outside UK) receiving higher education support and amount awarded/paid

The columns in this chart depict the number of applicants/students against the left-hand axis, and the line illustrates the amount awarded/paid against the right-hand axis.



Source: Table 7C (i)

[Download the data for Figure 16 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 16 shows that by end-October in the 2013/14 academic year, a total of 56,500 undergraduates and postgraduates had been awarded/paid student support. This early position increased steadily over the subsequent six years to reach 70,700 by 2019/20. The total amount awarded/paid by this early point of the same academic years followed a very similar trend, growing from £145.5 million in 2013/14 to £294.8 million by 2019/20.

As at end-October 2020, a total of £433.4 million had been awarded/paid to 75,300 students for the 2020/21 academic year. Despite a 6.4% increase in the number of students awarded/paid, the amount awarded/paid was 47.0% higher than at the same point in the previous year. This significant increase was predominantly attributed to an **early second instalment** of undergraduate tuition fees payments made to higher education providers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (two payments made in October 2020, instead of the typical schedule of one instalment paid in October and one in the following February). For further detail, please refer to our **Additional Information section**.

Figures normalised in the following year with the amount awarded/paid reducing to £338.0 million. Omitting the previous outlying year, the amount awarded/paid shows a steady increase between 2019/20 and 2021/22, in line with previous annual increases.

The early-look at academic year 2022/23 indicated a decrease in both the number awarded/paid and the amount awarded/paid (down 3.6% and 2.8% respectively).

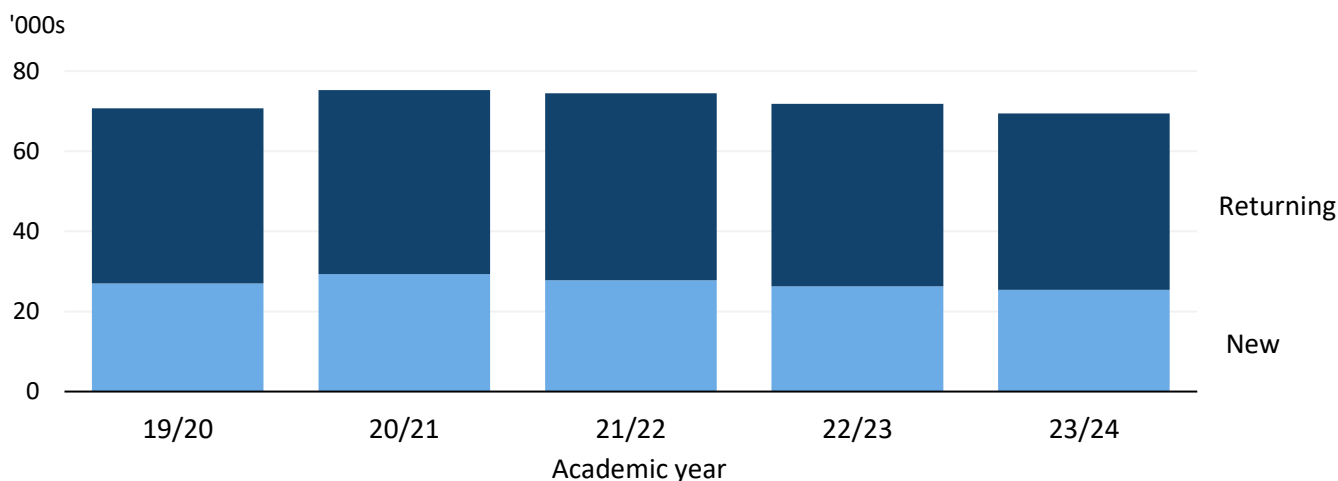
As at 31 October 2023, a total of 69,500 applicants/students have been paid for academic year 2023/24. This continued the downward trend beginning in the previous year (by a further 3.3%). The amount awarded/paid however increased slightly, up 1.4% to reach £333.1 million.

Of this, £310.6 million has been awarded/paid so far to 64,100 undergraduate students for academic year 2023/24. The number awarded/paid is 3.2% below the end-October position in the previous year (2,200 fewer) yet the amount awarded/paid is 1.7% higher (up by £5.2 million). Full-time undergraduate numbers have reduced by 3.9%, down to 54,100 offset by a small increase in part-time undergraduates (up 0.6%).

The early look at the 2023/24 academic year also indicates a total of £22.5 million has been paid to 5,400 postgraduate students so far. In comparison to the same point in 2022/23, this is a 3.5% decrease in the number of postgraduates paid (down by 200) and a 3.2% decrease in the amount paid out (£0.7 million less).

Early figures indicate a potential 3.2% reduction in the number of new students receiving student finance in academic year 2023/24

Figure 17: Early-in-year: Number of new and returning students domiciled in Wales and EU (outside UK) awarded/paid student support



Source: **Table 7C (ii)**

[Download the data for Figure 17 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

‘New’ students are defined as those who have not previously received student support from the Student Loans Company (SLC). ‘Returning’ students are defined as those who have.

Figure 17 indicates that the number of ‘new’ students awarded/paid student support by the end-October position for academic year 2019/20 was 27,000. This increased to 29,300 (up 8.4%) by the same point in the following year. Since then, numbers have decreased by 5.2% in 2021/22 and a further 5.4% in 2022/23 down to 26,300. As at end-October 2023, the number of ‘new’ students awarded/paid for academic year 2023/24 has decreased by a further 3.2%, down to 25,400.

The trend in ‘returning’ students follows a similar pattern yet includes a much larger proportion of students. The number of ‘returning’ students who had been awarded/paid student support by end-October in academic year 2019/20 was 43,700. This increased by 5.2% the following year, and by a further 1.6% in 2021/22 reaching 46,700. 2022/23 reported a decline in ‘returning’ students, down 2.5% to 45,600. At end-October 2023, the number of ‘returning’ students awarded/paid for academic year 2023/24 has decreased by a further 3.3%, down to 44,100.

As a proportion of all awarded/paid students at this early point in the academic year, ‘new’ students have decreased from 38.2% in 2019/20 down to 36.6% by 2023/24. Whereas ‘returning’ students have increased from 61.8% to 63.4% over the same period.

Additional Information

Available student financial support

Details on student support available in academic year 2022/23 and 2023/24 can be found the Student Finance Wales **website**.

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. This is evident on Table 7C (i) and (ii). 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 refer to **gov.uk**.

Definitions

For definitions of terms used in our publication, please refer to our **Definitions** page.

Data Sources

This publication uses data from Student Loans Company (SLC) administrative systems. For details of the administrative data sources used in our publications please refer to our **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. Refer to 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**.

In December 2020, owing to the significant public interest, SLC took the decision to publish data on the withdrawal notifications it receives from higher education providers (HEPs) in order to contribute towards an understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic may be impacting students. Due to ongoing interest, SLC continues to publish this series. These publications are housed within our **Other Statistics** section of **gov.uk**.

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 2022-23 was published on 15 June 2023.

The Student Awards Agency for Scotland publish details of higher education funding in Scotland in their publication 'Higher Education Student Support in Scotland'. The **latest release** of this series was published in August 2023 covering academic session 2022/23.

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 refer to our **National Statistics** page.