

STUDENT SUPPORT INFORMATION NOTE (SSIN)

2020/21 FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEW AND CONTINUING, FURTHER EDUCATION, UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IMPACTED BY COVID-19

To Student Finance administrators and practitioners in institutions of higher education, further education or specialist colleges providing HE.

SSIN 06/20
July 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Funding arrangements in the 2020/21 academic year for all eligible further education, undergraduate and postgraduate students impacted by Covid-19

The Government has agreed that the following measures will be put in place for new and continuing, undergraduate and postgraduate students who are prevented from attending their courses on-site due to Covid-19 in the 2020/21 academic year from 1 August 2020 onwards. We will continue to monitor the situation.

a) Students prevented from attending in person due to Covid-19:

- All designated courses (full-time and part-time) which normally require attendance on-site, but for which learning has moved either fully or partially online due to Covid-19, should attract the full package of tuition fee and living cost support in 2020/21, as they would ordinarily. Students on these courses should be considered to be attending and entitled to apply for the full package of support, provided they continue to engage with their HEP.
- Courses designed to be undertaken as “distance learning”, where students are not required to regularly attend on-site, will attract a fee loan and disabled students’ allowance (if applicable) as normal. In line with existing policy the only exception to this is for those studying by distance learning because they are prevented from attending a full-time course due to their disability.
- The maximum postgraduate loan for Master’s and Doctoral Degree courses (which are intended as a general contribution to both tuition and living costs) are the same irrespective of mode of study or pattern of attendance so these are not affected.

b) Students prevented from residing in England/UK due to Covid-19:

- It is expected that students will travel to England/UK to study if it is safe and sensible to do so. However, where eligible students are prevented, due to Covid-19, from residing in England/UK whilst studying on a designated course they will be considered to be temporarily absent and, therefore, resident here. This will allow them to access financial student support and qualify for home

fee status. This includes students who have never resided in England/UK but whose travel here to undertake a designated course of study in 2020/21 has been disrupted due to Covid-19. This applies to further education, undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

- Eligible students who would normally be undertaking a distance learning course in England (or the United Kingdom for continuing students who initially undertook the course in England), but who are required to temporarily study online from outside the United Kingdom as a result of Covid-19, will be considered to be studying in England and will qualify for an advance learner loan, tuition fee loan (and disabled students allowance if applicable) or the full postgraduate loan as appropriate.
- Students eligible to receive the loan for living costs will be entitled to either the parental, elsewhere or London rate of loan appropriate to where they are residing or studying in line with the Student Support Regulations.

c) Students who are prevented from attending an overseas HEP as part of their course due to Covid-19:

- Students prevented from travelling abroad for their overseas year of study (as part of a degree from a UK HEP) due to Covid-19 will still be considered as attending the overseas institution if that HEP is providing the learning online.
- If the UK HEP provides part of the learning during the year in which the student had intended to study overseas, but the period of full-time study at the UK HEP is less than 10 weeks (with the remainder provided by the overseas HEP online or on-site) the 15% fee cap (up to £1,385) will apply.¹
- In cases where at least 10 weeks of full-time study is provided by the UK HEP, eligible students can be charged up to the £9,250 maximum fee, with a fee loan available to meet the full costs of tuition. However, we expect providers to use their discretion and not charge more than the 15% cap for those students who fall just outside of the 10-week limit as a result of Covid-19.
- As students studying remotely with an overseas HEP, but living in the UK, are incurring the same living costs as those attending a UK HEP, we consider that these students should receive the rate of loan for living costs that would apply for study in the UK. If they subsequently move overseas, their entitlement can be reassessed.

¹ The 15% fee cap will also apply for the 2020/21 academic year and any previous academic years of the course where the aggregate of any one or more periods of attendance which are not periods of full-time study at the HEP in the United Kingdom (disregarding intervening vacations) exceeds 30 weeks.

d) Students' entitlement to living cost loans:

- Students' entitlement to the undergraduate loans for living costs will continue to be based on where the student is actually living or studying for the majority of an academic quarter (this normally corresponds to a term).

The four loan rates:

1. Parental home - students living at their parents' home while attending the designated course (parental rate)
 2. London - Students not living at their parents' home and attending
 - (i) a course at the University of London;
 - (ii) a course at an institution which requires attendance for at least half the time in aggregate of any quarter of the course in the academic year at a site wholly or partly within the area comprising the City of London and the former Metropolitan Police District; or
 - (iii) a sandwich course at an institution which requires the eligible student to undertake work experience or a combination of work experience and study provided that they undertakes such work experience or combination of work experience and study for at least half the time in aggregate of any quarter of the course in the academic year at a site or sites wholly or partly within the area comprising the City of London and the former Metropolitan Police District;
 3. Overseas - Students not living at their parents' home and attending
 - (i) attends an overseas institution as part of the student's course;
 - (ii) (ii) attends the Institute; or
 - (iii) (iii) attends an overseas work placement in an Erasmus year,
 4. Elsewhere - Those who do not fall into any of the above categories
- Students who are living with their parents for the majority of the term due to Covid-19 will be entitled to only the parental rate of loan but will be reassessed if their circumstances change.
 - Covid-19 may have an impact on household income due to sickness, unemployment, furloughing or as the result of a bereavement. Students who have applied for a loan for living costs for 2020/21 and have been awarded a lower amount than the maximum, and believe their household income for the current tax year (2020-21) will drop by at least 15% compared to the household income they provided when they were initially assessed, can apply for their entitlement to be reassessed.

Further detailed information on the above arrangements can be found at <https://www.heinfo.slc.co.uk/engagement/hep-news/faq-covid-19.aspx>