Statistics Publication

Student Loans Company

Student Support for Higher Education in England 2026:

2025/26 full year and 2026/27 early in year

SLC SP05/2026

26 November 2026

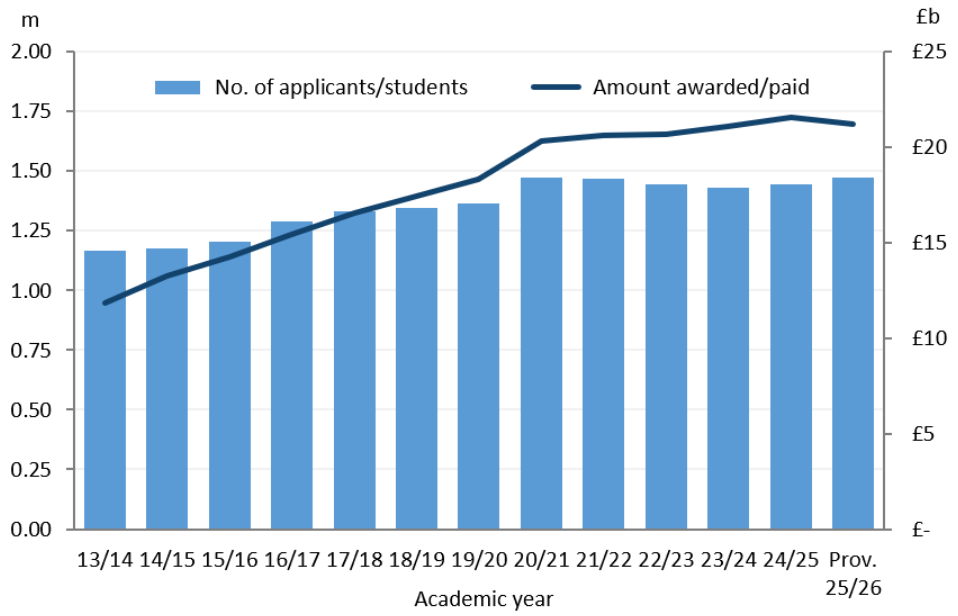
Coverage: England

Theme: Crime, Education and Justice

1.47 million students received higher education support in 2025/26, up 2.1% on the previous year

Figure 1: Number of students domiciled in England 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 2A**
Download the data for Figure 1 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 1 shows that 1.17 million full-time, part-time and postgraduate applicants/students were awarded/paid student finance in academic year 2013/14. This increased slowly up until 2016/17 when a more significant increase was reported, up 7.1% to 1.29 million. This can be predominantly attributed to the introduction of the Postgraduate Masters Loan, which encouraged a further 62,300 borrowers.

Annual increases then slowed, averaging 1.9% over the subsequent three academic years until 2020/21 when a 7.8% increase was reported, to 1.47 million. This was made up of a 6.7% increase in the number of undergraduates and a significant 22.8% increase in the number of postgraduates receiving funding. These increases were likely a result of the

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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, the number awarded/paid remained relatively constant (down 0.3%) as figures normalised against an outlying year. Over the subsequent three years, numbers averaged 1.44 million.

The provisional position for 2025/26 indicates a 2.1% increase to 1.47 million. This is made up of a 1.9% increase in the number of undergraduates and a 4.6% increase in the number of postgraduates receiving funding. While provisional figures are subject to revision, movements have generally been minor, with finalised figures over the last five years differing from the provisional figures by an average of just 0.5%. Therefore, the upward trend reported for 2025/26 is unlikely to be substantially affected when the figures are finalised.

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 £11.8 billion. Following a 12.0% increase in the following year, increases slowed to 5.4% by 2019/20.

In 2020/21 the total increased by a significant 10.7% to £20.3 billion, made up of a 10.0% increase in undergraduate funding and a notable 28.4% increase in postgraduate funding. In academic year 2021/22, a small increase of 1.4% was reported as figures normalized, bringing the total awarded/paid up to £20.6 billion. Over the subsequent three years, annual increases grew to 2.2% by 2024/25, at £21.6 billion.

The provisional position for 2025/26 indicates a decrease of 1.7% against the previous year, at £21.2 billion. However, it should be noted that the provisional figure for academic year 2024/25, reported in the **2025 edition** of this publication, was £20.3 billion, 6.2% lower than the finalised total of £21.6 billion reported in this year's edition. Consequently, 2024/25 ultimately recorded growth compared with the previous year. Over the last five years, finalised totals have exceeded their provisional counterparts by an average of 5.0%. Given this consistent pattern of upward revision, the provisional decrease reported for 2025/26 is likely to be revised upwards when final data becomes available and may become an increase on the previous year.

The average full-time Maintenance Loan paid to an England-domiciled student was £3,890 in 2013/14, increasing to £4,050 by 2015/16. Following the discontinuation of Maintenance Grants for new students in academic year 2016/17, the average loan borrowed increased considerably, rising by 18.8% to £4,810. Notable increases were also reported in the subsequent two years, owing to the growing proportion of borrowers who were no longer eligible for the grant.

Increases slowed to 2.3% by 2024/25, with the average amount paid reaching a peak of £7,870. The provisional position for academic year 2025/26 is 4.1% lower, at £7,550. However, historical movements between provisional and final figures suggest that the average will increase when the figures are finalised.

For more information on **undergraduate Maintenance Loans** please refer to the relevant section later in this publication.

The average full-time Tuition Fee Loan paid on behalf of an England-domiciled student was £6,140 in 2013/14. Following a significant 21.8% increase in the following year, to £7,480, growth slowed and averaged 1.7% annually through to 2020/21. Minimal change has been reported since then, with the average reaching £8,690 by 2024/25. The provisional average for academic year 2025/26 indicates a 3.9% decrease, to £8,350. However, historical movements between provisional and final figures suggest that the average will increase when the figures are finalised.

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

Table of contents

Introduction	4
What can you use these statistics for?	4
Things you need to know	4
Executive summary	5
Undergraduate Maintenance Loans	6
Undergraduate Tuition Fee Loans	8
Postgraduate loans	13
Disabled Students' Allowance	16
Childcare Grant	17
Early in year overview – academic year 2026/27	18
Additional information	22

Introduction

This statistics publication presents figures and analysis on student support awarded to applicants and paid to students or their higher education provider. The publication covers academic years 2013/14 to 2025/26, or from the year in which a particular support product was introduced, where later. The 'Early in Year' section provides an initial indication of activity in academic year 2026/27.

This publication covers applicants and students domiciled in England undertaking a designated higher education (HE) course at a UK university or college, as well as applicants and students domiciled in the EU (outside UK) undertaking 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 Student Loans Company for students studying in higher education between academic years 2013/14 and 2025/26, along with an early view of academic year 2026/27.

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 primary purpose of this publication is to measure student support paid to students funded by England during each academic year. This includes Maintenance Loans, Tuition Fee Loans, postgraduate loans and targeted support such as Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

Throughout this publication, a distinction is made between **awards** and **payments**.

- **Awards** represent the amount a student is entitled to receive if they remain in attendance for the full academic year.
- **Payments** represent the actual amount paid to, or on behalf of, students. As a result, payment amounts may be lower where a student does not attend, withdraws during the year, or does not draw down their full entitlement.

Due to data reporting limitations, it is not possible to separately identify payments for some grant products. Consequently, expenditure relating to Maintenance Grants and other targeted support products, such as Adult Dependants' Grant and Travel Grant, is reported as awards rather than payments.

Provisional vs. final figures

As payments are made to, and on behalf of, students throughout the academic year, some may be recorded after the effective dates used for this publication. Where this occurs, figures for the most recent academic year are identified as **provisional**. To provide a more complete picture, the previous academic year's data is refreshed the following year, where indicated, to capture these later payments. This is particularly relevant for postgraduate products, due to later course start dates.

Provisional figures are revised once, in the subsequent edition of this publication, at which point they are considered final and supersede the previously published provisional figures. Where appropriate, commentary is provided on the movement between provisional and final figures.

Executive summary – 2025/26 full year and 2026/27 early in year

For more detail, please click on the individual headline:

- 1.47 million students received **higher education support** in 2025/26, up 2.1% on the previous year
- Provisional figures indicate a 1.9% increase in **full-time Maintenance Loan** take-up in academic year 2025/26, at 1.19 million
- Provisional figures indicate a 2.1% increase in **full-time Tuition Fees Loan** take-up in academic year 2025/26, to 1.24 million
- Decrease in the number of **Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of EU (outside UK) students** continues, due to the change in policy in 2021/22, down to 6,600
- Provisional 2.7% decrease in **part-time Tuition Fee Loan** take-up in 2025/26, to 75,500
- Following six years of notable increase, **Tuition Fee Loan** take-up for **accelerated degrees** slows in academic year 2025/26, to 4,700
- 7.7% of all full-time loan borrowers **took only a Tuition Fee Loan and opted out of Maintenance Loan support**, representing the highest percentage recorded between 2013/14 and 2025/26
- Provisional figures indicate a 4.9% increase in **Postgraduate Master's Loan** take-up in 2025/26, to 84,900
- Provisional figures for 2025/26 indicate a small decline in take-up of **Postgraduate Doctoral Loans**, to 9,300
- Finalised figures show a 6.3% increase in the amount paid out in **full-time undergraduate Disabled Students' Allowance** for 2024/25, at £178.6 million.
- Increase in the amount claimed in **Childcare Gran**t, slows to 0.8% at £304.5 million in 2025/26
- By end-October 2026, a total of 1.17 million **undergraduates and postgraduates have been awarded/paid** a total of £5.1 billion for **academic year 2026/27**
- Early look at **academic year 2026/2**7 shows a continued decline in the number of **EU (outside UK) students** paid, due to the funding-policy change in 2021/22 - down to 4,300
- Early figures indicate a 3.7% decrease in the number of **new students** receiving student finance in **academic year 2026/27**, at 413,000

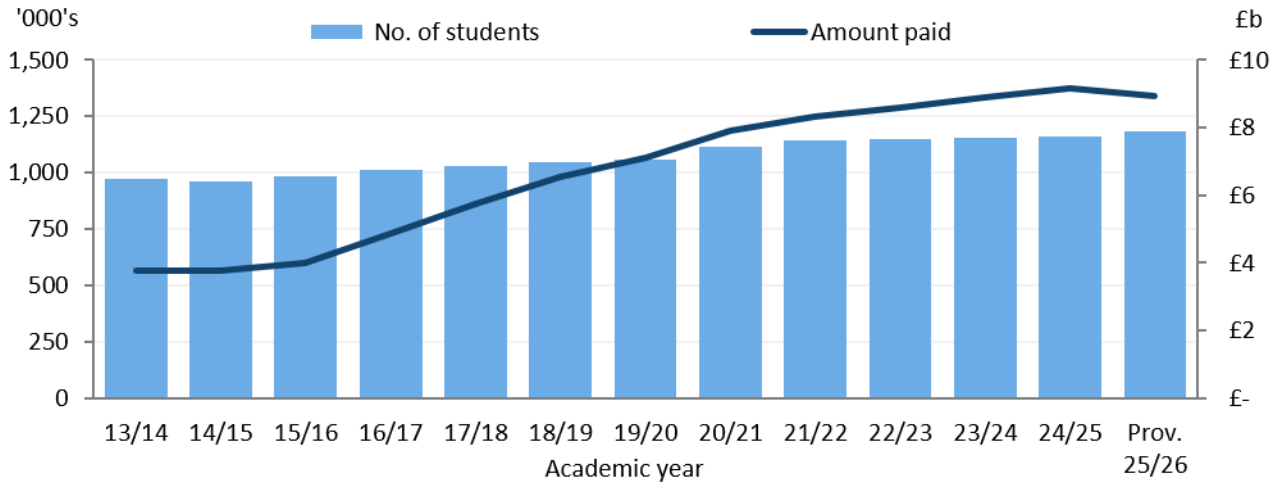
Undergraduate Maintenance Loans

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.

Provisional figures indicate a 1.9% increase in full-time Maintenance Loan take-up in academic year 2025/26, to 1.19 million

Figure 2: Number of students domiciled in England receiving higher education 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 0.97 million. Following a small 1.0% decrease in the subsequent year, gradual increases were reported year-on-year, most significantly in 2020/21 (up 5.9%). However, since 2021/22 numbers have seen minimal change.

The provisional position for academic year 2025/26 of 1.19 million indicates a 1.9% increase compared to the previous year, with an increase of 22,500 students taking out Maintenance Loans (vs. a 0.7% / 8,300 increase in 2024/25). While provisional figures are subject to revision, changes have typically been modest, with finalised figures over the last five years differing from their provisional position by an average of just 0.4%. As such, the upward trend reported for 2025/26 is unlikely to change materially when the figures are finalised.

£3.8 billion was paid out in the form of Maintenance Loans in 2013/14. This remained below £4.0 billion through academic year 2015/16. From 2016/17 new students were no longer eligible for a Maintenance Grant and in turn the maximum Maintenance Loan available was increased significantly (up by 42.9% to £8,200). This resulted in a 21.9% increase in the total paid out, up to £4.9 billion in 2016/17. In subsequent years increases slowed, down to 3.0% by 2024/25 due to the lessening percentage of students who remained eligible for the grant (and therefore the lower maximum Maintenance Loan).

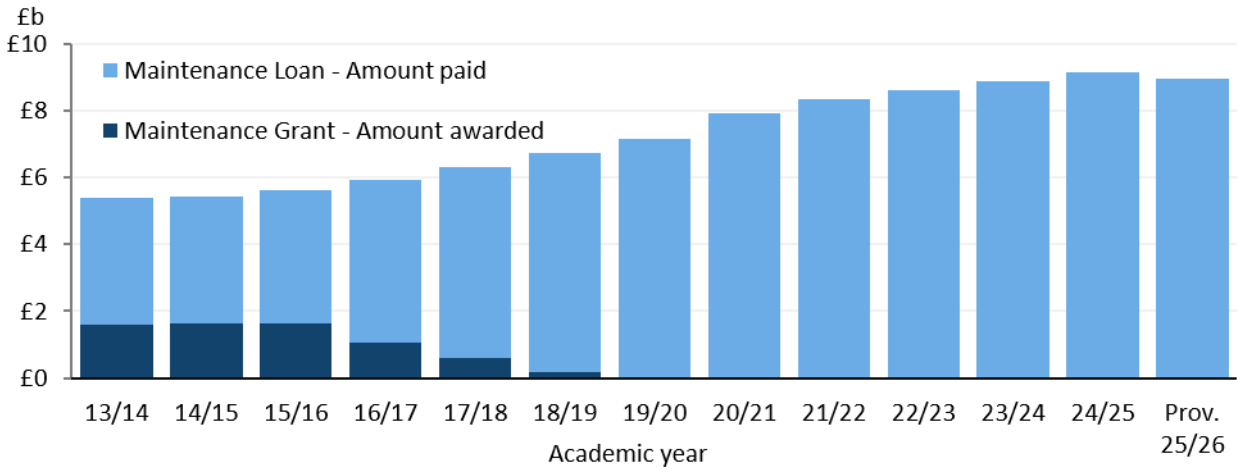
The provisional amount paid out for academic year 2025/26 is £8.9 billion. This is 2.2% lower than the finalised figure reported for 2024/25.

It should be noted that the provisional figure for academic year 2024/25, published in the **2025 edition** of this publication, was £8.6 billion, 6.4% lower than the finalised figure of £9.1 billion published in this year's edition. As a result, 2024/25 ultimately recorded an increase compared with the previous year. Over the last five years, finalised figures have been, on average, 5.2% higher than the corresponding provisional figures.

Given this consistent pattern of upward revision, the provisional decrease reported for 2025/26 is likely to be revised upwards when final data becomes available and may become an increase on the previous year.

Figure 3: Total amount paid/awarded in full-time maintenance support to higher education students

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



Source: **Table 3A (i) and Table 4A**
Download the data for Figure 3 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 3 displays the total amount of maintenance support paid to full-time students, split into Maintenance Loans and Maintenance Grants.

In contrast to the **previously discussed** trend in Maintenance Loan take-up, *Figure 3* shows the total amount awarded in Maintenance Grants totalled £1.6 billion in 2013/14, reducing year-on-year to just £0.1 million by academic year 2025/26. This can be attributed to the discontinuation of Maintenance Grants to new students from 2016/17.

In 2013/14, students who began a higher education course from academic year 2012/13 could receive up to £3,354 in the form of a Maintenance Grant. This accounted for 47% of the maximum maintenance support available of £7,177 (based on the 'Elsewhere' rate), with the remaining 53% provided as a loan. By contrast, for students starting in 2016/17, after the grant was discontinued, the maximum support increased to £8,200, but this was entirely loan-based.

In the first year of this policy change, the amount paid out in Maintenance Grants decreased by 35.7%. Since 2017/18 annual decreases have escalated due to the ever-decreasing proportion of full-time borrowers who remained eligible for the grant (only those who were/are in continuing study since pre-2016/17). Due to its discontinuation, the % of total maintenance support attributed to grants has steadily decreased from 29.6% in academic year 2013/14. This proportion will continue to decrease to zero as the last eligible grant students complete their courses.

For more information on maximum loans and grants available, please refer to **Table 1A**.

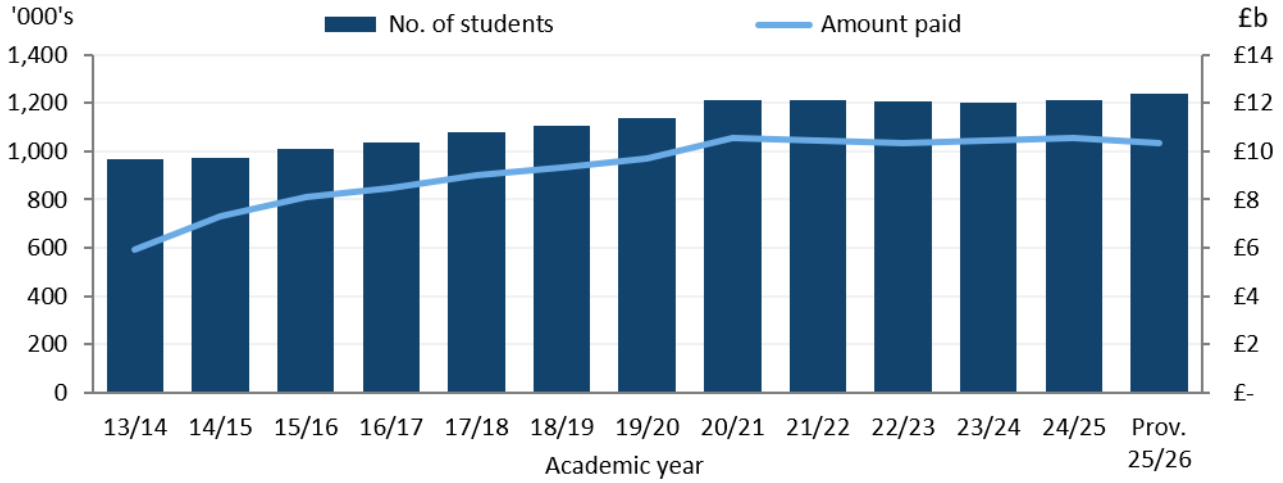
Undergraduate Tuition Fee Loans

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.

Provisional figures indicate a 2.1% increase in full-time Tuition Fees Loan take-up in academic year 2025/26, at 1.24 million

Figure 4: Number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of full-time England 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 4 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 4 shows the number of Tuition Fee Loans paid out on behalf of full-time students in 2013/14 was 0.97 million. This number increased by an average of 2.7% each year up until academic year 2019/20, to 1.13 million. 2020/21 recorded the most significant increase (of 6.6%) up to 1.21 million whilst across the subsequent four years, there has been minimal change.

The provisional position for academic year 2025/26 of 1.24 million indicates a 2.1% increase compared to the previous year, with an additional 25,500 students taking out Tuition Fee Loans. This compares to a 0.9% / 10,300 increase in the previous year.

This provisional increase is made up of a 2.3% increase in loans paid on behalf of England-domiciled students (+ 27,700) offset by a 25.4% decrease in loans paid on behalf of EU (outside UK) students (- 2,200) due to the continuing effect of the discontinuation of **EU- tuition fee funding** in 2021/22.

While provisional figures are subject to revision, changes have typically been small, with finalised figures over the last five years differing from their provisional position by an average of just 0.5%. As such, the upward trend reported for 2025/26 is unlikely to change significantly when the figures are finalised.

In academic year 2013/14, £5.9 billion was paid out on behalf of full-time students in the form of Tuition Fee Loans. The most substantial increase occurred the following year, rising 22.8% primarily due to the declining proportion of pre-2012/13 students whose tuition fees were capped at £3,375. As this cohort has

been gradually replaced by students subject to the higher fee cap (initially £9,000) introduced in 2012/13, by 2020/21 the amount paid had risen to £10.5 billion.

Academic year 2021/22 saw the first decrease in the amount paid, albeit by just 0.8%. This was followed by a further 1.0% decrease in the subsequent year.

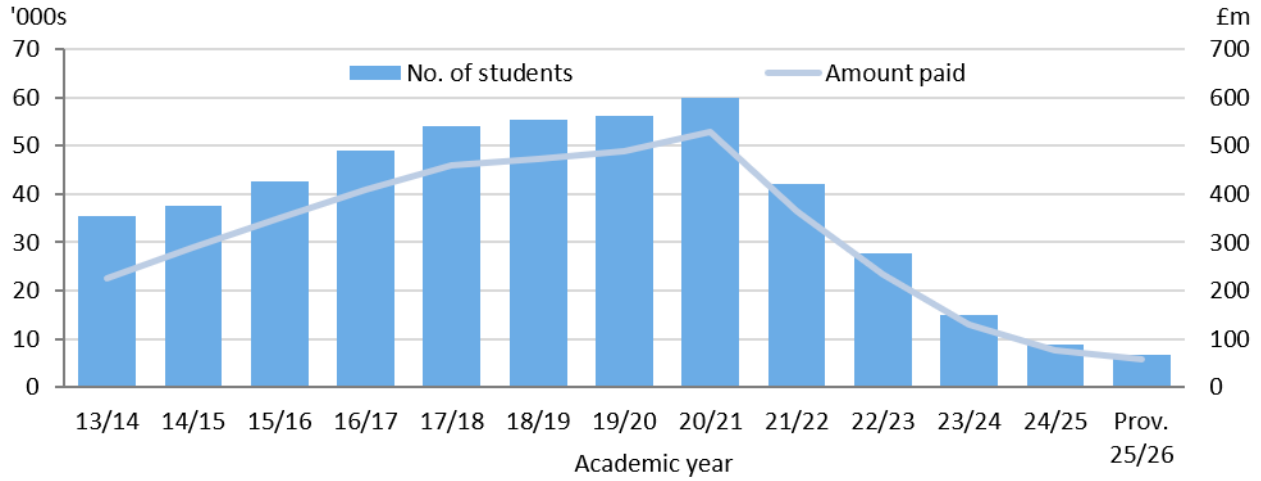
The provisional amount paid out for the 2025/26 academic year indicates a decrease of 1.8% compared with the finalised position for 2024/25, to £10.3 billion. However, it should be noted that the provisional figure for academic year 2024/25, published in the **2025 edition** of this publication, was £9.9 billion, 6.1% lower than the finalised figure of £10.5 billion published in this year's edition. As a result, 2024/25 in fact recorded a small increase on the previous year.

Over the last five years, finalised figures have, on average, been 4.8% higher than the corresponding provisional figures. Given this pattern of upward revision, the provisional decrease reported for 2025/26 may be revised upwards when final data becomes available and may result in an increase compared with 2024/25.

Decrease in the number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of EU (outside UK) students continues due to the change in policy in 2021/22, down to 6,600

Figure 5: Number of Tuition Fee Loans paid on behalf of full-time 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 5 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 5 shows that in 2013/14, Tuition Fee Loans were paid on behalf of 35,500 full-time EU (outside UK) domiciled students, increasing year-on-year to peak at 60,000 in 2020/21.

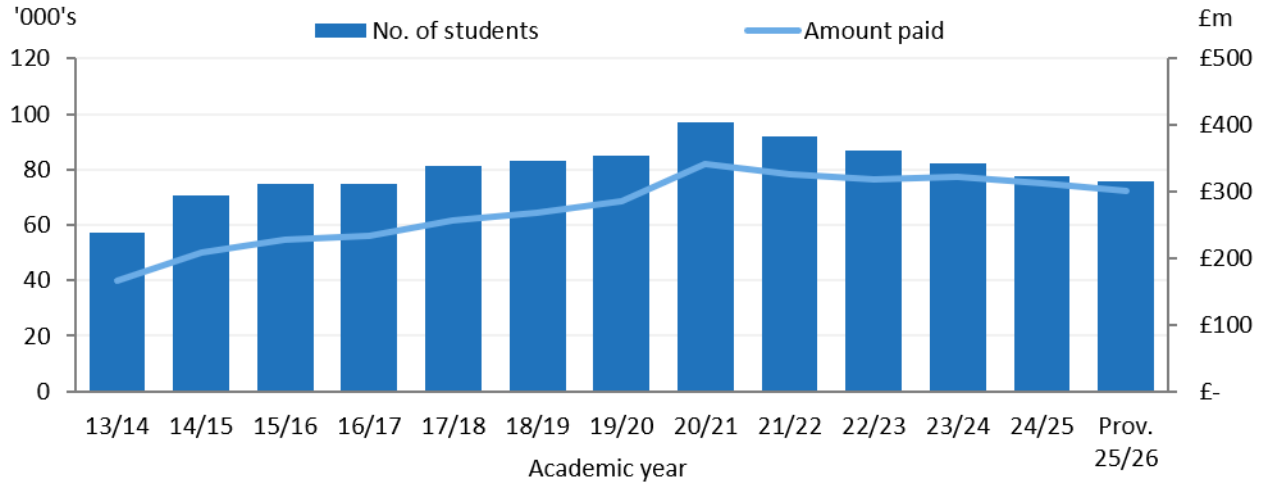
Academic year 2020/21 was named as the final year in which new EU students (without a **'settled or pre-settled' status)** would be **eligible for tuition fee support**. As a result, in 2021/22 the first decrease in take-up was reported, down 29.8% to 42,100. Sizeable year-on-year decreases have continued, with the provisional position for academic year 2025/26 indicating a further decrease of 25.4%, down to 6,600.

Following the same trend, a total of £225.8 million was paid on behalf of full-time EU (outside UK) domiciled students in 2013/14, increasing to peak at £527.5 million in 2020/21. Since the policy change, this has decreased year-on-year, to £57.6 million by 2025/26.

Provisional 2.7% decrease in part-time Tuition Fee Loan take-up in 2025/26, to 75,500

Figure 6: Number of students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) receiving part-time Tuition Fee 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 6 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 6 shows that 57,400 Tuition Fee Loans were paid on behalf of part-time students in academic year 2013/14, increasing to 84,800 by 2019/20. In the following year a notable 14.5% increase was reported, predominantly a result of an additional 10,000 entrants enrolled in Open University courses, likely due to of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting some employment sectors. In academic year 2021/22 figures normalised resulting in an overall reduction of 5.3% (down to 91,900). However, numbers have continued to decrease.

The provisional figure for the 2025/26 academic year shows a further decrease of 2.7% (down to 75,500). This is made up of a 2.3% reduction in England-domiciled students coupled with a 26.8% fall in EU (outside UK) domiciled students (owing to the aforementioned **policy change**) taking the loan.

While provisional figures remain subject to revision, revisions in recent years have generally been small. Over the last five years, finalised figures have differed from their provisional positions by an average of 1.1%. Consequently, the increase reported for 2025/26 is unlikely to change substantially when the figures are finalised.

£165.8 million was paid out in Tuition Fee Loans on behalf of part-time students in academic year 2013/14, increasing to peak at £342.0 million in 2020/21, a notable 20.1% increase on the previous year. Mirroring the trend in the number of loans paid out, the first decrease in the total paid was reported in 2021/22 (of 4.8% down to £325.8 million). Following a small 1.2% increase in 2023/24, the amount paid reduced again, down by a further 2.9%.

The provisional amount paid out for the 2025/26 academic year indicates a decrease of 3.3% against 2024/25, at £301.9 million. This reduction is made up of a 2.8% decrease in the amount paid out on behalf of England-domiciled students, plus a 28.3% decrease in respect of EU (outside UK) domiciled students.

It should be noted that the provisional figure for academic year 2024/25, published in the **2025 edition** of this publication, was £288.0 million, 8.4% lower than the finalised figure of £312.2 million published in this

year's edition. As a result, 2024/25 ultimately recorded an increase on the previous year.

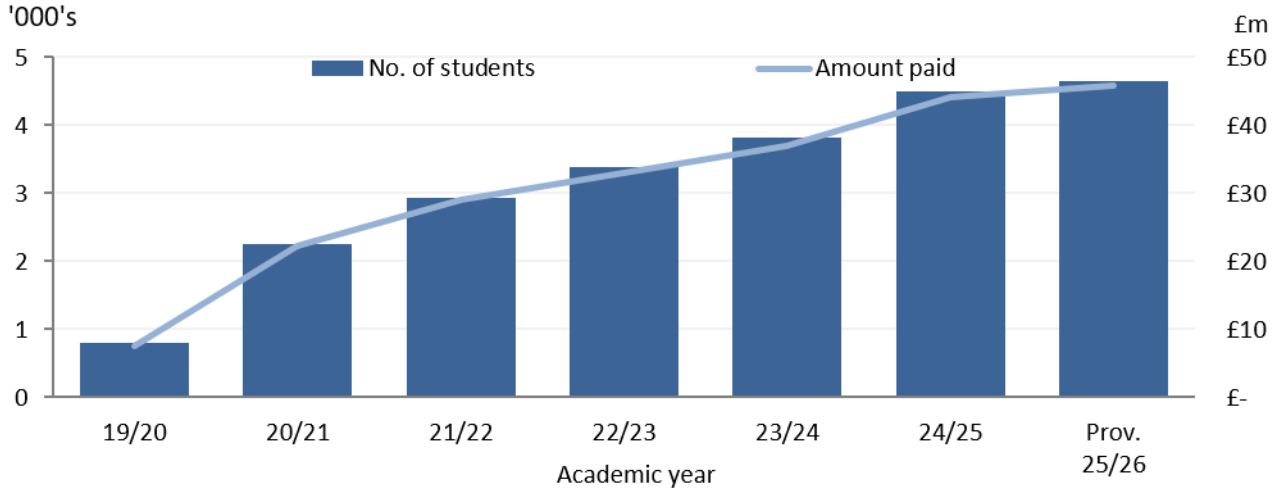
Over the last five years, finalised figures have, on average, been 8.6% higher than the corresponding provisional, suggesting that the provisional decrease reported for 2025/26 may become an increase on the previous year when final data becomes available.

Following six years of notable increase, Tuition Fee Loan take-up for accelerated degrees slows in academic year 2025/26, to 4,700

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 charge 20% extra on the maximum standard tuition fee for that course.

Figure 7: Number of students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) receiving Tuition Fee Loans for accelerated study 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 (iii)**
Download the data for Figure 7 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 7 demonstrates that in 2019/20, the first year of availability, 800 Tuition Fee Loans were paid out on behalf of students enrolled in accelerated study. Typically for a new type of student support there was a significant increase in take-up in the second year, up to 2,300 (+ 181.7%). Increases slowed to 17.8% by 2024/25.

The provisional position for the 2025/26 academic year reported a much less significant 3.5% increase, to 4,700. While provisional figures are subject to revision, changes have typically been minimal, with finalised figures over the last five years differing from their provisional position by an average of 0.7%. As such, the upward trend reported for 2025/26 is unlikely to change significantly when the figures are finalised.

As a percentage of the total number of all full-time undergraduates taking Tuition Fee Loans in 2025/26, those studying on accelerated degrees made up 0.4%, relatively consistent with the previous three years.

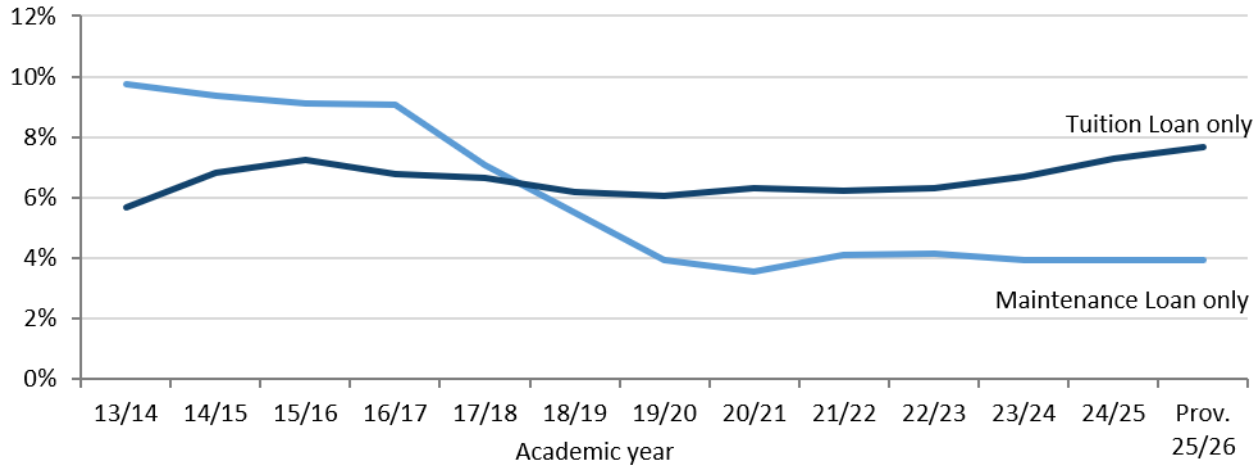
The amount paid out has followed a similar trend with £7.5 million paid out in 2019/20, increasing to £22.3 million in 2020/21 (up 198.5%). Subsequent increases slowed to 19.0% by academic year 2024/25.

The provisional amount paid out for the 2025/26 academic year indicates an increase of 3.8% compared with 2024/25, at £45.8 million. It should be noted that the provisional figure for academic year 2024/25, published in the **2025 edition** of this publication, was £41.8 million, 5.4% lower than the finalised figure of £44.1 million published in this year's edition.

As a result, 2024/25 in fact recorded a further increase on the previous year. Over the last five years, finalised figures have, on average, been 4.5% higher than the corresponding provisional figure. Given this pattern of upward revision, the increase reported for 2025/26 may be larger once finalised next year.

7.7% of all full-time loan borrowers took only a Tuition Fee Loan and opted out of Maintenance Loan support, representing the highest percentage recorded between 2013/14 and 2025/26

Figure 8: Maintenance Loan only borrowers and Tuition Fee Loan only borrowers as % of all loan borrowers



Source: **Table 3D**
Download the data for Figure 8 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 8 indicates as a percentage of all full-time loan borrowers, those opting to take a Tuition Fee Loan **without** taking a Maintenance Loan formed 5.7% in 2013/14. This subset increased to first peak at 7.3% in 2015/16. Until 2019/20, the percentage reduced year-on-year; down to 6.1%. The proportion of these borrowers then remained relatively constant, averaging 6.3% until 2022/23 when the increasing trend resumed.

In the most recent year, 7.7% of borrowers opted to take out a Tuition Fee Loan **without** taking a Maintenance Loan, compared to 7.3% in the previous year.

Figure 8 also shows that as a percentage of all full-time loan borrowers, those opting to take out a Maintenance Loan **without** taking a Tuition Fee Loan equated to 9.8% in 2013/14. This subset reduced gradually to 9.0% by 2016/17 and then began to reduce at a more increased rate, down to the lowest point of 3.5% in 2020/21. This decline may be attributed to the growing proportion of students subject to the higher tuition fee cap (initially of £9,000) introduced in 2012/13, increasing from £3,375.

In the subsequent year, the proportion grew to 4.1% and has remained relatively constant since, averaging 4.0% through to 2025/26.

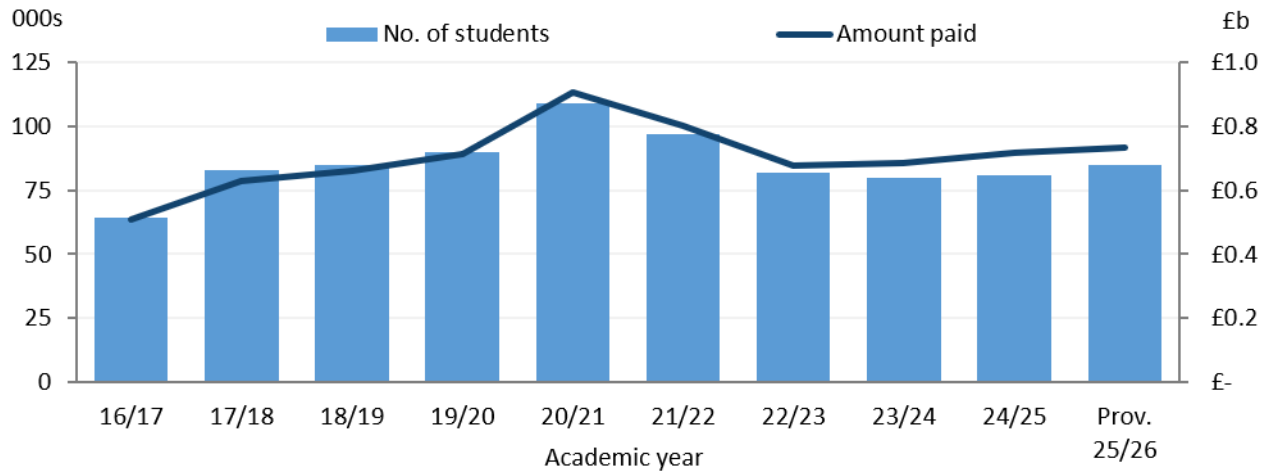
Postgraduate loans

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.

Provisional figures indicate a 4.9% increase in Postgraduate Master's Loan take-up in 2025/26, to 84,900

Figure 9: Number of students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) receiving Postgraduate Master's 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 6A (i)**
Download the data for Figure 9 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 9 demonstrates that in 2016/17, the first year of availability, 64,100 postgraduates took a Postgraduate Master's Loan. Typically, in the second-year numbers notably increased (up 29.2%). In the subsequent two years, increases slowed to an average of 4.1%, to 89,700 by 2019/20.

Academic year 2020/21 saw a far more significant increase (up 21.5%), to 108,900. 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, it was unsurprising to note a reduction in comparison to the previous year as figures normalised following an outlying year (down 10.9%). However, the declining trend continued, yet slowed to a 2.5% decrease in 2023/24, to 79,900. Whilst the volume of reductions was predominantly within England-domiciled students, these decreases could be in part attributed to EU (outside UK) students in England as from 2021/22, new students were no longer **eligible** for postgraduate funding.

The provisional figure for 2025/26 shows a 4.9% increase to 84,900. This is made up of a 6.6% increase in the number of England-domiciled students (up by 5,100), offset by a 34.7% decrease in EU (outside UK) domiciled students (down by 1,200) owing to the aforementioned change in policy.

While provisional figures are subject to revision, changes have typically been slight, with finalised figures over the last five years differing from their provisional position by an average of 1.0%. As such, the upward

trend reported for 2025/26 is unlikely to change significantly when figures are finalised.

Mirroring the trend in borrower numbers, in the first year of the Postgraduate Master's Loan, a total of £510.1 million was paid to eligible students, increasing by 23.3% in the second year. Increases then slowed over the two subsequent years (averaging 6.4%), to £712.3 million by 2019/20.

In 2020/21, potentially a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the amount paid out increased by a significant 27.3%, to £906.5 million. Figures then normalised in the following year, falling by 11.8%. However, the declining trend continued in 2022/23 with a further decrease of 15.3%, down to £677.7 million. Following minimal movement in the subsequent year, 2024/25's finalised figures reported a change in trend with a 5.2% increase.

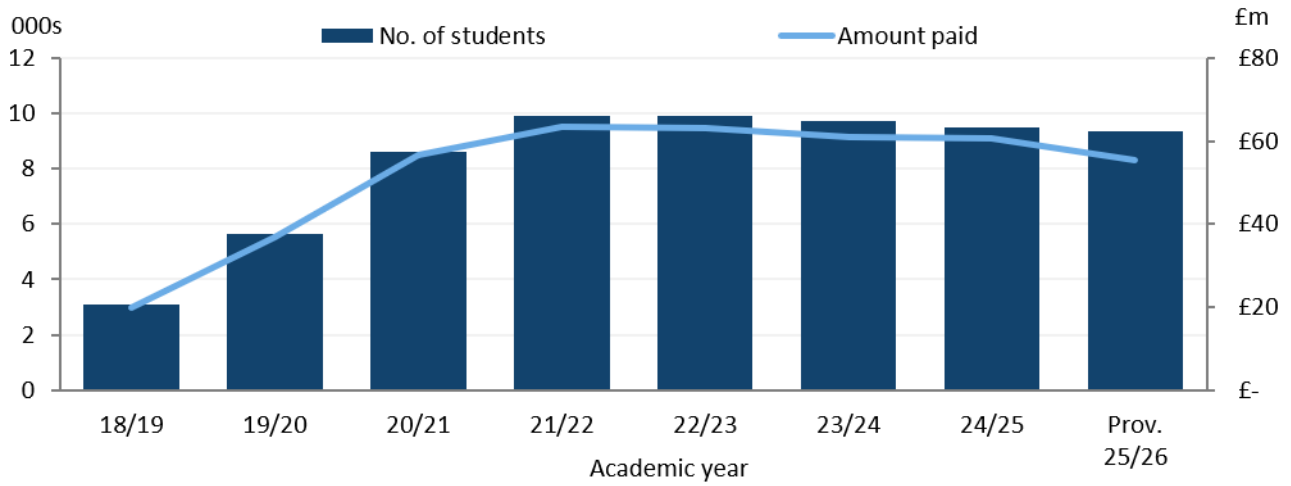
The provisional amount paid out for the 2025/26 academic year indicates an increase of 2.1% compared to the finalised position for 2024/25, at £733.9 million. The provisional figure for 2025/26 is made up of a 4.0% increase in the amount paid out to England-domiciled students (+ £27.5 million) offset by a 38.8% decrease in EU (outside UK) domiciled students (- £12.7 million).

However, it should be noted that the provisional figure for academic year 2024/25, published in the **2025 edition** of this publication, was £675.8 million, 6.4% lower than the finalised figure of £719.0 million published in this year's edition. As a result, 2024/25 in fact recorded a larger increase on the previous year. Over the last five years, finalised figures have, on average, been 5.0% higher than the corresponding provisional figures, suggesting that the increase reported for 2025/26 may be larger once figures are finalised.

Provisional figures for 2025/26 indicate a small decline in take-up of Postgraduate Doctoral Loans, to 9,300

Figure 10: Number of students domiciled in England 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 6A (ii)**
Download the data for Figure 10 (ODS, 6KB)

In academic year 2018/19, Postgraduate Doctoral Loans were introduced to both eligible England and EU (outside UK)-domiciled students who were enrolled on an eligible doctoral degree course.

Eligible students can apply for the loan amount they will require for the entire duration of their course (up to a maximum of £30,301 in academic year 2025/26) 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 however is capped at a maximum rate (£12,858 for 2025/26 applicants).

Figure 10 indicates that in the first year of availability 3,100 postgraduates received a doctoral loan.

Characteristically for a new type of student support, take-up significantly increased in the first two years (up 81.9% and 51.6% respectively) to 8,600. In academic year 2021/22 numbers continued to increase, yet at a much slower rate (15.1%).

Numbers stabilised in 2022/23, then reduced in the following two years by an average of 2.2%, down to 9,500. Whilst the volume of reductions is predominantly within England-domiciled students, these decreases can be in part attributed to EU (outside UK) students in England as they are no longer **eligible** for postgraduate funding.

The provisional position for 2025/26 indicates a small decrease of 1.6% at 9,300. This is made up of a 1.1% decrease in the number of England-domiciled students (down by 100) and a 15.3% decrease in EU (outside UK) domiciled students (down by 50).

Because postgraduate courses often begin later in the academic year, their provisional figures are typically subject to greater revision than undergraduate figures, with final numbers often showing more substantial changes in the following year. For context, over the last five years finalised figures have differed from the corresponding provisional figures by an average of 2.6%. This suggests that the provisional decrease reported for 2025/26 may become an increase on the previous year when final data becomes available.

Mirroring the trend in doctoral loan numbers, a total of £19.8 million was paid to eligible students in 2018/19. This amount increased considerably in the subsequent two years (up by 86.1% and 53.4% respectively) to £56.6 million. In 2021/22, the total continued to increase yet at a much slower rate (12.2%).

From this point the total paid out has decreased, at a fluctuating rate averaging 1.6% over the subsequent three years.

The provisional amount paid out for the 2025/26 academic year indicates a decrease of 8.3% compared to the finalised position for 2024/25, at £55.5 million. This provisional position is made up of a 7.9% decrease in amounts paid out to England-domiciled students (down by £4.6 million) coupled with a 19.9% decrease in the total paid out to EU (outside UK) domiciled students (down by £0.4 million).

However, it should be noted that the provisional figure for academic year 2024/25, published in the **2025 edition** of this publication, was £53.2 million, 13.7% lower than the finalised figure of £60.5 million published in this year's edition. As a result, 2024/25 remained relatively in line with the previous year. Over the last five years, finalised figures have, on average, been 13.2% higher than the corresponding provisional figures. On this basis, the provisional decrease reported for 2025/26 is likely to be revised upwards when final data becomes available next year and may result in a position broadly in line with, or above, that recorded in 2024/25.

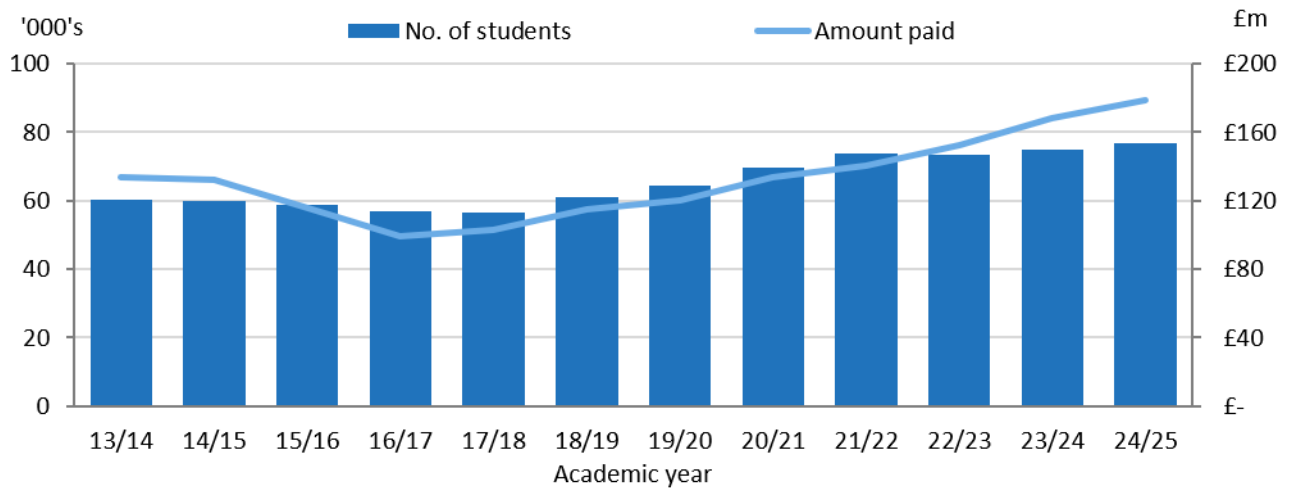
Disabled Students' Allowance

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is an additional part of the student support 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, DSA 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.

Finalised figures show a 6.3% increase in the amount paid out in full-time undergraduate Disabled Students' Allowance for 2024/25, at £178.6 million

Figure 11: Number of full-time undergraduates claiming Disabled Students' Allowance and amount paid (data 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 11 (ODS, 6KB)

The vast majority of DSA is paid to suppliers once the Student Loans Company receive invoices for equipment or services. As these continue to be received well after the end of the academic year, we also capture a more finalised position by reporting figures one year after the end of the academic year – the following end-August (hence 2024/25 being the most recent figures in *Figure 11*).

The total number of full-time undergraduate students in receipt of DSA in academic year 2013/14 was 60,100. Numbers reduced over the subsequent four years down to 56,700, potentially a result of a policy change from 2015/16 whereby students were required to make a £200 contribution towards the costs of a DSA-funded computer. This was followed by a further policy change in 2016/17 whereby responsibility for providing less specialist non-medical help moved from DSA to higher education providers under their Equality Act 2010 responsibilities. In 2018/19 this trend reversed, and the number of claimants increased by 7.8% to 61,200. Increases have since continued to peak at 76,800 in 2024/25 (up 2.7% on the previous year).

The amount claimed has followed a similar, yet a slightly more exaggerated trend. In academic year 2013/14, £133.9 million was paid out in DSA. This reduced to £99.0 million by 2016/17 likely affected by the aforementioned policy changes. 2017/18 saw the beginning of annual increases, continuing through 2024/25, to £178.6 million. This is a 6.3% increase in comparison to 2023/24, lower than the 10.3% increase reported last year.

As at 31 August 2026, a total of £176.6 million has been paid for academic year 2025/26. This is a 9.6% increase on the £161.2 million paid by the same point for 2024/25. Figures in regard to part-time undergraduate and postgraduate DSA can be found in the supporting **tables** (Table 5B and 6B).

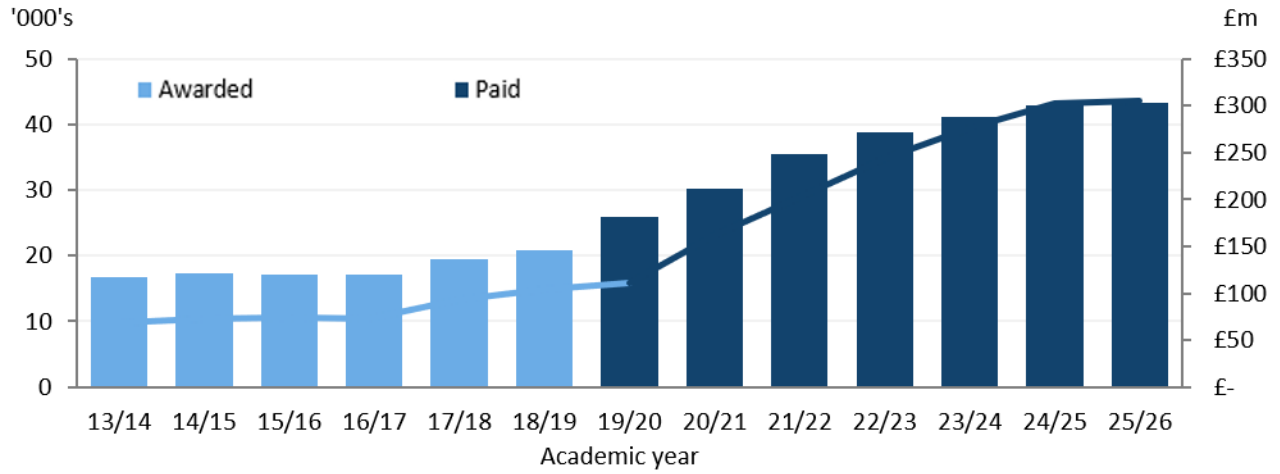
Childcare Grant

Childcare Grants are available to students to assist with the costs for childcare while they attend university or college. The allowance is based on the household income and the students' own circumstances. Please note that payments/awards shown are those made in the academic year and do not necessarily relate to costs incurred within that academic year.

Increase in the amount claimed in Childcare Grant, slows to 0.8% at £304.5 million in 2025/26

Figure 12: Number of Childcare Grant awards/payments made and amount awarded/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. The legend follows the same order as the columns, switching from 'awards' to 'payments at academic year 2019/20.



Source: **Table 4C (i)(ii)**
Download the data for Figure 12 (ODS, 6KB)

Prior to academic year 2019/20, Childcare Grant was reported as '**awards**' based on the number of students applying and the student's submitted financial estimates for the year. These were then finalised a year later, in the subsequent publication. During this period, Childcare Grant was paid directly to the student based on their estimations and their grant account would be balanced once actual paid amounts were verified.

For academic year 2019/20, Childcare Grant payments changed 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). *Figure 12* highlights this change in time-series.

In academic year 2013/14, 16,700 students were awarded Childcare Grant. By 2018/19, this had increased to 20,900. In the first year of the new policy, there was a significant 24.4% increase in the number of claimants. This increased, at a slowing rate, year-on-year to peak at 43,300 in 2025/26 - a 1.0% increase on the previous year.

In 2013/14, £68.4 million was awarded to students in the form of Childcare Grants. By 2018/19, this had risen to £103.8 million. Since then, the amount paid out has increased substantially, growing by an average of 20.2% annually to £302.2 million in 2024/25.

2025/26 however has remained relatively stable with a small 0.8% increase, to £304.5 million.

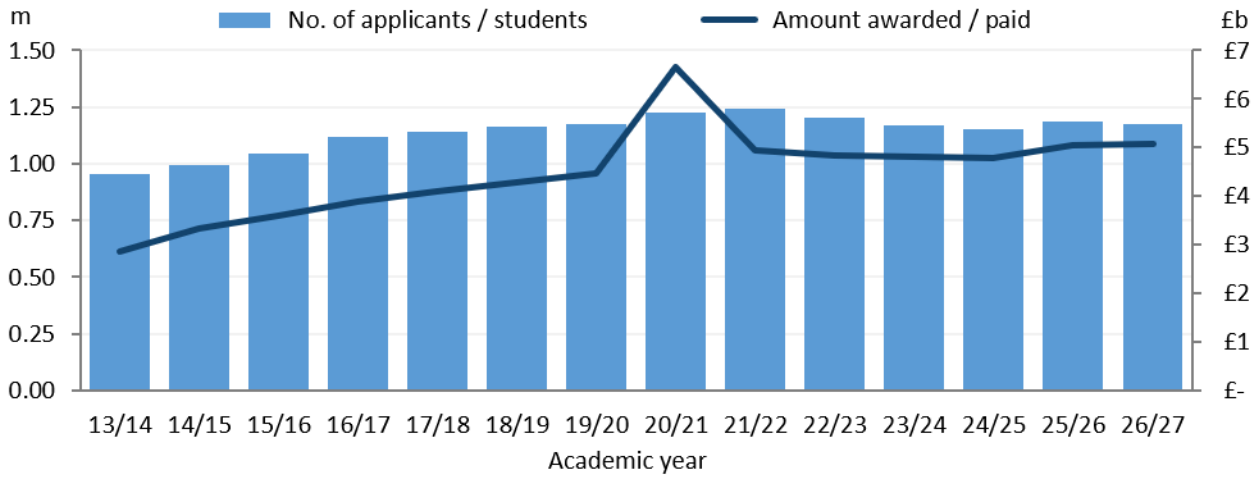
Early in year overview – academic year 2026/27

Table 7C (i) shows an early view of academic year 2026/27 at effective date 31 October 2026. This would be approximately two months into a typical academic year. These figures will be near finalised in *Table 2A* of the next update of this publication, due to be released in November 2027.

By end-October 2026, a total of 1.17 million undergraduates and postgraduates have been awarded/paid a total of £5.1 billion for academic year 2026/27

Figure 13: Early-in-year: Number of students domiciled in England 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 13 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 13 shows that by end-October in the 2013/14 academic year, a total of 0.95 million undergraduates and postgraduates had been awarded/paid student support. This early position increased steadily over the subsequent six years to 1.17 million by 2019/20. The total amount awarded/paid by this point of the same academic years followed a very similar trend, growing from £2.9 billion in 2013/14 to £4.5 billion by 2019/20.

As at end-October 2020, a total of £6.6 billion had been awarded/paid to 1.23 million students for the 2020/21 academic year. Despite a 4.4% increase in the number of students awarded/paid, the amount awarded/paid was 49.0% higher than at the same point in the previous year. This significant increase was predominantly attributed to an **early second instalment** of undergraduate tuition fee 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 £4.9 billion. Omitting the previous outlying year, this 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 the first reported decrease in both the number of students awarded/paid and the amount awarded/paid. This downward trend continued through to 2024/25.

The end-October view for 2025/26 saw a 2.9% increase in the number of students in receipt of support, rising to 1.19 million. The amount awarded/paid also increased, by a more substantial 5.7%, to £5.0 billion. This increase was driven in part by the 3.1% rise in the maximum Tuition Fee Loan available to new students in 2025/26, from £9,250 to £9,535.

As at 31 October 2026, a total of 1.17 million applicants/students had been paid for academic year 2026/27. This is 1.0% lower than at the same point in the previous year. The amount paid out so far showed minimal change compared with 2025/26, increasing by 0.5% to £5.1 billion.

Of this total, £4.9 billion has been awarded/paid to 1.11 million undergraduate students. Compared with the end-October position in the previous year, this represents a small decrease of 0.7% in the number awarded/paid (- 7,800), while the amount awarded/paid increased by 0.7% (+ £33.8 million).

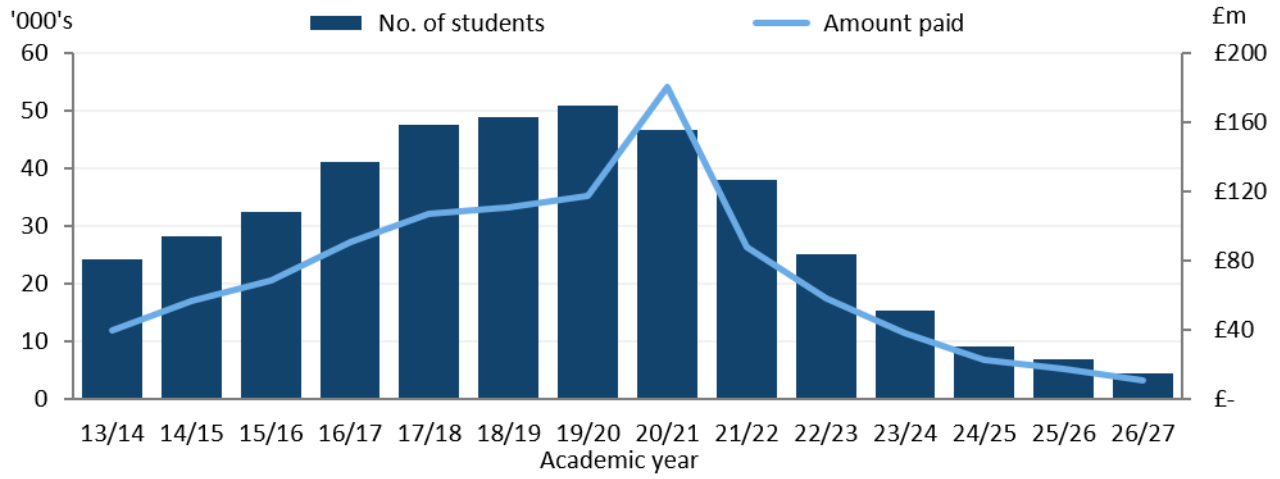
The number of full-time undergraduate students in receipt of funding decreased by 1.1% to 1.07 million (- 11,800). This was partially offset by a 10.6% increase in part-time undergraduate students, whose numbers rose to 42,300 (+ 4,000).

This early view of the 2026/27 academic year also indicates that £213.6 million had been paid to 65,200 postgraduate students so far. Compared with the same point in 2025/26, this represents a 5.2% decrease in the number paid (- 3,500) and a 3.6% decrease in the amount paid out (- £8.0 million).

Early look at academic year 2026/27 shows a continued decline in the number of EU (outside UK) students paid, due to the funding-policy change in 2021/22 – down to 4,300

Figure 14: Early-in-year: Number of students domiciled in EU (outside UK) receiving higher education support 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 7C (i)**
Download the data for Figure 14 (ODS, 6KB)

Figure 14 shows the number of EU (outside UK) undergraduate and postgraduate students paid by end-October for academic year 2013/14 was 24,100. This increased year-on-year to peak at 50,700 in 2019/20.

The amount paid out, over the same period of time increased from £39.7 million to £117.3 million.

The following year reported the first decrease in the number of EU (outside UK) students paid, down 8.2% to 46,600. This can be attributed to factors relating to the COVID-19 pandemic e.g. travel-limitations and later recruitment by higher education providers. However, due to the previously mentioned **early second instalment** of undergraduate tuition fees payments made to higher education providers, the amount paid out by this point in academic year 2020/21 was 53.6% higher than in the previous year, at £180.2 million.

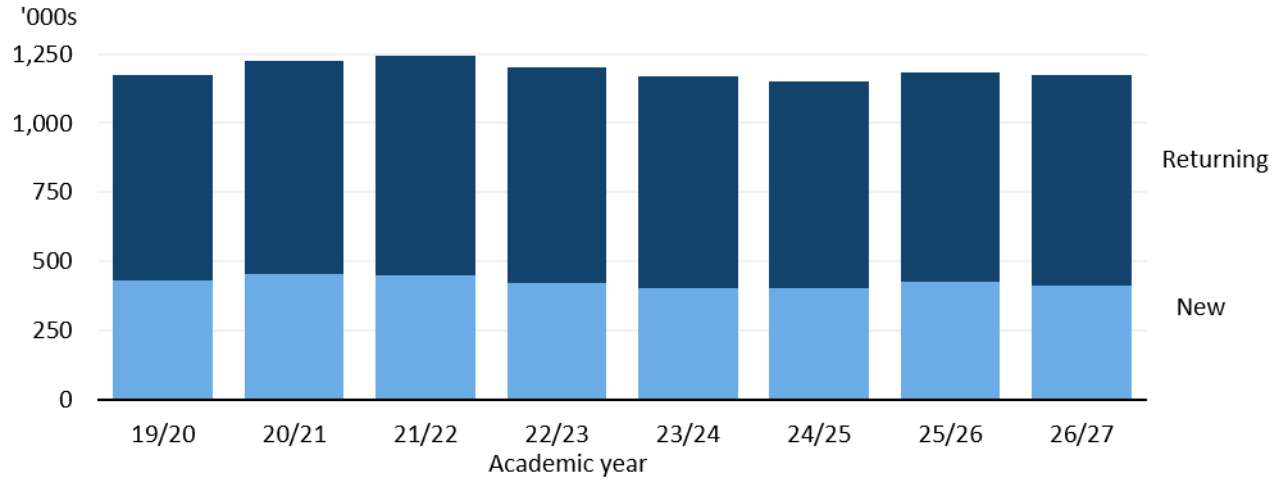
In academic year 2021/22, new EU (outside UK) students in England (without a '**settled' or 'pre-settled status**') were no longer **eligible** for tuition fee funding. This resulted in notable decreases, with the number of students paid reducing by 18.4% and the amount paid falling by a significant 51.2% (this also owing to figures normalising against an outlying year). Figures continued to decrease, at an increasing rate through to 2025/26.

As at end-October 2026, 4,300 EU (outside UK) undergraduate and postgraduate students had been paid student support for academic year 2026/27, a further decrease of 36.3% compared to the previous year. A total of £10.6 million has been paid out so far for the same academic year. This is 37.5% less than paid out by the same point for 2025/26.

The similar declines in both numbers and amount paid out indicate that the reduction in funding is primarily driven by fewer EU (outside UK) students receiving support. These numbers will continue to decline due to the policy change. Figures from academic year 2021/22 onwards will only include continuing students.

Early figures indicate a 3.7% decrease in the number of new students receiving student finance in academic year 2026/27, at 413,000

Figure 15: Early-in-year: Number of new and returning students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) awarded/paid student support



Source: **Table 7C (ii)**
Download the data for Figure 15 (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 15 indicates that the number of 'new' students awarded/paid student support by the end-October position for academic year 2019/20 was 431,400. This increased by 5.7% to peak at 456,000 in the

following year.

Numbers subsequently declined through to 2024/25, with the largest year-on-year decrease reported in 2022/23 (down 5.4%). This pattern was temporarily interrupted in 2025/26, when the number of new students increased by 6.1%, alongside a 1.3% increase in returning students.

As at end-October 2026, the number of ‘new’ students awarded/paid so far for academic year 2026/27 stood at 413,000. This is 3.7% lower than at the same point in the previous year, a decrease of 15,700 students.

The trend for ‘returning’ students, who account for the majority of students in receipt of support, follows a similar pattern. The number awarded/paid by end-October was 742,900 in academic year 2019/20, increasing to a peak of 793,900 in 2021/22. Numbers then decreased by an average of 2.0% per year, reaching 746,900 in 2024/25, before increasing by 1.3% in 2025/26.

At end-October 2026, 760,700 returning students had been awarded/paid student support for academic year 2026/27. This is 4,400 (0.6%) more than at the same point in the previous year.

As a proportion of all students awarded/paid support at this early point in the academic year, the share of ‘new’ students decreased from 36.7% in 2019/20 to 35.2% in 2026/27. Over the same period, the share of ‘returning’ students increased from 63.3% to 64.8%.

Additional Information

Available student financial support

Details on student support available in academic year 2025/26 and 2026/27 can be found on **GOV.UK**.

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 SLC's administrative systems. For details of the data sources used in our publications please refer to our **Statement of Administrative Sources**. We also publish details on our data management which can also be found on **GOV.UK**.

Data Quality

Student Loans Company publishes documentation which outlines our approach to ensuring that our statistics publications are robust, reliable and fit for purpose. As a producer of official statistics, SLC is committed to upholding the principles and standards set out in the UK Statistics Authority's **Code of Practice for Statistics**. For more information, please refer to our policies and procedures page on **GOV.UK**.

Related Statistics Publications

Student Loans Company 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**.

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 on 27 August 2026 covering academic session 2025/26.

SLC 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 financial year 2025-26 was published on 18 June 2026.

Accredited Official Statistics

This is an Accredited Official Statistics publication. Accredited Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. 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 and Northern Ireland) was awarded Accredited Official Statistics status in October 2011 following a **full assessment** against the Code of Practice for Statistics. Since that assessment, we have continued to comply with the Code and have made a number of improvements. These are detailed on **GOV.UK**.

Information detailing our compliance with the Code across all our publications is available on our **SLC Statistics: Policies and Procedures** page on GOV.UK. This page includes details of improvements that have been implemented, as well as those planned for the future in our Annual Statistical Work Programmes.