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# Higher Education Student Finance in England

## Assessing Eligibility - AY 26/27

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## Summary

This section provides details on the eligibility criteria for the financial support package for full-time (FT) students.

## Disclaimer

This guidance is designed to assist with the interpretation of The Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (as amended) (“the Regulations”) as they stand at the time of publication. It does not cover every aspect of student support, nor does it constitute legal advice or a definitive statement of the law. Whilst every endeavour has been made to ensure the information contained is correct at the time of publication, no liability is accepted with regard to the contents, and the Regulations remain the legal basis of the student support arrangements for the academic year (AY) 26/27. In the event of anomalies between this guidance and the Regulations, the Regulations prevail. Please note the Regulations are subject to amendment.

This guidance is for Student Finance England (SFE) students only.

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**Abbreviations**

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full</b>
ADG	Adult Dependants' Grant
AHP	Allied Health Profession
ALL	Advanced Learner Loan
ARAP	Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy
ARB	Architects Registration Board
ARR	Afghanistan Response Route
ACRS	Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme
AY	Academic year
BIOT	British Indian Ocean Territory
BOT	British Overseas Territory
BOTC	British Overseas Territories Citizen
CCG	Childcare Grant
DfE	Department for Education
DSA	Disabled Students' Allowance
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ELQ	Equivalent or Lower Qualification
EU	European Union
EUSS	European Union Settlement Scheme
FE	Further education
FHEQ	The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
FT	Full-time
GFDs	Grants for Dependants
HE	Higher education
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
HTQ	Higher Technical Qualification
IfATE	Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NHS	National Health Service
OfS	Office for Students
OR	Ordinary residence
PCET	Post Compulsory Education and Training
PLA	Parents' Learning Allowance
PT	Part-time
QTLS	Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SFE	Student Finance England
SLC	Student Loans Company Limited

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## 1 General eligibility

An eligible student qualifies for support if they are studying on a designated course and in accordance with The Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

Within these Regulations, regulation 4 and Schedule 1 outline the personal eligibility criteria. The provisions on designated courses are in regulation 5 and Schedule 2 and are discussed in a later section of this chapter (Section [4.1](#)).

Other general provisions that all eligible students are subject to, such as time limits for applications and requirements to provide documents, are discussed in detail below.

### 1.1 Time limit for applying for student support

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There is a general rule that a student must make their application to Student Finance England (SFE) within nine months of the first day of the academic year in respect of which the student is applying for (regulation 9(1)).

The general rule does not apply when an in-year qualifying event or course designation event as described in regulation 2A occurs. Examples of these events include:

- the date on which the course was designated, if that happens after the first day of the academic year,
- the date on which the student or their spouse/civil partner, parent or step-parent is recognised as a refugee, if that happens after the first day of the academic year, or
- the date on which the student or their spouse/civil partner, parent or step-parent has been granted humanitarian protection in the UK, if that happens after the first day of the academic year.

When an in-year qualifying event occurs, the time limit by which an application must be received is within a period of nine months beginning on the date the event occurred. It is important to note that the above list is not exhaustive. See Annex A for the full list of events.

The general rule also does not apply where the student is making a separate application for a loan product and is applying for an additional amount of loan or Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

SFE has the discretion to extend an application deadline where they consider it is appropriate to do so, with consideration to the individual's situation (regulation 9(2)(e)).

### 1.2 Documentation requirements

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The Regulations stipulate that a student must present documentation as required by the Secretary of State with their application (regulation 8(1)). Regulation 8(2) provides that the

Secretary of State, or the relevant body to which this function has been delegated (SFE), may take such steps and make such enquiries as it deems necessary to determine eligibility.

For all loans paid in AY 26/27, the Secretary of State may make it a condition of entitlement to payment of a loan that a student provides them with their United Kingdom (UK) National Insurance number (regulation 111(1)). SFE requests this from students at the application stage and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will issue National Insurance numbers to applicants if they do not already have one.

Students are asked at the point of application whether they hold a UK passport. If they do, they can provide SFE with their passport number and details rather than sending the physical passport. SFE verify these details with His Majesty's Passport Office via the Government Secure Intranet. For students who are not UK or Irish citizens, and have an immigration status issued by the Home Office, SFE will verify their identity and immigration status directly with the Home Office.

It may be necessary for SFE to request some applicants to provide documentary evidence. Regulation 112(3) states that the Secretary of State may request sight of a student's valid national ID card, their valid passport issued by the state of which they are a national, or their birth certificate. Relevant documents are listed in the supporting notes available when completing each application.

SFE may accept legally certified or notarised true copies of documents on an exceptional basis only, where they consider it unreasonable to insist on originals. Every endeavour should be made, however, to have sight of original identity documents, preferably a passport or identity card. A certified true copy is a photocopy of an original document. It must have been stamped and signed as being a true copy of the original by an official such as a minister of religion, doctor, lawyer, civil servant, teacher, lecturer or police officer. The person certifying the copy must provide their name, address and contact number. The certifying person must not be a relative.

If a student chooses to submit their birth certificate, this must be accompanied by a fully completed Birth or Adoption Certificate Form.

SFE should not require students to produce birth certificates where they are unwilling to do so, nor should they require students to provide reasons for not wanting to do so. In such cases, other forms of evidence such as a valid passport should be accepted.

In exceptional cases a student may, with a valid reason, be unable to provide either a birth certificate or passport. This may occur where the Home Office holds the passport, and the student is not in possession of their birth certificate. SFE must not in these circumstances continue to request these items. SFE may accept other forms of evidence from external organisations, such as the Home Office or the student's solicitor, so they can satisfy themselves of the applicant's identity.

### 1.3 Students ineligible for funding

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Whilst regulation 4 outlines who qualifies as an eligible student, it also makes provision for students that are excluded from any support under the Regulations (regulation 4(3)). A student is ineligible for support from SFE if they:

- are in receipt of a non-means tested 'healthcare bursary', (as defined in regulation 2(1)) or other allowance referred to in regulation 4(3),
- are in breach of any obligation to repay any student loan,
- have reached the age of 18 and have not ratified any student loan agreement made with them when they were under the age of 18,
- have shown themselves by their conduct to be unfitted to receive support, or
- are a prisoner who is not an eligible prisoner.

Where a person qualified as an eligible student for the previous academic year, it will not usually be necessary for SFE to redetermine personal eligibility for the following academic year, unless they have a temporary immigration status which expires during the academic year. In that case, support for the next academic year of the course will not be approved until evidence of a new eligible status has been provided.

#### **NHS bursaries**

Students attending designated undergraduate pre-registration courses are not entitled to receive NHS bursaries. Applicants undertaking these courses can apply for tuition fee loan and living costs support under the Regulations.

For students studying undergraduate pre-registration courses in Wales a bursary remains available from NHS Wales, subject to a two-year post-graduation employment requirement. Students who are funded by SFE and are in receipt of an NHS Wales healthcare bursary will qualify for the reduced rate non-means tested loan for living costs.

Please note that:

- students on non-designated dental hygiene and dental therapy courses at certain Health Trusts will still attract an NHS bursary. For more information on these courses and the support available please see the AY 26/27 NHS guidance.
- Students can opt out of the NHS Wales two-year post-graduation employment bursary; in doing so, they become ineligible to apply for this bursary but can apply for full support under the Regulations.

Students attending pre-registration undergraduate and postgraduate healthcare courses can apply for additional support from the NHS Learning Support Fund at:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-learning-support-fund/training-grant>

For detailed guidance on the support available to students studying on these courses, please see the AY 26/27 NHS guidance.

### **Applicants who breach any obligation to repay any previous student loans (arrears)**

The Regulations provide that a person shall not be eligible for support if they are in breach of any obligation to repay any loan (regulation 4(3)(d)).

An outstanding loan or grant overpayment is not a breach of an obligation to repay previous loans. Breaches to repay relate to repayment arrears, such as unpaid overseas contributions and cancelled direct debits. SFE cannot apply discretion in these circumstances. The applicant is not eligible for support, regardless of whether they have declared any such breach or non-ratification on their application.

SFE systems can identify students who are in breach, and this is discovered when the assessment is sent for approval. A letter is sent to the student at that point advising that they are ineligible for support as long as they remain in breach.

Once an applicant has cleared all of their arrears, they are no longer considered in breach of their obligation to repay a loan. When an applicant clears their arrears, SFE should reassess their eligibility for the academic year in which their arrears have been cleared. Any such reassessment is for the whole academic year, not from the date on which they cease to be in breach of any such obligation. However, the applicant will remain ineligible in respect of any previous academic years undertaken or completed during which they were in arrears.

Where an applicant is awarded funding but subsequently breaches any obligation to repay any previous student loan, they will remain eligible for support in the academic year to which the notification of funding applies.

### **Applicants who have reached the age of 18 and have not ratified a previous student loan**

The Regulations provide that a person shall not be eligible for support if they have reached the age of 18 and have not ratified any agreement for a loan made with them when they were under the age of 18 (regulation 4(3)(e)). By signing a new student declaration form, the student acknowledges and agrees that they are automatically ratifying all student loans that they borrowed before reaching the age of 18.

### **Unfitted to receive support**

A student does not qualify as an eligible student if, in SFE's opinion, they have shown themselves by their conduct to be unfitted to receive support (regulation 4(3)(f)). This power may be used at any stage in the process of assessing a student's eligibility for support, but once a student has been notified that they are eligible, this power may not be used. SFE may, however, terminate a student's period of eligibility for similar reasons under paragraph (5) of regulation 6.

A student may be deemed unfitted for support by SFE for several reasons. The following are examples that demonstrate when a student could be considered unfitted for support:

- Where identified that the student has committed fraud in applying for support. If a student has their eligibility terminated as a result of committing fraud on their student finance application, this could lead to their details being registered with the UK fraud prevention service Cifas. Their details will be held with Cifas for a period of six years. Students would remain ineligible for student support during this period.
- Where the student has made repeated applications for support and received support for a number of different courses without completing those courses.
- Where evidence from the HE provider calls a student's fitness to receive support into question.

Fraud against other government departments (such as the DWP) might be grounds for refusal of support in some circumstances. SFE will consider such cases carefully.

It is important to note that:

- The decision as to whether a student is suitable for or should be allowed to take a particular course rests with the HE provider.
- The decision as to whether the student is eligible for funds rests with SFE.
- The purpose of these provisions is to safeguard public funds, and to ensure that they are spent properly. SFE should always ensure that a decision to refuse or terminate support will stand up to examination in the event of a formal appeal or a court challenge. It may be a sensible precaution to seek advice from SFE's legal staff.

#### **1.4 Prisoners**

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Prisoners are ineligible for support from SFE (regulation 4(3)(g)) unless they meet the definition of an eligible prisoner.

An eligible prisoner under the Regulations is one who begins their current course on or after 1 September 2012 and is serving their sentence of imprisonment in the UK. They must have an earliest release date within six years of the first day of the first academic year. For indeterminate sentences, the earliest release date will be the minimum period of imprisonment set at trial (the sentence tariff). The appropriate prison authority must have approved the student to study the current course. The student must not have transferred to the current course from a course beginning before 1 September 2012.

A FT '2012 cohort' or '2016 cohort' student who is an eligible prisoner will be eligible for tuition fee support only for those periods when they are imprisoned. For more information see the AY 26/27 Change of Circumstances and Overpayments guidance.

Students who have spent any time in prison (whether on remand or otherwise) within the academic year will not be entitled to any maintenance support whilst they are in prison.

Maintenance support should be calculated on a pro-rata daily basis to exclude the time spent in prison.

In exceptional circumstances, SFE will have the discretion to determine whether to pay full, partial or zero support whilst a student is in prison in an academic year. SFE should only use their discretion if stopping or recovering payments will cause financial hardship to students and prevent them from continuing with their course.

In order to determine if a student should receive grants and loans for living costs for periods spent in prison during the academic year, SFE need to consider certain factors, such as a student's ability to pay rent and other living expenses to enable them to continue with their course. It is expected that exercising the discretion would be appropriate when a student spends a very short time in prison.

### **1.5 Students attending more than one HE course**

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Under the Regulations, a student can only be eligible for support for one course of higher education at any one time. This provision does not prevent the student from moving between courses during an academic year. It does however prevent the student from being eligible for support for more than one course where they take two (or more) courses concurrently.

## **2 General residency**

The following information on matters of residency represents the Department for Education's (DfE's) understanding on such matters. DfE is of the view that Student Finance England (SFE) should satisfy itself that it has understood, and applied correctly, the current law and practice in relation to residency when carrying out assessments.

### **2.1 Ordinary lawful residence**

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Although not defined in the Regulations, 'ordinarily resident' has been interpreted by the courts as lawful, habitual and normal residence from choice and for a settled purpose throughout the prescribed period, apart from temporary or occasional absences. Extracts from the judgment (Lord Scarman's) in the case of *Shah v Barnet London Borough Council* can be found in Annex B. The ruling did not define what might constitute a temporary or occasional absence but did indicate that it might be possible for an individual to establish ordinary residence in two countries simultaneously.

Paragraph 1(2A) of Schedule 1 of the Regulations provides that a person is not to be treated as ordinarily resident in a place unless that person lawfully resides in that place. Therefore, periods where an applicant has not been lawfully resident in the relevant residency area prescribed in the Regulations at any time within the required time period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course (or prior to the course start date for certain

residency categories) cannot be treated as ordinary residence. For the avoidance of doubt, the course start date is the first day of the first term of the first academic year of the course.

This means that generally, applicants must hold a valid status throughout the period of ordinary residence required by SFE when establishing their eligibility for student support.\* Students will be able to provide evidence from the Home Office confirming their immigration history and current immigration status, which will normally be sufficient to fulfil this requirement. DfE's policy is that SLC will rely on information from the Home Office in relation to residency matters.

\*Exceptions apply to students within certain eligible residency categories who qualify for support via a protected category event. When a protected category event occurs, for the purposes of determining whether the student meets the requirement to be ordinarily resident on the course start date, they are to be treated as if they were lawfully resident in the place they were residing on that date, even if they did not hold an immigration status at that time. See Section 3.37 for further information.

The Home Office has issued guidance about the immigration position of persons whose current leave to enter or remain has expired or is about to expire. This guidance would cover persons who have been granted limited leave to enter or remain in the UK and who have to demonstrate that they have current leave to enter or remain in order to be eligible for student support. DfE understands that if a person with limited leave to enter or remain applies for a further period of leave before the first period of leave has expired, the applicant's leave may be extended by section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971. Providing the application for further leave has not been withdrawn or the applicant does not leave the UK, the first period of leave is extended for the period it takes the Secretary of State to make a decision on the renewal application.

Section 3C of the 1971 Act enables a person's limited leave to be extended where:

- an application has been made to the Secretary of State to vary the limited leave to enter or remain,
- the application was made before the leave to enter or remain expired,
- the leave granted expires before the application for variation is decided.

Section 3C also sets out the circumstances in which leave can be further extended and the circumstances in which such extended leave will come to an end.

Note that the Home Office has the power to disregard instances where an individual remains in the UK beyond the expiration of their grant of leave, referred to here as 'overstaying', which normally would result in their continued residence in the UK being deemed unlawful:

- Until 24 November 2016, a period of overstaying where an application was made within 28 days of a person's leave expiring would be disregarded where the application was subsequently granted.

- From 24 November 2016, paragraph 39E of the Immigration Rules (replaced from 11 November 2025 by paragraphs SUI 13.1 and 13.2 of Part Suitability of the Immigration Rules) allows the Home Office to consider some exemptions for overstayers whose application could not be made within 14 days of the applicant's leave expiring.

The Home Office can apply this exemption in limited leave to remain (Immigration Rules), discretionary leave to remain (outside the Immigration Rules) and indefinite leave to remain cases. This means that the Home Office can determine that the period of unlawful residence, from the point of expiry of the person's leave to the point further leave was granted, will be disregarded where the late application was submitted within 14 days (or 28 days if before 24 November 2016) and the Home Office subsequently granted leave. In cases where further leave was granted by virtue of this exemption, it is expected that the Home Office will confirm this to SFE. Where that is not possible, SFE should consider whether a student's residence is lawful by virtue of their relationship to someone with a valid status.

In October 2020 the Home Office responded to restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and provided for a protection against negative consequences of overstaying in the period 24 January 2020 – 31 August 2020. Paragraphs SUI 13.1 and 13.2 of Part Suitability of the Immigration Rules, allowed individuals time to either leave the UK or regularise their stay within the UK. DfE agreed to align with this, which means that any overstaying between 24 January and 31 August 2020 is discounted for the purposes of future applications, where the applicant's leave expired within this period.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the Home Office put in place the NHS healthcare extension scheme. Eligible healthcare workers and their families whose leave expired between 31 March 2020 and 1 October 2021 were granted a one-year extension to their visa without having to make an application or pay relevant fees. Where there is a gap between an individual's previous leave expiring and leave under the extension scheme being awarded, that period of overstaying is disregarded when the person is otherwise eligible for leave under the extension scheme. SFE will make a similar determination when considering whether an individual has been ordinarily lawfully resident during this period.

The Home Office have introduced a further concession in response to international travel disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Exceptional Assurance Concession offers individuals a short-term protection against any adverse action or consequences after their permission has expired, where they were unable to leave the UK due to Covid-19. In line with existing guidance on disregarding periods of overstaying due to Covid-19 set out within paragraphs SUI 13.1 and 13.2 of Part Suitability of the Immigration Rules, SLC will disregard a period of overstaying between 1 September 2020 and 28 February 2023, but only where this is covered by an exceptional assurance. In this context, 'exceptional assurance' means a written notice given to a person by the Home Office stating that they would not be considered an overstayer for the period specified in the notice. Any person claiming to be covered by an exceptional assurance during this period must present evidence of this in the form of a written notice issued by the Home Office.

The Home Office also has discretion to allow late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) where there are reasonable grounds for the delay. Where an applicant living in the UK before the end of the transition period did not apply to the EUSS by the 30 June 2021 deadline, but does so at a later date, any period of unlawful residence in the UK and Islands from 1 July 2021 to the date a valid late application is made is to be treated as lawful residence for the purpose of considering the three-year ordinary residence requirement.

Eligible family members of European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss nationals covered by the Withdrawal Agreements may come to the UK to join their family member. For those who do not apply to the EUSS within the applicable deadline (the latter of 30 June 2021 or three months from arrival in the UK) but do so at a later date, any period of unlawful residence in the UK and Islands beyond the expiry of the deadline up to the date a valid late application is made is to be treated as lawful residence for the purpose of considering the three-year ordinary residence requirement.

For considerations when assessing the ordinary residence of armed forces personnel see Section [2.8](#) below.

## **2.2 Students who move to England from elsewhere in the UK and Islands in order to attend a course**

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Under Paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 1, where a student has moved to England from Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, the Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man for the purpose of undertaking study, they should be regarded as being ordinarily resident in the place from which they have moved.

To apply for support, the student should contact the responsible authority in the area they moved from, as they are assessed for support under the rules that apply there. Generally, only those students ordinarily resident in England apply to SFE. Note that some regulatory categories require the student to be undertaking the course in England to be funded by SFE, rather than being ordinarily resident in England.

## **2.3 Temporary or occasional absences**

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When establishing whether an applicant meets the requirements of ordinary residence throughout the relevant period preceding the start of the first academic year of a course (or course start date for certain categories), temporary or occasional absences may have to be considered.

Each absence should be reviewed in the context of the person's period of residence, with decisions on whether an absence affects an applicant's ordinary residence being made on a case-by-case basis. SFE should not apply 'rules of thumb' in determining a temporary or occasional absence.

The applicant's place of birth or nationality should not be considered. Additionally, whilst the duration of the absence must be taken into account, it must not be the only factor

evaluated. SFE should consider whether it would be confident that their decision would be upheld if it were challenged in court.

## **COVID-19**

Short periods of absence from the required residence area as a result of COVID-19 can be considered temporary and should therefore be discounted for the purposes of establishing whether an individual meets the ordinary residence requirements for student support, home fee status and fee caps.

Where the relevant regulation imposes a requirement to be ordinarily resident in England/the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course (or on the course start date for certain residency categories), a short period of absence at the start of the course as a result of COVID-19, which prevents ordinary residence on the first day, will not impact on the individual's eligibility for student support and should not equally impact on eligibility for home fee status and fee limits.

Likewise, where periods of ordinary residence in the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable) are required by the Regulations, a short period of absence as a result of COVID-19 should be discounted when calculating whether these requirements have been met. This includes cases where a student was relocating to the relevant residence area, but COVID-19 delays prevented this.

If this resulted in the student being short of the ordinary residence requirements at the start of the period, then flexibility should be applied.

## **Additional Flexibility**

Given the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, DfE have recognised there may be some students who may have remained overseas longer than was strictly required by travel restrictions, for example due to health, caring or study reasons, or other circumstances that were not anticipated at the time and were not covered by the guidance above.

Additionally, there may be students who started courses prior to COVID-19 but were subsequently forced to withdraw and may have spent extended periods outside the UK before returning to the UK. Some of these students may have been unfairly disadvantaged by the existing guidance and, were it not for COVID-19, would have received funding for study in England by now.

To address this, DfE have provided additional flexibility in the following circumstances:

- to automatically treat a person as ordinarily resident in the UK (or relevant residence area) between March 2020 and March 2022, provided that person had been ordinarily resident in the UK (or relevant residence area) on or after 1 January 2020; or
- to assess a person as eligible to receive funding for AYs 21/22 to 25/26 inclusive, where they were previously assessed as eligible\* by SFE for student support in England in AY 19/20 or AY 20/21.

(\*There is no requirement for the student to have attended the course.)

All eligibility requirements, other than the requirement to be ordinarily resident in the UK or relevant residence area for the required period still need to be met.

Those with rights under the Withdrawal Agreements should be treated similarly and the 'relevant residence area' would therefore include the EEA, Gibraltar and Switzerland as well as the Overseas Territories and specified British Overseas Territories (BOTs) and the Republic of Ireland.

For those falling within scope of this additional flexibility, there would be no requirement for the student to present evidence that the reason for their absence was due to COVID-19. This reduces the evidential burden on the student and administrative complexity for SFE. Where a person's absence falls outside the applicable timeframe or academic years, SLC will treat cases like this on an individual basis and consider those absences in line with existing guidance relating to COVID-19.

All deadlines for applying for student finance will also be disregarded in these circumstances and funding for compelling personal reasons (CPR) should be awarded for new applications where the student previously self-funded.

### **Students delayed from arriving in United Kingdom before the end of the transition period (31/12/2020) due to COVID-19**

DfE have also provided additional clarity on the flexibility that should be applied to those persons unable to travel as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, particularly in respect of persons prevented from entering, or returning to, the UK before the end of the transition period (31 December 2020) due to COVID-19.

The policy intent behind the COVID-19 flexibility guidance is to enable students to meet the ordinary residence requirements where they were otherwise prevented from doing so due to circumstances outside of their control as a result of COVID-19.

In principle, this also covers persons falling within the following residency categories where they were unable to meet the requirement to be ordinarily resident in UK before 31 December 2020:

- [Paragraph 8A](#) – Persons who are settled in the UK and have exercised a right of residence elsewhere
- [Paragraph 9B](#) – UK nationals and their family members
- [Paragraph 9BA](#) – Irish citizens
- [Paragraph 12A](#) – Children of Turkish workers

In the case of Paragraph 12A (Children of Turkish workers), where the person's access to student support is dependent upon them having exercised their rights under the Ankara

Agreement before the end of the transition period, flexibility should be applied where evidence has been provided that :

- the child and parent had, on or before 31 December 2020, applied for a visa which entitled the parent to work in the UK, and
- COVID-19 delays prevented the person from satisfying the ordinary residence requirement.

SFE must treat any cases like this on a case-by-case basis.

### **Gap years**

Students taking a gap year before starting a higher education course do not break their ordinary residence in the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable).

SFE will need to satisfy themselves that the student has maintained a residence in the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable) during the relevant period and will return to England (or the UK and Islands, or the relevant residence area, as applicable) other than solely for the purpose of completing the relevant course.

Students on a gap year immediately prior to starting their course can be considered to meet the requirement to be ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course (or on the course start date for certain residency categories), even if they are still abroad. The student must be able to evidence that they will return to the UK prior to the first day of the course.

Note that students with pre-settled status taking a gap year should seek advice from the Home Office on whether that would break the period of five years of continuous residence required for EUSS settled status.

### **Emigrants**

Absence from the UK because of emigration should generally not be considered a temporary absence, though each case should be considered on its own merits.

#### **2.4 Temporary employment outside of England, the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable)**

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Paragraph 1(4) of Schedule 1 provides that a person may be treated as being or having been ordinarily resident in the relevant residence area, as applicable, if they would have been so resident but for the fact that:

- they,
- their spouse or civil partner,
- their parent, or
- in the case of a dependent relative, their child or child's spouse or civil partner,

is or was temporarily employed outside the area in question during the relevant period.

A person can usually only be considered temporarily absent from the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable) if they have previously established ordinary residence in the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable) at an earlier point in time.

Information on temporary absence of armed forces personnel who are posted outside of the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable) and their family members can be found in Section 2.8.

## **2.5 Children living in England, the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable) whose parents are temporarily employed outside these areas**

Children whose parents are temporarily employed outside England, the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable) but who remain in the applicable area, will normally retain the relevant connection with these areas and therefore be eligible for support. DfE is of the view that, for the purposes of the Regulations, the relevant period of their residence should not be regarded as being wholly or mainly for the purposes of receiving FT education simply because they are still here and receiving education while their parents are temporarily employed abroad. Paragraph 2(2) of Schedule 1, which states that the three-year residence in the UK and Islands was not wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education, does not apply to a person who is treated as ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands in accordance with paragraph 1(4) of Schedule 1.

A person who has come to the UK to study or be schooled may initially be ordinarily resident here primarily for educational purposes, but the purpose of residence may subsequently change. For example, they may set up normal habitual residence in the UK. As always, however, SFE should make a decision in such cases based on the particular facts.

## **2.6 Considerations when establishing temporary employment**

When determining if a break in ordinary residence is a result of temporary employment abroad, SFE should be satisfied that the period abroad arises from employment. They should then assess whether the absence is temporary and whether, except for the temporary employment of the applicant (or parents or spouse/civil partner etc.), the applicant would have been ordinarily resident in the relevant place.

In making their decision, SFE may consider among other things:

- the nature of the posting,
- the terms of any contract or employer's letter,
- the period of time spent abroad,
- the time spent in the UK, and

- whether a residence has been maintained, for the purposes of the Regulations, in England or the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable).

The onus is on the applicant to provide evidence that:

- their absence was due to employment abroad,
- the employment was temporary, and
- were it not for temporary employment abroad, they would be ordinarily resident in England or the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable).

In determining whether the absence was for purposes of employment in circumstances where the applicant was not in employment immediately after moving overseas, SFE may wish to consider:

- whether the applicant had applied for jobs prior to their departure,
- the length of the time spent overseas before obtaining work,
- whether the applicant resided in the same overseas country before and after obtaining a job, and
- what the applicant was doing prior to obtaining a job, or between jobs.

Holding temporary residency visas and/or temporary employment contracts are insufficient grounds on their own, as different countries have different immigration systems. In determining whether the employment was temporary or permanent, SFE should consider:

- if the contract included liability for UK and Islands tax on the earnings and/or National Insurance contributions (or tax in the relevant residence area, as applicable),
- if the posting was for a specified period (or if it is for an unspecified period, what is the reason for this),
- how long the contractual period was,
- if the contract is renewable, has it been renewed or is it one of a succession of contracts abroad,
- if the contract conveys automatic rights of return to the UK from time to time,
- how long the employee has already been resident abroad,
- the nature of the work:
  - Is it normal for the nature of the trade or profession to be mobile?
  - Is mobility a condition of service?
- a right of return:

- Does the applicant (or parent, spouse/civil partner etc.) have an automatic right of return to work in their organisation (or a related one) in their home country on completion of the duty abroad?
- periods between overseas postings:
  - Have such periods been spent in the UK (or the relevant residence area, as applicable)?

SFE should consider domestic employment case law. Industrial tribunals have ruled that a succession of similar temporary contracts can be construed as permanent employment; they may indicate a long-term posting with the contract being renewed as a matter of formality rather than a real review. Conversely, a series of short contracts may be the result of a genuine temporary posting that is kept under review.

The list above is not exhaustive, nor will all the questions apply in every case. It emphasises that each case must be dealt with individually. Decisions on whether employment abroad is permanent or temporary must not be made solely on the length of period spent abroad, but in conjunction with the nature of the work and the employment pattern of the applicant. SFE should consider whether it would be confident that its decision would be upheld if it were challenged in court.

## **2.7 Determining dual residence**

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In determining ordinary residence, it may be necessary to consider if an applicant has been dually resident in the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable) and another overseas state outside of the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable).

DfE is of the view that it is possible for a person to be ordinarily resident in two countries at the same time. Evidence must be provided to enable SFE to make a judgment if there are significant and continued ties to the UK. SFE must consider the following factors alongside the evidence:

- Was the student settled in the UK prior to leaving?
- Does the student or their family maintain or own property? Note, however, that maintaining a property in the UK will not necessarily mean that somebody is ordinarily resident. For example, a property may be an investment or a future retirement home.
- Has the student or their family retained UK citizenship and valid UK passports and documents?
- Has the student or their family retained temporary status in the other state despite having the option to become citizens?
- Was the student a minor when the family left the UK?

- Has the student (or their parent/guardian) maintained UK bank accounts and/or paid UK taxes?
- Has the student or their family maintained business, work and/or social connections in the UK?
- Have regular visits been made to the UK during their absence, not just for the purposes of holidays and visiting relatives?

## **2.8 Armed Forces personnel**

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For the purposes of this guidance, 'UK Armed Forces' includes active service members of the British Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force.

To ensure applications for support from former members of the UK Armed Forces or family members of UK Armed Forces personnel are processed by the administration in the appropriate UK territory, all UK administrations apply a consistent approach to the responsibility of processing such applications:

- Where the applicant's family was ordinarily resident in England prior to enlisting, the student's application should be processed by SFE unless the applicant or their family have established permanent residence elsewhere.
- Where an applicant's family have not established a permanent residence in England and are living overseas or in England on a posting, SFE will check where in the UK the member of the Armed Forces was ordinarily resident when they enlisted. If this was deemed to be in Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland, then the applicant must apply to the appropriate UK administration for their student support.

The Regulations state that eligible FT and part-time (PT) students undertaking a distance learning course provided by a UK institution have to be undertaking the course in England on the first day of the first academic year of that course in order to qualify for tuition fee loans and, where applicable, DSA for their course. Additionally, eligible students undertaking a distance learning course outside the UK cease to qualify for support.

However, there is an exception to the above rule for students who are studying in the UK but outside their home domicile on a distance learning course as a result of their disability. Please see Section [6.7](#) for more information.

In AY 17/18 the rules for students starting or continuing FT and PT distance learning courses were amended so that eligible students who are either:

- UK Armed Forces personnel serving overseas, or
- family members living with UK Armed Forces personnel serving overseas,

became eligible for tuition fee loans, and, where applicable, DSA, for a FT or PT distance learning course.

From AY 18/19, DfE extended support for distance learning courses to:

- UK Armed Forces personnel serving outside their domicile on the first day of the first academic year of their course but within another country within the UK, and
- family members living with UK Armed Forces personnel serving outside their domicile on the first day of the first academic year of their course but in another country within the UK.

Paragraph 1(5) of Schedule 1 states that members of the regular naval, military or air forces of:

- the Crown (UK),
- the Republic of Ireland,
- an EEA State, or
- Switzerland or Turkey,

who serve any period outside these areas are considered to be temporarily employed overseas for any such period. The effect of this is that a person may be treated as being or having been ordinarily resident in England, the UK and Islands (or the relevant residence area, as applicable) if they would have been so resident but for the fact that they, their spouse or civil partner, their parent, or, in the case of a dependent relative, their child or child's spouse or civil partner, was serving overseas or in another country within the UK. This group of people are in a special situation: because of the unique nature of their employment, they are bound by military law to accept overseas postings. The provision is only intended for service personnel's families who follow them on postings. A student who has been living overseas but not with the parent who is on active service, would not be able to take advantage of this provision.

## **2.9 Derivative rights of residence (Zambrano, Chen and Ibrahim/Teixeira)**

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Individuals may hold, or have held, an EEA family permit (issued prior to entry to the UK), a derivative residence card (issued after entry) or pre-settled status or settled status (issued under the EUSS prior to August 2023) if they have a 'derivative right of residence' as the:

- primary carer of an EEA child in the UK who is financially independent (Chen),
- child of an EEA former worker and are currently in education in the UK (Ibrahim/Teixeira),
- primary carer of a child of an EEA former worker and the child is currently in education in the UK (Ibrahim/Teixeira),
- primary carer of a British child (Zambrano),
- primary carer of a British dependent adult (Zambrano), or the
- child of a primary carer who qualifies through one of these categories.

Individuals holding Zambrano derivative rights are not covered by the provisions of the Withdrawal Agreements. They were eligible to apply to the EUSS until August 2023, when this route to settlement closed. Therefore, whilst those individuals are unable to demonstrate a right of permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement, some may hold settled status under the EUSS.

Individuals with derivative rights based on Chen or Ibrahim/Teixeira are covered by the Withdrawal Agreements and can apply to the EUSS.

Holding a derivative right of residence does not confer an automatic eligibility for student support in its own right, but it may mean that an individual holds an immigration status and lawful period of residency which would enable them to satisfy the requirements of the Regulations. Applicants will still need to meet the necessary criteria set out in one of the eligibility categories.

Links to further details on Zambrano, Chen and Ibrahim/Teixeira cases can be found on Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/derivative-right-residence>

SFE will validate the award of an immigration status based on a derivative right of residence via the Home Office.

## **2.10 Impact of the UK's exit from the EU**

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The UK's exit from the EU took place on 31 January 2020. A transition period following the UK's exit from the EU ended on 31 December 2020, after which free movement ended and post-EU exit immigration rules apply.

The withdrawal of the UK from the EU is referred to as 'EU exit' in this document.

### **Continuing students in AY 26/27**

For students who began their studies in AY 20/21 or earlier, support will continue on the same eligibility grounds as established at the beginning of the period of study until the student completes that period of study. This applies even where the period of study starts after the end of the transition period in AY 20/21 (i.e. from 1 January 2021 to 31 July 2021 inclusive). EU, EEA and Swiss nationals and relevant family members who are already eligible for student support in England will therefore continue to be eligible according to the regulatory residency rules that were in force in AY 20/21.

Please note that where a student started a period of study prior to AY 21/22:

- the period of study is not terminated where the student transfers course once on or after 1 August 2021,

- the period of study will terminate following a second transfer on or after 1 August 2021, unless the student is eligible under a category available to new students at the point of the second transfer,
- the period of study terminates when the student withdraws from or completes a course.

See Section 5.7.1 for further details.

The above rules apply regardless of the duration of the student's period of study.

### **Citizens' rights and 'protected' rights**

EU, EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members who have exercised their right to reside in the UK by the end of the transition period (31 December 2020) and continue to reside in the UK thereafter have citizens' rights under the EU Withdrawal Agreement (and the similar EEA-EFTA (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) Separation Agreement and Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement). Those with citizens' rights have the right to continue to legally reside in the UK and enjoy associated rights. The rights of those who move to the UK after the end of the transition period (unless they have citizens' rights as a family member of a person already in the UK) will be subject to the points-based immigration system.

There is specific provision for family members of persons of Northern Ireland, who only have citizens' rights under the EU Withdrawal Agreement if the person of Northern Ireland is solely an Irish national, but continue to be in scope of access to home fee status and student financial support on the same basis as family members of EU nationals.

Those with citizens' rights, as well as family members of persons of Northern Ireland, are referred to as having 'protected rights'. Those with 'protected rights' are defined in the Regulations as follows:

*(1)(a) a person within the personal scope of the citizens' rights provisions who—*

*(i) has leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom granted by virtue of residence scheme immigration rules;*

*(ii) is an Irish citizen who, pursuant to section 3ZA of the Immigration Act 1971, does not require leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom;*

[sub-paragraph (iii) has been revoked]

*(iv) is an applicant for the purposes of regulation 4 of the 2020 Citizens' Rights Regulations where the relevant period has not expired; or*

*(v) otherwise has rights deemed to apply by virtue of any citizens' rights deeming provisions; or*

*(b) a family member of a relevant person of Northern Ireland for the purposes of residence scheme immigration rules, where that family member has leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom granted by virtue of residence scheme immigration*

rules;

(2) In paragraph (1)(a)(v), “citizens’ rights deeming provisions” means—

- (a) Article 18(2) and (3) (issuance of residence documents) of the EU withdrawal agreement;
- (b) Article 17(2) and (3) (issuance of residence documents) of the EEA EFTA separation agreement (as defined in section 39(1) of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020); or
- (c) Article 16(2) and (3) (issuance of residence documents) of the Swiss citizens’ rights agreement.

### **Persons of Northern Ireland**

The definition of “persons of Northern Ireland” is taken from the residence scheme immigration rules as defined by section 17(1) of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 and refers to people born in Northern Ireland to a parent who was a British citizen, Irish citizen or dual British and Irish citizen at the time of the birth. A person of Northern Ireland must be British, Irish or have dual citizenship at the time of their family member’s application to the EUSS.

### **EU/EEA nationals with protected right who acquire British citizenship**

EU/EEA nationals residing in the UK with protected rights may subsequently go on to acquire British citizenship. From the date of their naturalisation, their British citizenship confers an unlimited right to reside in the UK and they will no longer need to hold status under the EUSS. However, as they previously resided in the UK exercising free movement rights, they will continue to be covered by the Withdrawal Agreement and will retain protected rights.

For example:

**Jimmy** is an Australian national who is married to a German national. Jimmy moved to the UK from Australia in January 2022 to join their German spouse who was already working and living in the UK. Jimmy holds pre-settled status granted under the EUSS. Jimmy’s spouse held settled status under the EUSS before being naturalised as a British citizen in August 2026. Jimmy starts a HE course in September 2026. Jimmy’s spouse continues to work in the UK. Although Jimmy can qualify for fee support only under paragraph 9C as the family member of a settled person, Jimmy may also qualify for living costs support under paragraph 6A, as Jimmy’s spouse has protected rights under the Withdrawal Agreement and is therefore an EEA migrant worker.

### **2.11 The EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)**

Those who have protected rights could apply for a status under the EUSS. They had until 30 June 2021 to apply and any discretion to extend this date was considered on a case-by-case basis by the Home Office (see Section [2.1](#)). In certain circumstances, family members can join an EEA or Swiss national in the UK after 31 December 2020 and apply to the EUSS once they are here.

Family members of EEA/Swiss nationals arriving in the UK after 1 April 2021 have three months to apply to the EUSS from the date they arrive in the UK. They will have temporary protection and therefore will be treated as having citizens' rights for the purposes of eligibility for home fee status and student support during those three months, and pending the outcome of any EUSS application made during that period (and of any appeal).

Applicants to the EUSS will initially be given a Certificate of Application once their application has been validated by the Home Office, and can ultimately be awarded:

- **settled status** (i.e. indefinite leave to enter or remain) if they have the requisite minimum of five years of continuous lawful residence in the UK. In order to demonstrate the required period of continuous residence, individuals need to have been resident for at least 30 out of the last 60 months on aggregate, or
- **pre-settled status** (i.e. limited leave to enter or remain) if they have a shorter period of UK residence (any period of lawful residence of less than five continuous years). After five years of continuous lawful residence in the UK they can change this status to settled status.

### 2.11.1 Demonstrating settled or pre-settled status granted under the EUSS

From AY 21/22, access to student support under some of the categories detailed in Section 3 depends on the individual having protected rights. SLC will check that the individual with protected rights has settled status or pre-settled status granted under the EUSS, where either status is required for student support eligibility.

An individual with pre-settled status may potentially be eligible under one of the following categories:

- Paragraph 6A – Workers, employed persons, self-employed persons and their family members
- Paragraph 7A - Children of former EEA migrant workers
- Paragraph 9A – EU nationals and their family members with protected rights
- Paragraph 11A – Children of Swiss nationals

If applying as a family member of a person mentioned in Paragraph 6A and 9A, please refer to the relevant section for the definition of family member.

SFE will check applicants' settled or pre-settled status under the EUSS directly with the Home Office. All successful applicants to the EUSS are also able to demonstrate their status digitally via the Home Office's Digital Status Checker, the 'View and Prove' eVisa system). The individual generates a share code which remains valid for 90 days and which allows external parties such as the SLC to check the individual's eVisa status. To generate the code, the individual must select that they wish to demonstrate their immigration status, manually enter their national identity card number, date of birth and verify their account by text or e-mail. The verifying individual or organisation will require the individual's share code and date of birth to check the status. SFE may request the share code from the relevant applicants as part of the student finance application process.

### **2.11.2 EUSS outstanding applications and ongoing appeals**

The closing date for applications to the EUSS was 30 June 2021, other than in the case of joining family members.

EU, EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members applying for courses starting in AY 26/27 will generally be awarded student finance from SFE only if they have been granted settled or pre-settled status under the EUSS and they meet the other requirements of one of the eligibility categories in the Regulations.

However, there may be applicants for student finance for AY 26/27 and beyond who have reasonable grounds for making a late application to the EUSS. There may also be some applicants who have made an in-time EUSS application but are still waiting a final decision on their status from the Home Office, including those that have requested an administrative review, or lodged an appeal. Once a valid application has been made to the EUSS (evidenced by receipt of a Certificate of Application), the applicant will have temporary protection and citizens' rights, pending the outcome of that application.

A Certificate of Application does not provide an automatic right to support. Applicants will still need to meet the criteria set out in one of the eligibility categories. If SFE are made aware of an applicant's Certificate of Application being based on derivative rights, for example as a Zambrano carer, then SFE must consider each applicant on a case-by-case basis to ensure they meet the requirements of an eligibility category.

### **2.11.3 Expiry of pre-settled status**

From 21 December 2022, those who have been granted pre-settled status and who have five years of continuous lawful residence in the UK in line with the residence requirements of the Withdrawal Agreement or the EEA/EFTA Separation Agreement, will acquire the right of permanent residence, without having to apply to the EUSS for settled status.

Due to the above, the Home Office has extended the expiry dates of pre-settled status by five years and removed the pre-settled status expiry dates from their systems. The Home Office is reviewing and converting pre-settled status to settled status for those who are eligible, without the need for a second EUSS application. Pre-settled status will not expire; it will only be removed if the Home Office cancels or curtails it. Consequently, SFE will not verify pre-settled status expiry dates.

### **2.11.4 Students who acquire settled status under the EUSS or permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement/EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement as an event**

A right of permanent residence under Directive 2004/38 can no longer be acquired following the end of the transition period. Those who acquired this right can apply for settled status under the EUSS and must, in most cases, have done so by 30 June 2021.

The majority of applicants are expected to demonstrate permanent residence by acquiring settled status under the EUSS. There may also be instances where an applicant has held pre-settled status or a Certificate of Application under the EUSS and, rather than apply for

settled status under the EUSS, seeks to demonstrate permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement or EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement. See [Section 3.3](#) below for details of this alternative route. Note that this route is not open to those with leave in the UK under the Swiss Rights Agreement, who instead must demonstrate permanent residence by obtaining settled status under the EUSS.

Acquiring settled status under the EUSS, or permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement or EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement, may be treated as an in-year qualifying event for those starting a course from AY 21/22. Such an applicant may therefore become eligible after the start of the course and will be eligible for:

- loans for living costs, Adult Dependants' Grant (ADG) and Parents' Learning Allowance (PLA) in any subsequent years of the course (and in the quarters following the award in the year of the award, except the quarter in which the longest vacation falls),
- Childcare Grant (CCG) and Travel Grant in any subsequent years of the course and in the quarters following the award in the year of award, except the quarter in which the longest vacation falls (see the Grants for Dependants (GFDs) and Assessing Financial Entitlement guidance chapters for further information on the support available to students who become eligible during the course),
- DSA from the date of the award,
- (2012 cohort students only) maintenance grant or special support grant in any subsequent years of the course and in the quarters following the award of the status (if the status was acquired within three months of the first day of the academic year),
- tuition fee support in the academic year in which the award of the status occurs (provided that the event occurred within the first three months of the academic year) \*.

For other in-year qualifying events please refer to [Section 3.37](#).

For example:

*EU national with pre-settled status becomes settled after the first day of the first AY of the course*

- **Claudine** is a Dutch national who arrived in the UK in November 2022 to join a family member who was already living in the UK. Prior to that, Claudine lived in Germany. They apply for and are granted pre-settled status under the EUSS in November 2022. They start a course in England in September 2026 and apply to SFE for support.

Claudine is eligible for fee support only, as they have pre-settled status and the required three years of ordinary residence in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories prior to the first day of the first AY of the course which is required for a pre-settled person to get fee support only.

In November 2026, Claudine's pre-settled status changes to settled status, as they have been in the UK for five years by that time. Claudine contacts SLC to advise of this change.

Acquiring settled status under the EUSS pursuant to rights under the Withdrawal Agreement is an event in the Regulations. As Claudine is already eligible for fee support, that is unaffected. They will be reassessed for maintenance and targeted support (if applicable) starting from the following academic year quarter (from 1 January 2027). As a settled person, they must be:

- ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first AY of the course\*, and
- ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first AY of the course\*.

\*Note that the above residence requirements did not apply in the case of applicants who relied on events provisions in AY 22/23.

*EEA-EFTA national with pre-settled status becomes settled after the first day of the first AY of the course*

- **Harald** is a Norwegian national who arrives in the UK in October 2021. Prior to that Harald lived in Norway. They apply for and are granted pre-settled status under the EUSS in October 2021 and start a course in September 2026.

Harald is ineligible for support at the start of the course as they do not qualify under any of the categories.

In October 2026, Harald acquires settled status, effective as of 30 October 2026 as they have been in the UK for five years by that time. They contact SLC to advise of this change.

Acquiring settled status under the EUSS pursuant to rights under the Withdrawal Agreements is an event in the Regulations. Harald will be eligible for fee support for AY 26/27 as the event occurred during the first 3 months of the academic year, and maintenance support from the start of the next AY quarter (From 1 January 2027). As a settled person, they must be:

- ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first AY of the course\*, and
- ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first AY of the course\*.

*EU national with pre-settled status acquires permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement after the first day of the first AY of the course*

- **Florian** is a German national who arrives in the UK in October 2021 as a late joining family member. Prior to that, they lived in Germany. Florian applied for and was

granted pre-settled status in October 2021 and they are eligible for settled status from October 2026.

Florian starts a course in England in September 2026 and in October 2026 they apply to SFE for full support as a person with a right of permanent residence in the UK by virtue of the Withdrawal Agreements. Florian has not applied to the EUSS for settled status but has provided evidence of permanent residence after five years of continuous lawful residence under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, which equates to settled status.

Florian will be eligible for tuition fee support for AY 26/27 as the event occurred within the first three months of the academic year of the course and maintenance and targeted support (if applicable) from the following academic quarter (1 January 2027). As a settled person, they must be:

- ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course\*, and
- ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course\*.

\*Note that the above residence requirements did not apply in the case of applicants who relied on events provisions in AY 22/23.

### **2.11.5 Students who hold pre-settled status under the EUSS qualifying as an event**

If a student holds pre-settled status under the EUSS, they may be eligible for support if any of the following in-year qualifying events occur:

- The student becomes the family member of an EU national.
- The student becomes an EEA migrant worker or self-employed person or the family member of a person mentioned.
- The student becomes a Swiss employed person or Swiss self-employed person or the family member of a person mentioned.
- The student becomes an EEA frontier worker or the family member of a person mentioned.
- The student becomes the child of a Swiss national who is covered by the Swiss Agreement.

For example:

#### *Student becomes the family member of an EU national*

**Kristin** is an Icelandic national who has been living in England since joining their family member in November 2022. Prior to that they lived in Iceland. Kristin applies for and receives pre-settled status under the EUSS. They start a course in September 2026 and are ineligible for support as they do not qualify under any of the categories.

In November 2026, Kristin marries their long-term partner who is a German national with pre-settled status.

Becoming the family member of an EU national is an in-year qualifying event and Kristin will be eligible for fee support in AY 26/27 as:

- They have pre-settled status under the EUSS.
- They have three years of ordinary residence in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories prior to the first day of the first AY of the course.
- They are the spouse of an EU national.
- The event occurred within first three months of the academic year.

### **2.11.6 Settled and pre-settled status granted by Crown Dependencies**

Persons who hold settled or pre-settled status awarded by the Crown Dependencies may use this as evidence to support their application for student finance on the same basis as those with settled or pre-settled status awarded under the EUSS, subject to meeting the residency requirements.

Pre-settled or settled status granted by the Crown Dependencies cannot be checked via the EUSS eVisa system, or via a Home Office check. SFE must check paper evidence from the student or other status holder to determine eligibility.

Note that students who come from the Crown Dependencies to the UK wholly or mainly for the purposes of study are not eligible for student support. They are, however, eligible for home fee status. If they come to the UK for purposes other than study, and then subsequently start a course, they will qualify for student support as long as they satisfy the other eligibility conditions including required residency criteria.

## **3 Residency categories (Schedule 1 Part 2)**

Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the Regulations describes the categories under which a student can be eligible for support. The residency requirements and other conditions that must be met are set out under each category.

A student's eligibility is not solely derived from satisfying the requirements of one of the categories; they must meet the other conditions as prescribed under regulation 4.

### **3.1 Paragraph 2 – Persons who are settled in the UK (other than those falling into Paragraph 3)**

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Full support will be available to persons who are settled in the UK under paragraph 2 of Schedule 1 (Part 2).

From AY 24/25, to fall within paragraph 2 of Schedule 1, the student must:

- be settled in the UK within the meaning of section 33(2A) of the Immigration Act 1971, which is to be ordinarily resident here without being subject to any restriction on the period for which they may remain;
- have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of their course. This excludes any period of residence wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education; and
- be ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of their course.

Note that in any academic year prior to AY 24/25, students would need to hold settled status on the first day of the first academic year of their course. This requirement has been removed from AY 24/25 going forward.

As per paragraph 2(2) of Schedule 1, the requirement that a student has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course and not wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education does not apply to a person who is treated as ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands in accordance with paragraph 1(4) of Schedule 1.

Paragraph 1(4) of Schedule 1 states that a person is to be treated as ordinarily resident in an area if they would have been so resident but for the fact that:

- a) they,
- b) their spouse or civil partner,
- c) their parent, or,
- d) in the case of a dependent direct relative in the ascending line, their child or child's spouse or civil partner,

is or was temporarily employed outside the areas mentioned. Refer to Sections [2.4 – 2.6](#) for further information on residency rules pertaining to temporary employment.

From AY 24/25, the acquisition of settled status is considered an 'event' under the Regulations; where this occurs, and the student is already in study, they could become eligible for support during the academic year. The event must also have occurred within the first three months of the academic year in order to qualify for tuition fee support. See [Section 3.37](#) for the support students may be eligible for in this scenario.

### **Settled status**

A person is considered settled in the UK if:

- they are a British citizen (British citizens are not subject to any restriction on their length of stay in the UK, and evidence of British citizenship may be established by a British passport),

- they are a person who has been granted indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/ILR) (which includes settled status under the EUSS – see Section [3.3](#) for persons with settled status granted under the EUSS),
- they are exempt from immigration control under section 8(4)(a) of the Immigration Act 1971 (they are a member of HM Forces),
- they have the right of abode, or
- they are an Irish citizen.

The immigration status of applicants with ILE/ILR may be evidenced via a Home Office check.

A person with the right of abode is entirely free from UK immigration control. This status can also be evidenced via a Home Office check.

### **British Citizens**

Whether an individual is British citizen depends can depend on where their parents were from and their own circumstances, including when and where they were born. There are different rules applicable if, when they were born:

- at least one of their parents was a British or Irish citizen,
- at least one of their parents was a citizen of an EU or EEA country,
- neither of their parents was a British, Irish, EU or EEA citizen.

An individual is automatically a British citizen if they were adopted by a British citizen in a UK court. Further detail on who qualifies as a British citizen depending on when they were born and their circumstances can be found at: [Check if you're a British citizen: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

### **British citizen by descent**

The British Nationality Act 1981 (section 2) provides that a child born outside the UK will be a British citizen by descent if either parent was a British citizen 'otherwise than by descent'.

Settled status is defined as being ordinarily resident in the UK without being subject to immigration time restrictions. A person who is a British citizen has the right of abode in the UK and so is not subject to immigration control. These students therefore meet the settled status requirement.

'Parent' means:

For children born before 1 July 2006:

- the mother, if the child was born on or after 1 January 1983 (before 1983, women were not able to pass on citizenship to their children), or

- the father (but only if he was married to the mother)

If the parents were not married when the child was born, but subsequently get married, the marriage might legitimise the child's birth. If it does, the child would become a British citizen (and would be regarded as having been one from birth) if the father was a British citizen (or settled) when the child was born. Children of a void marriage may also, in some circumstances, be treated as legitimate.

For children born on or after 1 July 2006:

- the mother (the woman who gives birth to the child)
- the father if:
  - he is married to the mother at the time of the birth,
  - he is treated as the father under section 28 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, or
  - (if neither (1) nor (2) apply) he can satisfy certain requirements as regards proof of paternity – i.e. he is named as the father on a birth certificate issued within one year of the child's birth or he can satisfy the Home Secretary that he is the father of the child (by means of DNA test results, court orders, or other relevant evidence)

### **British Overseas Territories**

The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 renamed the previously known "British dependent territories" (BDT) as "British overseas territories" (BOTs). A further change took place on 21 May 2002: if a person was a BOT citizen (BOTC), except by virtue of a connection only with the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia, immediately before 21 May 2002, they automatically became a British citizen on that date.

Students from a BOT may also be a British citizen if they were born on or after 21 May 2002 in a BOT or born outside of a BOT to a parent who is a British citizen as detailed in Section [3.1.2](#):

- Any BOTC entering the UK from the relevant countries (provided they have not renounced or acquired their BOTC status by naturalisation as a BOTC in an overseas territory after 21 May 2002) will be doing so as a British citizen and will not be subject to immigration control.
- Holders of BDTC/BOTC passports were allowed to present their BDTC/BOTC documents as evidence of right of abode in the UK prior to obtaining full British citizen passports until 21 May 2002.

These students still have to meet the ordinary residence criteria of the applicable residency category.

Students from the BOTs may be asked to provide proof that they have settled status when applying for places at colleges and universities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland or student support from SFE.

Acceptable evidence might be:

- a British citizen passport or passport number,
- a BOTC passport or BDTC passport issued before 21 May 2002, or
- a BOTC passport issued after 21 May 2002, with evidence that the person or their parent was born in an overseas territory or registered or naturalised as a citizen before that date.

Except for Gibraltar, BOTs were not previously part of the EEA, and the main body of EU law did not apply to them.

Fee support is available to students starting courses in AY 22/23 or later who are settled when in the UK, and who have been resident in specified BOTs. See Section [3.24](#) for more details.

### **Overseas Territories**

Persons settled in the UK may be eligible for support under paragraph 9BB where they have been resident in the specified British Overseas Territories for part of the three-year period before the first day of the first academic year of the course - further details on this category are in Section [3.24](#).

EU nationals and their family members, and the family members of persons of Northern Ireland who are persons with protected rights, may be eligible for support where they have been resident in the EU overseas territories as well as the BOTs. See Section [3.21](#) for details.

EU nationals and their family members previously eligible as a result of their resident status in Gibraltar may be eligible if they have been resident in the overseas territories. See Section [3.27](#) for details.

Fee support only will also be available to students in the following categories who start a course from AY 22/23 and who have been ordinarily resident for all or part of the three-year period in an overseas territory. (Note that if that overseas territory is Gibraltar, the student will continue to be eligible for full support). See the corresponding section in this chapter for each category for details:

- Workers and their family members (paragraph 6A)
- Children of former workers (paragraph 7A)
- Children of Swiss nationals (paragraph 11A)
- Children of Turkish workers (paragraph 12A)

Fee support only will also be available to students in the following categories where residence in the UK and Islands during the three-year period has been wholly or mainly for

the purpose of study, and residence prior to that period was in an overseas territory. Note that if that overseas territory is Gibraltar, the student will continue to be eligible for full support in the first of these categories, and postgraduate DSA in the second:

- Settled persons with protected rights (paragraph 3)
- EU nationals in the UK and Islands (paragraph 10ZA)

The specified British Overseas Territories and EU overseas countries and territories are as follows:

<b>Specified British Overseas Territories</b>	Anguilla; Bermuda; British Antarctic Territory; British Indian Ocean Territory; British Virgin Islands; Cayman Islands; Falkland Islands; Gibraltar; Montserrat; Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands; South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; St Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha; Turks and Caicos Islands
<b>EU overseas countries and territories</b>	Greenland; Curaçao; Aruba; Sint Maarten; Bonaire; St Eustatius; Saba; French Polynesia; New Caledonia; Wallis and Futuna; Saint Barthélemy; Saint Pierre and Miquelon; French Southern and Antarctic Territories; Faroe Islands; Mayotte

Note that the sovereign base areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia are British Overseas Territories but are not included in the above list, as residents of those areas are not eligible for support under this category. (Under the terms of the 1960 agreement with Cyprus establishing the Sovereign Base Areas, the UK issued a non-binding letter of intent not to form colonies in the Areas or use them for civilian purposes: this was stated in 2002 as the primary reason for the exclusion of the Areas from the scope of the British Overseas Territories Act 2002. They are run as military bases not colonial territories.)

## Gibraltar

Gibraltar is the only British Overseas Territory that was historically part of the EEA. It was not part of the Customs Union and was not a member of the EU in its own right. Since the end of the transition period, Gibraltar is no longer part of the EEA or subject to EU law, but it remains part of the free-travel Schengen area.

UK nationals and their family members with resident status in Gibraltar granted by the Government of Gibraltar continue to be eligible in England for home fee status and fee support for courses starting before 1 January 2028, on the basis of three years of residence in the UK, Gibraltar, EEA and Switzerland. EU nationals and their family members who have a right to reside in Gibraltar arising from the Withdrawal Agreement will be eligible in England for home fee status and fee support for courses starting before 1 January 2028, on

the basis of three years of residence in the UK, EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories. See Section [3.26](#).

For more information see the following sections: Gibraltar nationals working in the UK (Section [3.16](#)); persons settled in the UK who move to Gibraltar then return before the first day of the first academic year (Section [3.18.1](#)); and UK nationals, EU nationals and their family members in Gibraltar (Section [3.25](#)).

### **Residence wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education**

In order to be eligible for support, persons who are settled in the UK under paragraph 2 in the Regulations must not have been resident in the UK and Islands during the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of their course wholly or mainly for the purposes of receiving FT education.

SFE should determine on a case-by-case basis whether an applicant has been resident in the UK and Islands wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education.

DfE is of the view that a student is not prevented from qualifying for support simply because they have been receiving FT education during some or all of the three-year prescribed period. For example, the child or spouse/civil partner of a foreign businessperson or diplomat ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands may be receiving FT education, but may be here mainly to be with their parent or spouse/civil partner (and not wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education) and so be entitled to support if the time requirements are met.

### **3.2 Paragraph 2A – Settled persons resident in the Common Travel Area – students who start a course from AY 21/22**

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Fee support will be available to settled persons who have been ordinarily resident in the Common Travel Area (the UK, Islands and the Republic of Ireland) for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, with at least part of that time resident in the Republic of Ireland, and are studying in England. In academic years prior to AY 24/25, students would also need to hold settled status in the UK on the first day of the first term of the course. A person who moves to England from the Islands (Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) for the purposes of undertaking the course is not eligible for fee support under this category.

A UK national who was resident in the Republic of Ireland before the end of the transition period and starts a course before 1 January 2028 could be eligible for full support under paragraph 9B, so they would not need to apply for fee support only under this category.

Examples of students who may be eligible under paragraph 2A:

- **Calum** is an Irish citizen who was ordinarily resident in the Republic of Ireland until they arrived in the UK in September 2025. Calum starts a course in England in October 2026.

Calum is eligible for fee support only as they were ordinarily resident in the UK, Islands and the Republic of Ireland for the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course (1 September 2023 – 31 August 2026) with at least part of that period spent in the Republic of Ireland.

- **Shane** is a British citizen. They move from the UK to the Republic of Ireland in January 2024 and return to the UK in September 2026 to start a course in England in the same month. Shane’s residence period in Ireland is not considered a temporary absence.

Shane is eligible for fee support only, as they have been resident in the UK, Islands and the Republic of Ireland (with at least part of that time in Ireland) for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course (1 September 2023 – 31 August 2026).

From AY 24/25, the acquisition of settled status is considered an ‘event’ under the Regulations; where this occurs, and the student is already in study, they could become eligible for support during the academic year. The ‘event’ must also have occurred within the first three months of the academic year in order to qualify for tuition fee support. See [Section 3.37](#) for the support they may be entitled to.

### **3.3 Paragraph 3 – Persons with settled status under the EUSS or who demonstrate a right of permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement or the EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement**

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Paragraph 3, from AY 21/22 onwards, covers those with a right of permanent residence. Its main focus is on those persons granted settled status under the EUSS, which was established in line with the Withdrawal Agreement (made between the UK and the EU), the EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement (made between the UK and the EEA-EFTA States) and the Swiss Citizens’ Rights Agreement (made between the UK and Switzerland). Paragraph 3 also covers Irish citizens and family members of relevant persons of Northern Ireland where the family member holds settled status under the EUSS.

In the majority of cases, a person is expected to demonstrate permanent residence by the grant of settled status under the EUSS, because settled status under the EUSS does not require the person to fulfil the stricter criteria for permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement or EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement, i.e. proof that they were exercising their treaty rights during a continuous five-year period.

However, it is possible that a person might decline to demonstrate permanent residence via the EUSS and instead choose to demonstrate permanent residence under the stricter criteria in the Withdrawal Agreement or EEA-EFTA Agreement. While this approach applies to those falling within the Withdrawal Agreement or EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement, it does not apply to those covered by the Swiss Citizens’ Rights Agreement.

Those who rely solely on the provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement or the EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement to demonstrate permanent residence must be able to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of those Agreements. This means they must have resided continuously in the UK for five years as either:

- A worker
- A self-employed person
- A self-sufficient person with comprehensive sickness insurance
- A student with comprehensive sickness insurance, or
- A family member of such a person

Five years of continuous residence means that for five years in a row the person has been in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for at least six months in any 12-month period. The exceptions are:

- one period of up to 12 months for an important reason (for example, childbirth, serious illness, study, vocational training or an overseas work posting)
- compulsory military service of any length
- time spent abroad as a Crown servant, or as the family member of a Crown servant
- time spent abroad in the armed forces, or as the family member of someone in the armed forces

In practice, SFE expect that the majority of applicants will obtain settled status via the EUSS. However, any applicant who applies on the grounds of having acquired permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement or EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Where SFE are unable to verify status, they may revert to the relevant Department in order to assist in establishing the applicant's residence status.

Where a student started a course in AY 20/21 or earlier, has citizens' rights under any of the three Agreements referred to above, and is awarded EU settled status during their course, they may become eligible under this paragraph under the event provisions (see Section [3.37](#)). Similarly, if the applicant has obtained permanent residence relying on the direct effect of the Withdrawal Agreement or the EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement, the student will fall within the event provisions.

To fall within paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 (Part 2), the student must be able to satisfy three requirements. They must:

- have citizens' rights under the Withdrawal Agreement\* or be the family member of a Person of Northern Ireland who is settled in the UK by virtue of having acquired settled status under the EUSS,

(\*EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members who acquire settled status under the EUSS, Irish citizens living in the UK before the end of the transition period and individuals who have an outstanding determination or appeal with the Home Office relating to their application for status under the EUSS (Section [2.11.2](#)) can be included here.)

- be ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course,

- have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course\*.

\*Where the three-year residence period referred to above was wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education, have been ordinarily resident in the territory comprising the UK, Gibraltar, EEA and Switzerland immediately prior to the start of that period of residence. Full support will be available to students in this scenario. From AY 22/23, those that were resident in an overseas territory (other than Gibraltar) immediately prior to the start of that period of residence will be eligible for fee support only. See Section [3.1.4](#) for a full list of the overseas territories.

Retired EEA migrant workers and their family members may also have a right to permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreements, subject to acquiring settled status under the EUSS or by acquiring permanent residence under the provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement or EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement. As stated above, Swiss nationals must obtain settled status via the EUSS.

If an individual can demonstrate that they have a right of permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreements through having been awarded EUSS settled status or relying on the direct effect of the Withdrawal Agreement or EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement as described above (and that they have not lost it due to, for example, a five-year absence or serious criminality), SFE can treat this as proof that a person thereafter has the legal right to reside in the UK without restriction for the purposes of checking periods of legal ordinary residence.

Examples of students who may be eligible under paragraph 3:

- **Annika** is a Russian national who moved to England in January 2011 and became the spouse of a Spanish national in June 2013. Annika was granted a right of permanent residence in July 2018 as the family member of an EEA national who was exercising their treaty rights under directive 2004/38. In October 2020, Annika is granted settled status under the EUSS. Annika starts a course in September 2026.

Annika is eligible for full support as:

- They have settled status in the UK by virtue of having obtained settled status under the EUSS.
  - They are ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course.
  - They have three years of ordinary residence in the UK and Islands prior to that date.
- **Albin** is a Polish national who arrived in the UK in July 2018. They apply for and are granted pre-settled status in July 2020. In July 2023, Albin is eligible for settled status.

Albin applies for full funding as a person with settled status and three years of ordinary residence in the UK and Islands for a course starting in September 2026. Despite being

eligible for settled status from the EUSS from July 2023, Albin does not apply for this status.

Albin can be assessed as eligible for full funding with permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement, but they will need to evidence that they have five years of continuous lawful residence during which they were exercising their rights in the UK under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement.

### **3.4 Paragraph 4 – Refugees and their family members**

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Full support is available to refugees and their family members under paragraph 4 of Schedule 1 (Part 2).

Those granted refugee status by the Home Office and their family members claiming student support under this category must satisfy the criteria below in order to potentially be eligible for support. The student must be:

- a refugee in their own right who is ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands, and who has not ceased to be so resident since they were recognised as a refugee, or
- the spouse or civil partner of a refugee who was also the spouse or civil partner of the refugee on the date on which the refugee made their application for asylum to the Home Office, and is ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands and has not ceased to be so resident since the leave to enter or remain status was awarded, or
- the child\* or step-child of a refugee who, on the date on which the refugee made their application for asylum to the Home Office, was the child or step-child of the refugee and also under the age of 18, and is ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands and has not ceased to be so resident since the leave to enter or remain status was awarded, and
- ordinarily resident in England on the course start date. (Where a student qualifies under this category as an ‘event’, they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details.)

\* Schedule 1, Part 1, 1(2) states that a parent is defined as a parent, guardian or any other person having parental responsibility and child is to be construed accordingly. In this context, a child is defined as any individual who is under the care or responsibility of a biological or adoptive parent, a legal guardian or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child’s care and welfare.

In cases where the spouse, civil partner or child arrived after the date refugee status was awarded, they must have leave to enter or remain or have been granted leave in line with their parent or partner.

Regulation 2(1) defines ‘refugee’ as a person who is recognised by His Majesty’s Government as a refugee under the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the status of refugees. A refugee is defined in the Convention as someone who, owing to well-founded

fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country.

People who are recognised as refugees are granted five years of limited leave to enter or remain in the UK. At the end of this five-year period, people with refugee status are entitled to apply for indefinite leave to remain.

SFE will check a person's refugee status with the Home Office.

As being recognised as a refugee or the spouse, civil partner or parent of a refugee is an event under the Regulations, an applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course. Please see Section [3.37](#) for the support they would be entitled to.

### **3.5 Paragraph 4A – Stateless persons and their family members**

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Full support is available to stateless persons and their family members under paragraph 4A of Schedule 1 (Part 2).

Persons granted stateless leave by the Home Office because they have no right to residence in their country of former habitual residence or any other country may qualify as an eligible student for full support under paragraph 4A of Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

The Regulations state that to be eligible under this category, students must:

- be a person granted stateless leave status by the Home Office,
- have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands throughout the period since being granted such leave\*,
- be ordinarily resident in England on course start date. (Where a student qualifies under this category as an 'event', they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details.)

and

- have leave to enter or remain which has not expired.

\*Note that this period of ordinary residence refers to the period subsequent to the student's most recent grant of their stateless leave status. Where a student has had to renew their stateless leave, there is only a requirement for the student to have been ordinarily resident from the date of the renewal onwards.

Family members of persons granted stateless leave may also be eligible for support. The definition of a family member mirrors that currently used for a refugee or person who has been granted humanitarian protection.

If the student is the:

- spouse, civil partner, child or step-child of the person granted stateless leave, or the
- child or step-child of the spouse or civil partner of the person granted stateless leave

and was so on the date that the valid application for leave (i.e. the application to remain in the UK) was made to the Home Office, they may be eligible for support. A child or step-child of the person granted stateless leave or of their spouse or civil partner must have been under 18 on the date the valid application for leave was made to the Home Office but does not need to be under 18 when applying for student support. Note that family members are also required to:

- hold a valid Home Office form of leave (limited leave to remain or discretionary leave to remain) on the first day of their course, and
- have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since being granted such leave. Note that where the student has been granted leave to enter the UK (i.e. where leave is granted either prior to arrival in the UK or at the UK border), the leave start date should be taken as the date of arrival in the UK.

The Regulations provide that where a student or their eligible family member acquires stateless leave during an academic year of their course, they can become eligible partway through that course. This means that students who have already commenced their eligible course and who acquire this status are potentially eligible. Please see Section [3.37](#) below for the support they would be entitled to.

### **3.6 Paragraph 4B - Persons granted leave to remain under Section 67 of the Immigration Act**

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Full support is available to persons granted leave to remain under Section 67 of the Immigration Act under paragraph 4B of Schedule 1 (Part 2).

Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 requires the Government to relocate to the UK and support a specified number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children from Europe. This change, which came into force on 31 May 2016, is commonly known as the 'Dubs amendment' and the children known as 'Dubs children'.

Following an assessment of their asylum claim, Dubs children will fall into one of the following categories:

- Those who are awarded refugee status in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention, or humanitarian protection leave. Separate residency categories already exist in the Regulations for these persons - see Sections [3.4](#) and [3.10](#).
- Those who are not awarded refugee status or humanitarian protection leave and are instead awarded the new form of leave under section 67 of the Act. This new form of leave allows those awarded it to study, work, access public funds (including student support) and healthcare and apply for settlement after five years.
- Note that dependent children of those granted leave to remain under Section 67 will be granted leave to remain for the same duration as their parent, provided that the requirements specified in the Immigration Rules are met. Under the Immigration Rules, a 'child' means an individual who is under 18 years of age on the date the application was made and for whom the person granted Section 67 leave has parental responsibility.

The Section 67 leave residency category only applies to new students from AY 19/20 onwards, i.e. those who start a course on or after 1 August 2019.

The Regulations state that to be eligible for full support, students with leave to remain under section 67 must also:

- be ordinarily resident in England on the day on the course start date. (Where a student qualifies under this category as an 'event', they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details.)

and

- have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since the person was granted such leave\*\* (Note that where the student has been granted leave to enter the UK (i.e. where leave is granted either prior to arrival in the UK or at the UK border), the leave start date should be taken as the date of arrival in the UK.)

and

- have leave to enter or remain which has not expired.

\*\*This period of ordinary residence refers to the period subsequent to the student's most recent grant of their Section 67 leave status. Where a student has had to renew their Section 67 leave, there is only a requirement for the student to have been ordinarily resident from the date of the renewal onwards.

An applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course under the event provisions. See Section [3.37](#) for the support they would be entitled to.

### **3.7 Paragraph 4C - Persons granted indefinite leave to remain (ILR) or indefinite leave to enter (ILE) as a victim of domestic violence or abuse and their children**

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Full support is available to persons granted ILR or ILE as a victim of domestic violence or abuse and their children under paragraph 4C of Schedule 1 (Part 2).

The Home Office grants indefinite leave to remain to victims of domestic violence or abuse who are in the UK by virtue of a partner visa or sponsorship by a British citizen or settled person. Where an individual's relationship has broken down with their partner/sponsor as a result of domestic violence or domestic abuse, they can be granted the immigration status of indefinite leave to remain, even if they have only been in the UK for a short period of time and do not have existing leave.

From AY 20/21, a person who has been granted indefinite leave to remain by the Home Office as a victim of domestic violence or abuse is eligible for student support without being required to demonstrate three years of ordinary residence in the UK prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, as is currently required of most other individuals with indefinite leave to remain applying for support as a person settled in the UK.

From 2024, the Home Office may also grant indefinite leave to enter to victims of domestic violence/abuse who have been living outside of the UK and are victims of transnational marriage abandonment. From AY 24/25, students who are granted indefinite leave to enter or indefinite leave to remain under any of the following provisions of the Immigration Rules will be eligible for full support under this category:

- (i) paragraph VDA 9.1 of the Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse; or
- (ii) where such leave was granted before the coming into force of the Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse, paragraph 289B (victims of domestic violence), paragraph D-DVILR.1.1. of Appendix FM (victims of domestic abuse) or paragraph 40 of Appendix Armed Forces (victims of domestic violence: partners of members of the armed forces);

A person who holds the status of indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence or abuse is not required to demonstrate they have been ordinarily resident in the UK for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

The person is required to be ordinarily resident in England on the course start date. Where a student qualifies under this category as an 'event', they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details.

From AY 24/25, children of those granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence/abuse, may be eligible for full support under this category without any requirement for the applicant to have been granted leave in line. This will include the child/stepchild of the person granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence/abuse.

The child will need to show:

- that they have been issued indefinite leave to enter or remain (for any reason) in their own right,
- that they were under 18 on the date that the parent applied for indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence/abuse,
- that their parent was issued indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence/abuse, and
- that they were the child/step-child of the parent granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence/abuse on the leave application date.

There is no requirement that the child/step-child is under 18 when applying for student funding.

There is also no requirement for SFE to check that the student is dependent on the parent granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence/abuse on the date they apply for student funding to qualify under this category.

An applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course under the event provisions. See Section [3.37](#) for the support they would be entitled to.

### **3.8 Paragraph 4D - Persons granted Calais leave and their dependent children**

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Full support is available to persons granted Calais leave and their dependent children under paragraph 4D of Schedule 1 (Part 2).

Calais leave status is awarded to a person who transferred to the UK as part of the Calais camp clearance between October 2016 and July 2017 as an unaccompanied child who was to be reunited with qualifying family.

From AY 20/21, new students who hold this leave to remain status are eligible for full student support in England. This is also extended to dependent children of a person who holds Calais leave status who have been granted “leave in line” with their parent.

The Regulations state that to qualify for full student support under this category a person must:

- be ordinarily resident in England on the course start date (where a student qualifies under this category as an ‘event’ from AY 23/24, they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details),

and

- have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands through the period since the person was granted such leave\*, and

- have leave to enter or remain which has not expired.

\*Note that this period of ordinary residence refers to the period subsequent to the student's most recent grant of their Calais leave status. Where a student has had to renew their Calais leave, there is only a requirement for the student to have been ordinarily resident from the date of the renewal onwards.

A person who is a dependent child of a person with Calais leave status must:

- be granted "leave in line" with the parent who holds Calais leave status,
- be ordinarily resident in England on the day on the course start date (where a student qualifies under this category as an 'event', they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details),

and

- have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands through the period since the person was granted such leave.

As this immigration status is typically only valid for a five-year period, a person will subsequently need to demonstrate they have a further valid leave to remain status for the remainder of their course if their Calais leave status expires whilst they are still in study, prior to any applications in respect of any remaining academic years of their course.

If a person submits an application for another residence permit to obtain a further five years of leave to remain under Calais leave, they would ultimately be a UK resident for a period of ten years and would therefore be eligible to apply for UK settled status at the end of that period. In this instance, they can then declare settled status on their student finance application instead of Calais leave once they have been granted settled status by the Home Office.

An applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course under the event provisions. Please see Section [3.37](#) for the support they would be entitled to.

### **3.9 Paragraph 4E - Persons granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a bereaved partner**

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Full support is available to persons granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a bereaved partner under paragraph 4E of Schedule 1 (Part 2).

The Home Office makes special provision to disregard gaps in leave when granting indefinite leave to remain for bereaved partners of a settled person where their leave expired during the stages of their bereavement. The Home Office accepts that it is reasonable to take into account the difficult personal circumstances that the individual may have experienced

during this period of time and that this may impact on their ability to submit applications for further leave in time.

The Home Office have made a number of updates to the Immigration Rules relating to bereaved partners. From AY 25/26, a person granted indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK as a bereaved partner includes those granted their status under any of the following provisions of the Immigration Rules:

- (i) paragraph BP 11.1 of Appendix Bereaved Partner of the Immigration Rules; or
- (ii) where such leave was granted before the coming into force of Appendix Bereaved Partner, under any of the following provisions of the immigration rules—
  - (aa) paragraph 288, as a person in relation to whom the requirements in paragraph 287(b) of those rules were met (bereaved partners);
  - (bb) paragraph 295N, as a person in relation to whom the requirements in paragraph 295M of those rules were met (bereaved partners);
  - (cc) paragraph D-BPILR.1.1 of Appendix FM (bereaved partners); or
  - (dd) paragraph 36 of Appendix Armed Forces (bereaved partner of a member of HM Forces);
- (iii) under paragraph AF (GHK) 14.1 of Appendix GHK of the immigration rules, as a bereaved partner; or
- (iv) where such leave was granted prior to 5th October 2023, outside the immigration rules, on the basis that the person was a bereaved partner of a Gurkha discharged before 1st July 1997

Please see the Assessing Eligibility guidance for AY 21/22 to AY 24/25 for the applicable definitions from the Immigration Rules in those years.

From AY 21/22, a person who has been granted indefinite leave to remain by the Home Office as a bereaved partner is eligible for full student support without being required to demonstrate three years of ordinary residence in the UK prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, as is currently required of most other individuals with indefinite leave to remain applying for support as a person settled in the UK. From AY 25/26, this category has been expanded to also include those granted indefinite leave to enter.

A person who holds the status of indefinite leave to enter or remain as a bereaved partner is not required to demonstrate they have been ordinarily resident in the UK for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

The person is required to be ordinarily resident in England on the course start date. (Where a student qualifies under this category as an 'event', they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details.)

The person is also required to have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since their most recent grant of leave.

Between AY 21/22 and AY 23/24, children of persons who were granted indefinite leave as a bereaved partner were not eligible for support.

From AY 24/25, children of those granted indefinite leave to remain as a bereaved partner may be eligible for full support under this category without any requirement for the applicant to have been granted leave in line. From AY 25/26, this also includes children of those granted indefinite leave to enter as a bereaved partner. This will include the child/step-child of the person granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a bereaved partner.

The child will need to show:

- that they have been issued indefinite leave to enter or remain (for any reason) in their own right,
- that they were under 18 on the date that the parent applied for indefinite leave to enter or remain as a bereaved partner,
- that their parent was issued indefinite leave to enter or remain as a bereaved partner, and
- that they were the child/step-child of the parent granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a bereaved partner on the leave application date.

There is no requirement that the child/step-child is under 18 when applying for student funding.

There is also no requirement for SLC to check that the student is dependent on the parent granted indefinite leave to remain as a bereaved partner on the date they apply for student funding to qualify under this category.

From AY 25/26, this category has been expanded to include the bereaved partners and the children with indefinite leave to enter or remain of bereaved partners of Gurkha and Hong Kong military unit veterans who were discharged from service prior to 1997 and were granted indefinite leave to enter or remain under the following provisions of the Immigration Rules:

- (i) under paragraph AF (GHK) 14.1 of Appendix GHK of the immigration rules, as a bereaved partner; or
- (ii) where such leave was granted prior to 5th October 2023, outside the immigration rules, on the basis that the person was a bereaved partner of a Gurkha discharged before 1st July 1997

An applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course under the event provisions. Please see Section [3.37](#) for the support they would be entitled to.

### **3.10 Paragraph 5 – Persons who have been granted humanitarian protection in the UK and their family members**

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Full support is available to persons granted humanitarian protection UK and their family members under paragraph 5 of Schedule 1 (Part 2).

Paragraph 5 of Schedule 1 (Part 2) is only concerned with students who:

- are granted humanitarian protection and have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since being granted such leave\*,

\*Note that this period of ordinary residence refers to the period subsequent to the student's most recent grant of humanitarian protection status. Where a student has had to renew their humanitarian protection leave, there is only a requirement for the student to have been ordinarily resident from the date of the renewal onwards.

- are the spouse/civil partner, child or step-child of such a person at the time of the application to the Home Office, and in the case of the child or step-child, who are under 18 years old at the time of the application to the Home Office,
- are ordinarily resident in England on the course start date. (Where a student qualifies under this category as an 'event', they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details.)

Please refer to regulation 2(1) for a full definition of a person granted humanitarian protection. Humanitarian protection is not the same as asylum and does not constitute recognition as a refugee within the meaning of the 1951 United Nations Convention. Persons granted this status are nevertheless in genuine need of international protection. Those granted discretionary leave or limited leave to remain, with restrictions on the time they can remain in the UK, may be eligible for support if they satisfy the requirements of the long residency category (paragraph 13 of Schedule 1 of the Regulations).

#### **Humanitarian protection terms and conditions**

People qualifying for leave on grounds of humanitarian protection are granted leave to enter or remain, as appropriate, for five years in the first instance, with the possibility of indefinite leave to remain thereafter. Humanitarian protection status is not granted to people who qualify for asylum or to EU, EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members exercising withdrawal agreement rights. At the end of the five-year qualifying period, people with refugee and humanitarian protection status are entitled to apply for indefinite leave to remain.

A student, or the spouse, civil partner, parent or stepparent of a student, does not need to have been granted humanitarian protection by the first day of the course for the student to be eligible for student funding. The student or the student's spouse, civil partner, parent or stepparent being granted humanitarian protection is considered an 'event' under the Regulations; where this occurs, and the student is already in study, they could become

eligible for support during the academic year. The ‘event’ must also have occurred within the first three months of the academic year in order to qualify for tuition fee support. See [Section 3.37](#) for the support they may be entitled to.

In DfE’s view a person whose humanitarian protection has been extended under section 3C of the 1971 Act could still potentially satisfy the definition of a “person granted humanitarian protection” as set out in regulation 2 of the Regulations. Whether such a person is an eligible student or qualifies for any particular type of support will be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations, as will the amount of support, if any, payable to that person.

An applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course under the event provisions. See [Section 3.37](#) for the support they would be entitled to.

### **3.11 Paragraph 6 – Workers, employed persons, self-employed persons and their family members – students who started a course before AY 21/22**

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This category does not apply to students starting a course from AY 21/22 onwards. Students eligible under paragraph 6 who started a course in AY 20/21 or before can continue to receive student support on the same basis as at the start of the course. For further details on this category, please see the AY 20/21 Assessing Eligibility guidance.

Where an eligible student who started a course in AY 20/21 or earlier subsequently becomes a worker, self-employed person or a family member of either, during their course, they may become eligible under this paragraph under the ‘event’ provisions (see [Section 3.37](#)).

### **3.12 Paragraph 6A – Workers, employed persons, self-employed persons and their family members – students who start a course in AY 21/22 or later**

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Workers, employed persons, self-employed persons and their family members who are covered by the Withdrawal Agreements and generally who have been granted a status under the EUSS can access student finance under paragraph 6A.

Frontier workers (i.e. workers who are resident outside the UK while working in the UK) cannot apply to the EUSS and will instead be awarded a frontier worker permit as evidence of their frontier worker status under the Withdrawal Agreements. Irish citizens do not need this permit to work in the UK. The permit is only available to those who were working in the UK by 31 December 2020. Family members of frontier workers who were living in the UK by 31 December 2020 can apply to the EUSS, even though the frontier worker is resident elsewhere.

The requirement to have EUSS status or a frontier worker permit does not apply to Irish citizens. Irish citizens are eligible under this category if they have citizens’ rights (generally if they were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 (migrant workers) or working in the UK by 31 December 2020 (frontier workers)).

Note that all applicants can provide alternative evidence of their frontier worker status, as a frontier worker permit is not mandatory for the purposes of a student support application.

A relevant person of Northern Ireland who is a UK national is to be treated as an EEA migrant worker or an EEA self-employed person if that relevant person would otherwise be treated as such if they were an EEA national or (in the case of a dual national) solely an EEA national.

To fall within paragraph 6A of Schedule 1 (Part 2), as well as having pre-settled or settled status, the student must be able to satisfy the following requirements. They must either:

- be an EEA migrant worker or an EEA self-employed person; or
- be a Swiss employed person or a Swiss self-employed person; or
- be a family member of a person mentioned above; or
- be an EEA frontier worker or an EEA frontier self-employed person; or
- be a Swiss frontier employed person or a Swiss frontier self-employed person; or
- be a family member of a person mentioned above; and
- be ordinarily resident in England\* on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- have been ordinarily resident in the territory comprising:
  - the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course to qualify for full support.
  - the UK, EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course, with at least part of that time in the overseas territories, to qualify for fee support.

\*EEA frontier workers, EEA frontier self-employed persons, Swiss frontier employed persons and Swiss frontier self-employed persons, as well as family members of any of these persons do not need to be ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course as per paragraph 6A(2) of Schedule 1 (Part 2) of the Regulations. They must have been ordinarily resident in the territory comprising the UK, Gibraltar, EEA and Switzerland throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course for full support, or the UK, EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories for fee support (see Section 3.13.1 for students eligible for fee support only under this category).

Migrant worker status must be maintained throughout the course. Where worker status is lost, the student would no longer be eligible for support under this category.

Where the child of a migrant worker is not under 21, factual dependency on the migrant worker (i.e. dependency for any reason, financial or otherwise) must be demonstrated (see Section [3.15](#)).

## **Effective and genuine versus marginal and ancillary employment**

The number of hours worked is only one of the factors to be considered in determining whether the work is genuine and effective. SFE will consider the principles set out below including the remuneration received and whether the work is lawful.

DfE has set an indicative threshold of 10 hours of paid work per week either in term time or during holidays. Where a student works 10 or more hours per week and is paid for that work under an employment contract, that is a strong indicator the student is a worker. It is important to note that where this threshold is not met, a person may still qualify as a worker. Consequently, all individual circumstances must be considered by SFE.

Self-employed persons are in a slightly different position to other workers. It is common for self-employed workers to have periods where no work is carried out. Irregular or intermittent work will not preclude a person from being properly regarded as self-employed (or as a worker). SFE will consider whether the person is experiencing a temporary lull in work or whether the change in their working patterns means that they are no longer in continuing self-employment. It would be reasonable to consider a period of at least three months.

Work is marginal if it is minimal, negligible or insignificant. In *Raulin (Raulin V Minister Van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen Case 352/89 1992 I-ECR 1054)*, it was suggested that work may be marginal where it was on such a small scale that it did not allow the person to become acquainted with the work or had little or no economic value for the employer. It is reasonable to use the minimum wage as an indicator when calculating what is a reasonable reimbursement, although individual cases need to be considered on their merits.

Ancillary employment involves something additional or subsidiary to the primary activities or functions of the person. Work will be ancillary if it is done pursuant to some other relationship between the person providing the services and the person receiving the benefit of those services, such as where a lodger performs a small task for his landlord as part of the terms of their tenancy (*Barry v Southwark [2008] EWCA Civ 1440*).

## **Principles from EU case law**

In order to decide whether an EEA national can be classed as a migrant/frontier worker or a Swiss national employed in the UK, SFE should continue to take into account the previous case law of the European Court of Justice which has established the following principles:

- Freedom of movement of workers was one of the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the UK's prior membership in the EU, therefore the term 'worker', which determined the scope of application of that freedom, must be interpreted broadly and not restrictively.
- The essential characteristics of an employment relationship are that for a period of time a person performs services for and under the direction of another person in return for which they receive remuneration.

- To qualify as a worker, the activity performed by the person must nevertheless be effective and genuine, to the exclusion of activities of such a small scale as to be regarded as purely marginal and ancillary.
- When determining whether the work is effective and genuine, the decision maker must make their decision on the basis of objective criteria and considering all the circumstances of the case.
- A person is not precluded from being classified as a 'worker' where their work is part-time (Levin v Secretary of State for Justice case 53/81 [1982]), low wage (Lawrie-Blum v Land Baden-Wurtemberg case 66/85 [1986] ECR 2121 [16]), below the minimum subsistence wage (Levin), on-call (Raulin), or short term (Brown v Secretary of State for Scotland [1988] ECR 3205). In particular, a person is not required to complete a minimum period of employment before being able to attain the status of a worker (Brown [22]). The irregular nature and limited duration of the services provided are however factors which may be taken into account when assessing whether the work is effective and genuine or purely marginal and ancillary (Raulin). Depending on the circumstances of the individual case, multiple short-term contracts may be satisfactory where these show that an individual has, in total, worked a more than a negligible number of hours per week for the period being assessed.
- The services performed by the person must have some economic value and form part of the normal labour market. As a result, where work is performed solely as a volunteer without payment as a means of social rehabilitation or reintegration, it is unlikely to be regarded as real and genuine economic activity (Trojani v CPAS Case C-456/02 [2004] 3 CMLR 38 [18]).
- The person's subjective intentions or motives in carrying out or seeking work or in applying for entry to or residence in the UK are irrelevant and must not be taken into account. What matters is that the person is performing genuine and effective work in paid employment (Levin). It follows that a person who enters the UK with the principal intention of pursuing a course of study, but who also pursues effective and genuine employment activities in the UK, is not precluded from having the status of a worker (Styrelsen Case C-46/12 [2013] ICR 715 [39]).
- The person, however, is not entitled to be classified as a migrant worker at the start of an academic year for student support purposes, where the person has arrived in the UK and is not working or is actively seeking employment but has not yet worked here (Collins v SSWP [2005] QB 145).
- Where a person has ceased work either before undertaking their higher education studies or has ceased work during their higher education studies, the person will be able to retain their status as a worker (and be eligible to receive the same benefits as UK national workers), provided there is a link or connection between the previous work activities performed in the host Member State, or prior Member State in the

case of individuals with protected rights working in the United Kingdom, and the course of study they have undertaken (Lair V University of Hanover Case 39/86 1988 ECR 3161 [24] [28]) (Raulin). As an exception, such a connection may not be required where the person has involuntarily become unemployed and is obliged by labour market conditions to undertake occupational retraining in another field of activity (Lair) (Raulin). It is not necessary however to show any link or connection where the person works at the same time as studying.

- A person's work history with a particular employer could be one of the objective factors to which a decision maker can have regard in determining a person's worker status, particularly if there are questions about whether the work is genuine and effective or marginal and ancillary. It is probably unnecessary to do so in most cases. Where a student has demonstrated consistent work for an employer over several years but only for a few hours a week, this could indicate they were a worker.

### **Assessing eligibility of family members**

Family members of an EEA or Swiss migrant worker or employed person, frontier worker or self-employed person are also potentially eligible for support, with the same entitlements as the worker. The nationality of the family member is not relevant, as long as they are a 'person with protected rights' and fulfil relevant residency requirements within the Regulations. The definition of 'family member' varies according to the category of person in question.

For an EEA migrant worker, an EEA self-employed person, an EEA frontier worker or an EEA frontier self-employed person the definition of a family member is:

- the person's spouse or civil partner, or
- a direct descendant of the person or of the person's spouse or civil partner who is either:
  - under the age of 21, or
  - dependent on that person or the person's spouse or civil partner, or
- a dependent direct relative in the ascending line of that person or the person's spouse or civil partner.

For a Swiss employed person, a Swiss self-employed person, a Swiss frontier employed person or a Swiss frontier self-employed person the definition of family member is:

- the person's spouse or civil partner, or
- the person's child or the child of that person's spouse or civil partner.

For EEA workers/Swiss workers and their spouses/civil partners:

- 'child' refers to:
  - a child of which they are a guardian, or a child of which they have parental responsibility (this includes step-child),
- 'parent' refers to:
  - a parent, guardian or any other person having parental responsibility for a child (this includes step-parents),

- in either case, the parent must have (or have had, if eligibility is under paragraph 7 or 7A – see below) established migrant worker status in this country and the child must meet the residence conditions in the Regulations.

For the purposes of this section:

- ‘EEA worker’ refers to an EEA migrant worker/self-employed person/frontier worker/frontier self-employed person.
- ‘Swiss worker’ refers to a Swiss employed person/self-employed person/frontier employed person/frontier self-employed person.

Where an applicant is applying as a family member of an EEA worker, both the applicant and family member must provide evidence of their status, whether that be evidence of a status awarded under the EUSS or of an outstanding determination, or a frontier worker permit or alternative evidence of frontier working (see also Sections 2.1, 2.11 and 2.11.2 for late applicants to the EUSS and joining family members).

### EEA workers

When establishing the eligibility of persons who may come within scope of a dependent direct relative in the ascending line of an EEA migrant worker, ‘dependent’ will often mean financially dependent. In order to determine financial dependency, SFE may consider the following: can the applicant meet all of their essential needs (such as food, utilities and accommodation) with or without their family’s support. If they would not be able to meet all of their essential needs without the financial support, they are dependent. Dependency for other reasons, such as health, will also be considered. Dependency must be over a sustained period.

### Fee support where previously resident in the overseas territories

From AY 22/23, fee support only will be available to students in this category where they have been ordinarily resident in the territory comprising the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course, and where at least part of that ordinary residence was in an overseas territory other than Gibraltar where the residency conditions for full support are met. See Section [3.1.4](#) for a full list of the overseas territories.

Examples of students who may be eligible under paragraph 6A:

- **Rafael** is a Spanish national who arrived in the UK in December 2020. Prior to that Rafael lived in France for five years. They are granted pre-settled status under the EUSS. Rafael starts a course in September 2026 and continues to work while studying.

Rafael is eligible for full support as:

- they are a migrant worker whose work continues during his course.
- they have pre-settled status in the UK.

- they have ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course.
- they were ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.
- **Marco** is a Dutch national who works in England and returns to their home in Belgium at weekends. Marco is awarded a frontier worker permit under the Withdrawal Agreement as they were working in the UK by 31 December 2020. Marco starts a course in September 2026 and continues to work while studying.

Marco is eligible for full support as:

- they are a frontier worker whose work continues during their course.
- they were ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

As a frontier worker, Marco is not required to be ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course.

### **3.13 Paragraph 7 – Children of former EEA migrant workers – students who started a course before AY 21/22**

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This category no longer applies to new applicants for student funding from AY 21/22. For further details on this category, please see the AY 20/21 SFE Assessing Eligibility guidance.

Students eligible under paragraph 7 who started a course in AY 20/21 or previously can continue to receive student support on the same basis as at the start of the course.

### **3.14 Paragraph 7A – Children of former EEA migrant workers – students who start a course in AY 21/22 or later**

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To be eligible for support under this paragraph a student must be covered by the Withdrawal Agreements, have been granted pre-settled status under the EUSS (unless they are an Irish Citizen who are covered without having to demonstrate so by applying for status under the EUSS), be the child of someone who was an EEA migrant worker in the UK and have remained in this country in order to complete their studies. To consider eligibility under paragraph 7A, it would be reasonable to require that the child had studied here (at a level below HE) while they were dependent or under 21. Once eligibility is established under this paragraph, it will continue, whether or not the parent remains in the UK. Eligibility for the child of a migrant worker will also continue for the duration of the course in cases where the migrant worker dies.

To fall within paragraph 7A, as well as holding settled or pre-settled status, a person must meet the requirements of Article 10 of Council Regulation 492/2011 and meet the following ordinary residence requirements:

- be ordinarily resident in England\* on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- have been ordinarily resident in the territory comprising:
  - the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course to qualify for full support.
  - the UK, EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course, with at least part of that time in the overseas territories, to qualify for fee support.

Paragraph 7A students are persons who are entitled to support by virtue of Article 10 of Council Regulation 492/2011 on the freedom of movement as workers as it had effect immediately before IP completion day, as extended by the EEA Agreement as it had effect immediately before IP completion day, and who now have citizens' rights under the Withdrawal Agreement and are awarded pre-settled status under the EUSS.

Article 10 states that "The children of a national of a Member State who is or has been employed in the territory of another Member State shall be admitted to that State's general educational, apprenticeship and vocational training courses under the same conditions as the nationals of that State, if such children are residing in its territory. Member States shall encourage all efforts to enable such children to attend these courses under the best possible conditions".

This provision may apply to the children of EEA workers in the UK where that worker is no longer a worker here and where the child has protected rights under the Withdrawal Agreement as demonstrated via the award of pre-settled status under the EUSS.

The migrant worker parent does not need to have status.

### **Fee support where previously resident in the overseas territories**

From AY 22/23, fee support only is available to students eligible under paragraph 6A or 7A where they resided in the overseas territories (other than Gibraltar where the residency conditions for full support are met) for at least part of the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course. See Section [3.1.4](#) for a full list of the overseas territories. For example:

- **Ingrid** is a Norwegian national who lived in Norway before moving to the UK in June 2020. Ingrid is granted pre-settled status under the EUSS in December 2020. In June 2022 Ingrid moves to Sint Maarten and lives there until they return to the UK in January 2025. Ingrid starts an undergraduate degree course in September 2026 (AY 26/27). Ingrid is working in the UK from September 2024 and continues to work during their studies.

Ingrid is eligible for fee support only from SFE as:

- they are a migrant worker in the UK,
- they are ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course,
- they are an EEA migrant worker and has pre-settled status, and
- they have been ordinarily resident in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories throughout the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

### **3.15 Gibraltar nationals working in the UK**

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Gibraltar was a part of the EEA by virtue of its connection with the UK. As such, Gibraltar was not a Member State of the EU or EEA in its own right.

The Regulations define an ‘EEA migrant worker’ as an ‘EEA national who is a worker other than an EEA frontier worker in the United Kingdom’ and an ‘EEA national’ as a ‘national of an EEA state’. As a result, Gibraltar nationals working in the UK do not meet the definition of an ‘EEA migrant worker’ with protected rights, and therefore cannot qualify for support under paragraphs 6A or 7A of Schedule 1 (Part 2). EU nationals and their family members who have resident status in Gibraltar arising under the Withdrawal Agreement may be eligible for fee support under paragraph 9D.

### **3.16 Paragraph 8 – UK settled persons who have exercised a right of residence elsewhere – students who started a course before AY 21/22**

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This category does not apply to students starting a course from AY 21/22. Students eligible under paragraph 8 who started a course in AY 20/21 or previously can continue to receive student support on the same basis as at the start of the course. For further details on this category, please see the AY 20/21 Assessing Eligibility guidance.

### **3.17 Paragraph 8A – UK settled persons who have exercised a right of residence elsewhere – students who start a course in AY 21/22 or later**

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This category provides full support for those starting a course from AY 21/22 where the applicant had exercised a right of residence in the EEA/Switzerland by the end of the transition period and where, on 31 December 2020, the applicant was ordinarily resident either:

- in the EEA, Switzerland or Gibraltar, or
- in the UK, having moved back to the UK from the EEA/Switzerland/Gibraltar on or after 1 January 2018.

Where a settled person moves from the UK to the EEA or Switzerland after the end of the transition period, they are not exercising a right of residence and will not be eligible under

this category.

The applicant must have exercised a right of residence in the EEA or Switzerland before the end of the transition period. However, they can spend part of the three-year ordinary residence period in the UK and Gibraltar. They must have remained resident in the UK, Gibraltar, EEA or Switzerland throughout the period beginning on 31 December 2020 and ending immediately before the first day of the first academic year of the course.

The following are some examples of situations where a person has exercised a right of residence for the purpose of paragraph 8A(1)):

- a UK national who exercised a right under Article 7 of Directive 2004/38 in an EU Member State before the end of the transition period (e.g. a UK national who went to work in France before 1 January 2021),
- a UK national who exercised a right under the EEA Agreement or the Agreement with the Swiss Federation that is equivalent to a right under Article 7 of Directive 2004/38 before the end of the transition period (e.g. a UK national who went to work in Iceland before 1 January 2021),
- a family member of a UK national who exercised a right under Article 7 of Directive 2004/38 in an EU Member State (please note that ‘family member’ here has the meaning provided in Article 7 of Directive 2004/38) before the end of the transition period (e.g. the American spouse of a UK national accompanies them when they went to work in Germany before 1 January 2021),
- a family member of a UK national who exercised a right under the EEA Agreement or the Agreement with the Swiss Federation that is equivalent to a right under Article 7 of Directive 2004/38 (please note that ‘family member’ here has the meaning provided in relation to the right being exercised under the EEA Agreement or Swiss Agreement) before the end of the transition period (e.g. the Chinese husband of a UK national who accompanied her when she went to work in Norway before 1 January 2021),
- a person who has acquired the right of permanent residence in the UK (as defined in the Regulations) and exercised a right under Article 7 of Directive 2004/38 in an EU Member State before the end of the transition period (e.g. the Moroccan civil partner of a Spanish national who has been working in the UK acquires the right of permanent residence in the UK and then goes to the Netherlands before 1 January 2021 with his Spanish national civil partner who took up a job there),
- a person who has acquired the right of permanent residence in the UK (as defined in the Regulations) and exercised a right under the EEA Agreement or the Agreement with the Swiss Federation that is equivalent to a right under Article 7 of Directive 2004/38 before the end of the transition period,
- A person who has acquired the right of permanent residence in the UK (as defined in the Regulations) and went to the state within the territory comprising the EEA and

Switzerland of which he or she is a national or of which the person in relation to whom he is a family member is a national of before the end of the transition period.

The other requirements that need to be satisfied are listed below. The applicant must:

- have been ordinarily resident in England before exercising a right of residence,
- be ordinarily resident in the UK on the day on which the first term of the academic year begins,
- have been ordinarily resident in the territory comprising the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course, and
- where the three-year residence period referred to above was wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education, has been ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, EEA and Switzerland immediately before that period of residence.

Eligibility for student support under this category (and home fee status) will only be available for courses starting up to seven years from the last day of the transition period (i.e. courses starting on 31 December 2027 at the latest).

An example of when paragraph 8A of Schedule 1 may apply is where a family of UK nationals who were ordinarily resident in England left the UK to live in Spain prior to the end of the transition period, with the parents going as workers and their children accompanying them. If the daughter returns to the UK aged 18 to enter higher education before 31 December 2027, she may be eligible for support under paragraph 8A of Schedule 1 if she satisfies the relevant provisions.

Students who are settled in the UK and exercised a right of residence anywhere in the EEA or Switzerland prior to the end of the transition period for a period in excess of three months, then return to the UK and apply for support within three years of their return, should apply to the UK domicile that they were resident in before they left the UK, regardless of the domicile they are resident in once returned to the UK.

Examples of students who may be eligible under paragraph 8A:

- **Bill** is a UK national who lives in England until March 2008 when they go to live and work in Spain. Bill returns to the UK in July 2025 and starts a course in England in September 2026.

Bill is eligible for funding as:

- they were ordinarily resident in England before exercising a right of residence,
- they were ordinarily resident in the EEA and Switzerland before the end of the transition period (before 31/12/2020),
- they are ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first term of the course,

- they were ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course and has remained there since the end of the transition period, and
  - their course start date is within the seven-year time limit starting from the last day of the transition period.
- **Bridget** is a UK national who lives in England until December 2020 when they go to live and work in Switzerland. Bridget returns to the UK in March 2027 and starts a course in April 2027.

Bridget is eligible for funding as:

- they were ordinarily resident in England before exercising a right of residence,
- they are ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first term of the course,
- they were ordinarily resident in the EEA and Switzerland before the end of the transition period (before 31/12/2020),
- they were ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course and has remained there since the end of the transition period, and
- their course start date is within the seven-year time limit starting from the last day of the transition period.

### **Persons settled in the UK who move to Gibraltar then return before the first day of the first academic year**

'UK national' includes Gibraltar residents if they are British citizens or British Overseas Territories citizens via a connection with Gibraltar, whereas the UK as a physical territory includes only Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and not Gibraltar.

A person who is settled in the UK, moves to Gibraltar, and then returns to the UK before the first day of the first academic year would not be exercising a right of free movement for the purposes of paragraph 8A of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. The Treaty establishing the European Community (the EC Treaty) was previously only extended to Gibraltar by virtue of its connection with the UK, because it is a European territory "for whose external relations a Member State is responsible" (Treaty establishing the European Community (Nice consolidated version), Article 299(4)). Article 7 of Directive 2004/38 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union relates to a right of residence on the territory of another Member State and therefore can only apply if an individual exercises a freedom of movement in another Member State. For paragraph 8A to apply to a UK national with residence in Gibraltar, they would have had to have gone from the UK to an EU Member State (e.g. France) before returning to the UK.

### **3.18 Paragraph 9 – EU Nationals and their family members – students who started a course before AY 21/22**

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Up to and including AY 20/21, EU nationals and their family members (as well as UK nationals and their family members who did not meet the criteria to receive the full package of support) needed to satisfy the residence conditions in paragraph 9 of Schedule 1 (Part 2) in order to potentially be eligible for support. However, this category of student only qualifies for tuition fee support.

This category does not apply to students starting a course from AY 21/22. Students eligible under paragraph 9 who started a course in AY 20/21 or previously can continue to receive student support on the same basis as at the start of the course. For further details on this category, please see the AY 20/21 Assessing Eligibility guidance.

Individuals who start a course from AY 21/22, who would formerly have received support in this category, may be eligible under categories 2A, 9A, 9B, 9BA, 9C or 9D.

### **3.19 Paragraph 9A – EU nationals and their family members with protected rights – students who start a course in AY 21/22 or later**

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Category 9A allows the following to apply for fee support:

- EU nationals and their family members with protected rights who are granted pre-settled status (or settled status\*) under the EUSS,
- Irish nationals who are living in the UK by 31 December 2020 (who have protected rights but are not required to apply to the EUSS), and
- family members of persons of Northern Ireland living in the UK by 31 December 2020 who have status under the EUSS.

For those starting a course in AY 22/23 or later, the relevant three-year ordinary residence area for this category is the UK, EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories. For those who started a course in AY 21/22, the three-year ordinary residence area is the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland. See Section [3.1.4](#) for further information on the overseas territories.

\*Those who have settled status under the EUSS should apply for full support under Paragraph 3 of the Regulations as a settled person if they have three years of residence in the UK and Islands. However, where the settled person is an EU national with protected rights who does not have three years of ordinary residence in the UK and Islands but does have three years of ordinary residence in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories, they can also be eligible for fee support only under this category.

Family members of Irish citizens are able to apply to the EUSS if the Irish citizen is resident in the UK by the end of the transition period. There is no requirement for the Irish citizen themselves to have applied to the EUSS. Similarly, family members of persons of Northern Ireland may apply to the EUSS if the person of Northern Ireland was resident in the UK before the end of the transition period, in order to equalise treatment with family members of Irish citizens.

### Family member definition

In the case of an EU national who previously fell within Article 7(1)(c) of Directive 2004/38 and has protected rights (not self-sufficient), a family member is defined as:

- the person's spouse or civil partner, or
- a direct descendant of the person or of the person's spouse or civil partner who is
  - a) under the age of 21, or
  - b) a dependant of the person or the person's spouse or civil partner.

In the case of an EU national who previously fell within Article 7(1)(b) of Directive 2004/38, has protected rights and who is self-sufficient, a family member is defined as:

- the person's spouse or civil partner
- a direct descendant of the person or of the person's spouse or civil partner who is
  - a) under the age of 21, or
  - b) a dependant of the person or the person's spouse or civil partner
- a dependent direct relative in the person's ascending line or that of the person's spouse or civil partner.

Although 'self-sufficient' is not a term used in the Regulations, this term refers to article 7(1)(b) of Directive 2004/38. This provides that a person has a right to reside in a host Member State, including the UK, up until 31 December 2020, if the person has sufficient resources for himself/herself and family members not to become a burden on the social assistance system of the host Member State during their period of residence and have comprehensive sickness insurance cover in the host Member State.

It is not appropriate to say that someone does not have sufficient resources if their resources are higher than the level at which social security benefits or the social security pension is paid. A means test is not necessary to establish self-sufficiency, and SFE must remain flexible in their assessment.

Details of the countries and territories that make up the EU can be found in Annex C.

Examples of students who may be eligible under paragraph 9A:

- **Antonia** is an Italian national who arrived in the UK in October 2020. Prior to that they lived in Italy. Antonia applies for and is granted pre-settled status under the EUSS in October 2020. Antonia moves to Germany to live in February 2024 and returns to the UK in June 2025. Antonia starts a course in September 2026.

Antonia is eligible for fee support only as:

- they have pre-settled status on the first day of the first academic year of the course, and
- they have three years of ordinary residence in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

- **Louise** is an Irish citizen who arrived in the UK in November 2020. Prior to that they lived in the Republic of Ireland. Louise has citizens' rights but does not need to apply to the EUSS to have the right to remain in the UK as they automatically have settled status as an Irish citizen. Louise returns to the Republic of Ireland for six months from January to June 2025. They start a course in September 2026.

Louise is eligible for fee support as:

- they were resident in the UK prior to the end of the transition period.
- they have three years of ordinary residence in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.
- **Umar** is a Kyrgyz national who has been living in England with their Irish civil partner since October 2020. Prior to that, Umar lived in Germany. They apply for and receive pre-settled status under the EUSS and start a course in England in September 2026.

Umar is eligible for fee support only as:

- they are the family member of an Irish citizen,
- they have pre-settled status, and
- they have three years of ordinary residence in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

### **3.20 Paragraph 9B – UK nationals and their non-UK national family members in the EEA and Switzerland by 31/12/2020 – students who start a course in AY 21/22 or later**

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Full support will be available to UK nationals who were:

- resident in the EEA or Switzerland immediately before the end of the transition period (or resident in the UK, having moved there from the EEA or Switzerland after 31 December 2017),
- resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, and
- remained ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA or Switzerland between the end of the transition period and the first day of the first academic year of the course.

Full support will also be available to non-UK national family members of UK nationals, where both the UK national and the family member meet the above requirements.

The family member must be:

- the person's spouse or civil partner, or
- a direct descendant of the person or of the person's spouse or civil partner who is
  - a) under the age of 21, or
  - b) a dependant of the person or the person's spouse or civil partner.

For both UK nationals and their non-UK national family members, the applicant should apply for support from the UK territory where they are undertaking the course. Ordinary

residence in that territory on the first day of the first academic year of the course is not required.

Eligibility on these grounds will only be available for courses starting up to seven years from the last day of the transition period (i.e. courses starting on 31 December 2027 at the latest).

Examples of students who are eligible under paragraph 9B:

- **Stuart** is a UK national who has never lived in the UK. (Stuart's UK national parents left the UK to permanently reside in Spain prior to Stuart's birth.) Stuart is resident in Spain until they arrive in the UK in February 2024. Stuart starts a course in England in September 2026.

Stuart is eligible for full support as they were:

- resident in the EEA or Switzerland at the end of the transition period, and
- ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course (1 September 2023 – 31 August 2026).

- **Margot** is a UK national who has never lived in the UK. (Margot's parents are UK nationals who left the UK prior to her birth to permanently reside in the USA.) Margot left the USA in March 2017 to live and work in France and was living in France at the end of the transition period.

Margot arrives in the UK in June 2026 in order to start a course in September 2026.

Margot is eligible for full support as they were:

- resident in the EEA or Switzerland at the end of the transition period, and
- ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course (1 September 2023 – 31 August 2026).

- **Lana** is a Spanish national whose mother is a UK national. They both live in Spain. Lana comes to the UK in June 2024 and starts a course in September 2026. Lana is under 21 on the first day of the first academic year of the course. Lana is not eligible for pre-settled or settled status as they did not arrive in the UK by the end of the transition period.

Lana is eligible for full support as:

- they are the non-UK family member of a UK national,
- they and their UK national parent were living in the EEA or Switzerland on 31 December 2020, and
- they and their UK national parent were ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

### **3.21 Paragraph 9BA – Irish citizens who were resident in the EEA or Switzerland at or before the end of the transition period – students who start a course in AY 21/22 or later**

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Fee support is available to Irish citizens who are undertaking a course in England and were:

- resident in the EEA or Switzerland immediately before the end of the transition period (or resident in the UK, having moved to the UK from the EEA or Switzerland after 31 December 2017),
- resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, and
- remained ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA or Switzerland between the end of the transition period and the first day of the first academic year of the course.

For example:

- **David** is an Irish citizen who arrived in the UK in July 2025. Prior to that David lived in Spain, having moved to Spain from Ireland in July 2021. They start a course in September 2026.

David is eligible for fee support as:

- they were resident in the EEA and Switzerland at the end of the transition period, and
- they have three years of ordinary residence in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

### **3.22 Paragraph 9BB - Persons settled in the UK who have been resident in the specified BOTs - students who start a course in AY 22/23 or later**

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Fee support only is available to students starting a course in AY 22/23 or later who meet the following requirements:

- settled in the UK (prior to AY 24/25, an applicant would need to hold settled status on the first day of the first academic year of the course, i.e. be ordinarily resident in the UK on that specified date),
- ordinarily resident in the UK, the Islands and the specified BOTs for the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, with at least part of that period having been spent in a specified BOT and who did not move to England from the Islands for the purpose of undertaking the current course or a course which, disregarding any intervening vacation, the person undertook immediately before undertaking the current course, and
- attending or undertaking a course in England.

An applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course under the event provisions. See Section [3.37](#) for the support they would be entitled to.

An example of a student who may be eligible under paragraph 9BB:

- **George** has full British citizenship and has been resident in Gibraltar since birth. George moved to Bermuda in November 2020 before moving to England in August 2025 and starting a degree course there in September 2026.

George is eligible for fee support only from SFE under paragraph 9BB as they:

- are settled in the UK,
- have been undertaking a designated course in England, and
- have been ordinarily resident in the UK, Islands and the specified BOTs for the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

### **3.23 Paragraph 9BB – Chagossians with British citizenship**

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The term ‘Chagossians’ refers to a group of people who were evicted between 1968 and 1971 by the UK Government from the Chagos Islands and their direct descendants. From 1965, the Chagos Islands were known as the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). The UK government have agreed a deal to transfer sovereignty of the islands to Mauritius.

There are two routes to British citizenship available to Chagossians:

- The **British Overseas Territories Act (2002)** granted those born on the islands and their children (but not their grandchildren or any subsequent generations) the right to British citizenship.
- The **Nationality and Borders Act (2022)** extended the right to British citizenship to anyone who is a direct descendant of someone born in the islands known as the BIOT (i.e. their children, grandchildren and other direct descendants by birth or adoption).

A new eligibility route for fee-only funding was introduced in AY 24/25 within the BOTs category (paragraph 9BB of Schedule 1 of the Regulations) for Chagossians with British citizenship.

The BOTs category has been amended so that any person who is either:

- a British citizen who was born in the islands which were known as the BIOT, or
- a British citizen who is a direct descendant of a person who was born in the islands which were known as the BIOT

is treated as ordinarily resident in the islands that were known as the BIOT during any period(s) during which they are/were not ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands.

The following are excluded from the term ‘Chagossian’:

- step-children and other descendants who are related by marriage, and

- any other family members who are not direct descendants of a person who was born in the BIOT.

The following students will be eligible for tuition fee only funding as Chagossians:

- new students who start an eligible course in AY 24/25 or later (i.e. on or after 1 August 2024),
- continuing students in AY 24/25 or later who started an eligible course in AY 22/23 or AY 23/24.

Chagossians with British citizenship must be undertaking their course in England in order to qualify for tuition fee support.

Chagossians, either by birth or descent, may not have a specific evidence item issued by the Home Office or other government department that states they are Chagossians. However, applicants will need to demonstrate that they are Chagossians with British citizenship. Existing operational checks on British citizenship will be undertaken by SFE.

A certificate of registration as a BOTC which indicates the registration was carried out under section 17H of the British Nationality Act 1981 will be sufficient evidence that a person is a Chagossian (but will not prove they are a British citizen). Where this is not available, it may be necessary for SLC to check the birth certificate of the applicant (and of their direct ascendant(s), as required) to confirm that the applicant, their parent and other direct ascendants as relevant were born in the BIOT.

Examples:

- **Billy** is a British citizen who was born in the BIOT. Billy has been ordinarily resident in the UK since 1 January 2022. Before this, Billy was ordinarily resident in Chad between 1989 and 1 January 2022. Billy started a HE course in England in January 2022 (AY 21/22) and self-funded their studies. Billy is continuing on the same course in AY 26/27. Billy is not eligible for support as they are a continuing student who started studying prior to AY 22/23.
- **Jim** is a British citizen who is a descendant of a person born in the BIOT. Jim has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since 30 November 2023. Jim starts a HE UG course in England on 1 January 2024 (AY 23/24), self-funding the course.

In AY 26/27 Jim is a continuing student who started the course in AY 23/24 so is eligible to receive fee support as a Chagossian from AY 24/25. Note that Jim is not eligible for fee funding for AY 23/24.

- **Martha** is a British citizen. Martha's parents were born in the BIOT, but the family was ordinary resident in Mauritius until arriving in the UK in August 2025. Martha starts a HE UG course in England in September 2026.

Martha is eligible for fee support as a British citizen who is a descendant of a person born in the BIOT.

- **Steve** is a British citizen who was born in the BIOT and has been ordinarily resident in the UK since 2002. Steve starts an eligible HE UG course in England in September 2026.

Steve is eligible for full support as a British citizen with settled status in the UK who has been ordinarily resident in the UK for the three-year period prior to the first day of the course. Steve does not therefore need to be considered as eligible for fee support only under the Chagossians category.

An applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course under the event provisions. See Section [3.37](#) for the support they would be entitled to.

### **3.24 Paragraph 9C – Family members of persons settled in the UK who have been resident in the UK and Islands for three years - students who start a course in AY 22/23 or later**

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In AY 21/22, this category was available to family members of UK nationals only. For those starting a course from AY 22/23, this category is available to family members of all settled persons in the UK. To be considered as ‘settled’ in the UK, the settled person must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the specified date.

Fee support will be available to non-settled family members of persons settled in the UK, where the family member was ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

Note that where the settled person is a UK national, and the non-UK national family member of the UK national was living with that UK national in the EEA or Switzerland on 31 December 2020 or moved with their family member from the EEA or Switzerland to the UK on or after 1 January 2018, they may be eligible for full support under paragraph 9B.

The family member must be:

- the person’s spouse or civil partner, or
- a direct descendant of the person or of the person’s spouse or civil partner who is
  - a) under the age of 21, or
  - b) a dependant of the person or the person’s spouse or civil partner.

Eligibility on these grounds is not subject to a time limit.

Example of a student eligible under paragraph 9C:

- **Hector** is a Costa Rican national who is married to a person settled in the UK and has been living in the UK since 1 August 2018. Prior to that Hector lived in Costa Rica. Hector starts a course in England in September 2026.

Hector is eligible for fee support only as they:

- are the non-settled family member of a settled person, and

- have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

### **3.25 Paragraph 9D – UK nationals and EU nationals etc. in Gibraltar – students who start a course in AY 21/22 or later**

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Fee support only under paragraph 9D is available to:

- UK nationals and their family members who in either case have resident status in Gibraltar granted by the Government of Gibraltar, and
- EU nationals and their family members who in either case have a right of residence in Gibraltar arising under the EU Withdrawal Agreement.

The applicant must be:

- undertaking a designated course in England, and
- in the case of UK nationals and their family members, ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the three-year period before the first day of the first academic year of the course (other than for the purposes of education), or
- in the case of EU nationals and their family members, ordinarily resident in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories\* for the three-year period before the first day of the first academic year of the course (other than for the purposes of education).

\*Note that for those starting a course in AY 22/23 or later, the applicable area of ordinary residence for the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course for EU nationals and their family members was extended to include all overseas territories rather than just Gibraltar.

Students in this category will be eligible for home fee status and fee support on these grounds for courses starting up to seven years from the last day of the transition period (i.e. courses starting on 31 December 2027 at the latest).

EU nationals and their family members must evidence their right of residence in Gibraltar under the Withdrawal Agreement. Currently the immigration status system operated by the Government of Gibraltar is as follows:

- the 'red card' is only for Gibraltarians and other UK nationals who have been resident for over five years,
- the 'blue card' is for all EU, EEA-EFTA and Swiss nationals, regardless of whether they hold permanent residence (UK nationals who are yet to accumulate five years continuous residence also receive this card), and
- the 'green card' is for third-country nationals.

EU nationals and their family members who arrived in Gibraltar before the end of the transition period are awarded a 'blue card', which is the evidence that SLC will require to prove the eligibility of an EU national resident in Gibraltar.

Examples of students who may be eligible under paragraph 9D:

- **Ben** is a UK national who has been resident in Gibraltar since January 2012. Prior to that they lived in the UK. Ben comes to the UK to start a course in England September 2026.

Ben is eligible for fee support only as they have:

- resident status in Gibraltar and are undertaking a designated course in England, and
- been ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

- **Lars** is a Swedish national who has been resident in Gibraltar since February 2020. Prior to that, Lars lived in the UK for two years, and before that they lived in Sweden. Lars starts a course in England in September 2026.

Lars is eligible for fee support only as they:

- are an EU national who has a right to reside in Gibraltar under the Withdrawal Agreement and is undertaking a designated course in England, and
- have been ordinarily resident in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories for the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

### **3.26 Paragraph 10 – EU nationals with a genuine link with the UK (prior to 25 March 2016)**

This category does not apply to students starting a course in AY 21/22 or later. Students eligible under paragraph 10 who started a course in AY 20/21 or previously (for example, those claiming postgraduate DSA support) can continue to receive student support on the same basis as at the start of the course. For further details on this category, please see the AY 20/21 Assessing Eligibility guidance.

### **3.27 Paragraph 10A – EU nationals with a genuine link with the UK (effective from 25/03/2016)**

EU nationals with five years of residence in the UK and Islands and who have protected rights can apply to the EUSS and will be granted settled status. Where they are starting a course from AY 21/22, they should apply under paragraph 3 (3.4).

Students eligible under paragraph 10A who started a course in AY 20/21 or previously can continue to receive student support on the same basis as at the start of the course.

This category does not apply to students who start a course in AY 21/22 or later. For further details on this category, please see the AY 20/21 Assessing Eligibility guidance.

### **3.28 Paragraph 10ZA – EU nationals with a genuine link with the UK**

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EU nationals with protected rights who have a ‘genuine link’ with the UK may be eligible for tuition fee support if on the first day of the first academic year of the course they satisfy the following:

- they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three-year period immediately preceding the first day of the first academic year (applicants applying under this category will be asked to submit evidence to prove their three-year residency),
- they are ordinarily resident in England, and
- where the period of ordinary residence referred to above was wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education, the person was ordinarily resident in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories immediately preceding the three-year period referred to above.

Note that from AY 22/23, where the three-year period of ordinary residence was wholly or mainly for the purposes of receiving FT education, the preceding ordinary residence area has been extended from the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA, and Switzerland to the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories.

Students eligible under this category do not qualify for maintenance support or DSA for undergraduate courses.

Postgraduate students who are eligible under paragraph 10ZA can qualify for postgraduate DSA if they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the full three-year period before the first academic year of their course. However, students eligible under this category who have been resident in the overseas territories do not qualify for postgraduate DSA.

To be eligible for support under paragraph 10ZA, a person must be an EU national on the first day of the first academic year of the course.

### **3.29 Paragraph 11 – Children of Swiss nationals – students who started a course before AY 21/22**

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This category does not apply to students starting a course from AY 21/22. Students eligible under paragraph 11 who started a course in AY 20/21 or previously can continue to receive student support on the same basis as at the start of the course. For further details on this category, please see the AY 20/21 SFE Assessing Eligibility guidance.

Where a student started a course in AY 20/21 or earlier and subsequently becomes a child of a Swiss national during their course, they may become eligible under this paragraph under the event provisions if they were previously eligible for support, or would have been if they had applied under another eligibility category prior to AY 21/22 (see Section [3.37](#)).

### 3.30 Paragraph 11A – Children of Swiss nationals – Students who start a course in AY 21/22 or later

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A student may qualify for full support where they have protected rights and:

- they are the child of a Swiss national entitled to support in the UK under the Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement,
- they are ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course,
- they have been ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar\*, the EEA and Switzerland throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course, and
- where the three-year ordinary residence period referred to above was wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving FT education, the person was ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA or Switzerland immediately preceding this period.

\*Where they were ordinarily resident for all or part of the three-year period in an overseas territory other than Gibraltar, they may be eligible for fee support only – see Section 3.30.1.

The parent of the 'child of a Swiss national' must be exercising their rights under the Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course for the student to be eligible to apply for the full package of support (tuition support, maintenance support and supplementary grants). Evidence should therefore be requested that both the child and their Swiss national parent have an award of either pre-settled status or settled status under the EUSS.

As becoming the 'child of a Swiss National' is an in-year qualifying event under regulation 2A, an applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course, for example where their parent marries a Swiss national. Please see Section [3.37](#) below for the support to which they may be entitled.

Example of student who may be eligible under paragraph 11A:

- **Sara** is the child of a Swiss national. Sara arrives in the UK to join their Swiss mother on 12 December 2024. Prior to that, Sara was resident in Switzerland. Sara applies for and is granted pre-settled status and starts a course in September 2026.

As Sara's Swiss national parent arrived prior to the end of the transition period and has protected rights, and Sara has pre-settled status, Sara is eligible for full support.

### **Paragraph 11A - fee support only from AY 22/23 where previously resident in the overseas territories**

From AY 22/23, fee-only support will be available to students in this category where they resided in the overseas territories other than Gibraltar for part of the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course. See Section [3.1.4](#) for a full list of the overseas territories.

### **3.31 Paragraph 12 – Children of Turkish workers – student who started a course before AY 21/22**

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This category does not apply to students starting a course from AY 21/22. Students eligible under paragraph 12 who started a course in AY 20/21 or previously can continue to receive student support on the same basis as at the start of the course. For further details on this category, please see the AY 20/21 Assessing Eligibility guidance.

As becoming the ‘child of a Turkish Worker’ is an in-year qualifying event under regulation 2A, an applicant may become eligible under this category after the start of the course if they were previously eligible for support (or would have been if they applied under another eligibility category prior to AY 21/22). Please see Section [3.37](#) below for the support to which they may be entitled.

### **3.32 Paragraph 12A – Children of Turkish workers – student starts a course in AY 21/22 or later**

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A student may qualify for full support where:

- they are the child of a Turkish worker (regulation 2 defines such a worker as a Turkish national who is ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands and is, or has been, lawfully employed in the UK (this includes periods of self-employment)),
- the Turkish worker is in the UK by the end of the transition period (31 December 2020) and has been allowed by the Home Office to temporarily extend their leave in order to remain in the UK (these individuals are no longer covered by the Ankara Agreement),
- the child of the Turkish Worker also arrived in the UK by 31 December 2020 (unless their arrival in the UK was delayed due to Covid-19),
- the child of the Turkish Worker is ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course, and
- the child of the Turkish worker has been ordinarily resident in the territory comprising the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA, Switzerland and Turkey throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course.

Where the child of the Turkish Worker arrived in the UK on or after 1 January 2021, they can apply for support as the Child of a Turkish Worker for a course starting in AY 20/21 under

paragraph 12 but will not be eligible as a Child of a Turkish Worker for a course starting in AY 21/22 or later (unless their arrival in the UK was delayed due to Covid-19). In either case, the parent must have leave granted by the Home Office at the point the course starts.

Example of student who may be eligible under paragraph 12A:

- **Emin** is a Turkish national and the child of a Turkish worker. Both Emin and their parent arrived in the UK by the end of the transition period (31 December 2020). The Turkish worker (Emin's parent) is given leave to remain by the Home Office. Emin starts a course in September 2026.

Emin is eligible for full support as:

- Emin and their Turkish worker parent both arrived in the UK by the end of the transition period, and
- Emin was ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA, Switzerland and Turkey for the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course (*1 September 2023 – 31 August 2026*).

### **Paragraph 12A - fee support only where previously resident in the overseas territories from AY 22/23**

From AY 22/23, fee support only will be available to children of Turkish workers where the applicant resided in the overseas territories other than Gibraltar for part of the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course. See Section [3.1.4](#) for a full list of the overseas territories.

### **3.33 Paragraph 13 – Long residence**

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Effective from 6 June 2016, DfE introduced a new eligibility category for student support for those with long residence in the UK. This category extends eligibility for full student support to those persons who are:

- under 18 years of age and who have lived in the UK throughout the seven-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of their course, or
- aged 18 years or above and who, preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course, have either lived at least half their life in the UK or lived for at least 20 years in the UK. Students cannot amalgamate periods of residency to meet long residency criteria.

To be eligible for full support under this category the student must also:

- be ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course and have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three-year period immediately preceding the first day of the first academic year of their course, and

- not have been resident in the UK and Islands for the three-year period referred to above wholly or mainly for the purposes of receiving FT education.

Ordinary residence means lawful residence and the student must hold some form of leave to remain issued by the Home Office (limited leave or discretionary leave to remain or another form of leave). If a student has moved from one period of leave to another during the three years preceding the first day of the first academic year their leave must run concurrently, i.e. the application for the second period of leave was made in time before the first period elapsed. A break in leave will mean that the student was here unlawfully, and they will not satisfy the ordinary residence requirement. It should be noted, however, that SLC relies on information from the Home Office in relation to residency matters, and that the Home Office does have the power to disregard a period of overstaying. For further information on this please see Section [2.1](#) (Ordinary lawful residence).

For example:

- **Yann** is a Congolese national who starts a degree course in England in September 2025. Yann has the following residence history:
  - physically resident in the UK since 1 June 1996
  - ordinarily resident in Scotland from 16 July 2018 to 1 November 2022
  - ordinarily resident in England from 2 November 2022 to 1 September 2026.

As Yann has been resident in the UK for at least 20 years, is ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course and has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three-year period immediately preceding the first day of the first academic year of their course, Yann is eligible for student support under the long residence category.

Students need to meet the eligibility criteria before the first day of the first academic year of the course. Students who only meet the criteria after the first day of the first academic year of their course are not eligible for any support. The student's cohort will be determined based on the first academic year of the student's course, and this defines the support package available.

The onus is on the student to demonstrate that they meet the long residence requirements. Whilst only a confirmed entry date from Immigration Control and verified by the Home Office would be evidence of entry to the UK, the student may provide evidence to SFE that they have been living in the UK. This evidence is considered on a case-by-case basis and may include (but is not limited to):

- a school letter and records on headed paper, signed by someone in authority (Deputy Head, Head etc.) within the school, stating the dates each year the student was in attendance,
- a letter from a General Practitioner,
- confirmation of university / college attendance,
- a council tax bill,

- wage slips / P60 / P45 / Self-Assessment Tax Return, or
- a confirmation of employment from employer on company headed paper signed by a senior member of staff with contact details provided.

Please note that this evidence can also be considered when a Home Office check or documentation does not provide a definitive date of entry into the UK.

It should also be noted that a valid entry clearance visa, such as a visitor visa, is not in itself confirmation the student entered the UK at that time. Individuals usually receive an entry clearance for a six-month period.

SFE should establish the student's three-year ordinary residence period in the UK and Islands preceding the first day of the first academic year before requesting evidence to satisfy the long residence requirements.

The calculation for long residence is determined by the student's age as of the first day of the first academic year of their course, and their entry date to the UK (or relevant other evidence demonstrating they were living in the UK throughout the required period). This will mean that the seven-year, half-life or 20-year calculation can be determined by the first day of the first academic year of the course.

It should be noted that a similar category is present in the NHS Bursary rules. Even if the student is assessed as meeting the rules of the NHS Bursary scheme, the checks should still be carried out by SFE if the student applies for a reduced-rate maintenance loan.

Consideration should be given as to whether the student may qualify under another category. In some cases, a student may not meet the terms of the long residence category, but if they are a non-EEA national and related to a British or EU citizen they may qualify for a tuition fee loan under paragraph 9A, 9C or 9D of Schedule 1 (Part 2) of the Regulations.

From AY 24/25 a termination provision applies to new students who qualify for support under the long residence category. This means that they will not be supported for future academic years of the course if their immigration status expires or is revoked during an academic year of the course, unless they have a new valid leave status that allows their eligibility to continue.

Where the termination provision applies, funding for HE UG students will continue until the end of the academic year in which the student's leave expires or is revoked. Funding for future academic years will only be paid if the student can evidence a new valid leave status as part of their application for continuing student funding.

For example:

- **Graham** begins a four-year Honours degree in England in October 2025. Graham applies in April 2025 for and is awarded HE UG funding for year one from SFE as they have limited leave to remain and are eligible under the long residence category.

In December 2026, during AY 26/27, Graham's limited leave to remain expires, and they are not granted any other leave status that would allow them to remain eligible at that point. Graham does not enter an appeal of the decision to not award another status.

Graham's funding will continue until the end of AY 26/27 (the current academic year) but they will be ineligible to apply for funding as a continuing student for the third year of their course in AY 27/28, as their eligibility under the long residence category will have terminated and they will not be eligible under any other regulatory categories.

- **Bella** begins a three-year Honours degree in England in September 2024. Bella applies for support in May 2024 and is awarded HE UG funding for year one from SFE, as they have limited leave to remain and are eligible under the long residence category.

In January 2026, during AY 25/26, Bella's limited leave to remain expires, and they are granted indefinite leave to remain. Therefore, Bella remains eligible for support for AY 26/27 for the final year of their course.

### **3.34 Paragraph 14 – Persons who have been granted leave under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)**

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Please note that both the ARAP and the ACRS were closed to new applicants on 1 July 2025. Individuals with leave under these schemes and their family members may continue to be eligible for funding under this category.

From AY 22/23, individuals with leave under the ARAP or the ACRS are eligible for full support on the same basis as other protection-based categories (those with refugee status, Humanitarian Protection leave, Calais leave, Section 67 leave and stateless persons).

Paragraph 14 is for the following individuals:

- A person who has been granted leave under the ARAP or the ACRS who:
  - is ordinarily resident in England on the course start date. (Where a student qualifies under this category as an 'event', they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details.)
  - and
  - has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands from the date their most recent leave was granted. (Note that where the student has been granted leave to enter the UK (i.e. where leave is granted either prior to arrival in the UK or at the UK border), the leave start date should be taken as the date of arrival in the UK.);

and

- From AY 23/24\*, a family member of a person who has been granted leave under the ARAP or the ACRS, where the family member:
  - is ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the course; and
  - has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands from the date their most recent leave was granted.

\*Prior to AY 23/24, the family member had to have 'leave in line' with the ARAP or ACRS leave holder. This is no longer required.

Eligible family members are defined as follows:

- spouse or civil partner of a person who has been granted leave under the ARAP or the ACRS,
- child/step-child of a person who has been granted leave under the ARAP or the ACRS.

Leave under the ARAP was granted to Afghan nationals aged 18 or over and their relevant family members. This means that an applicant could be eligible for support either by holding leave under the ARAP in their own right, or as a family member of an ARAP leave holder, as the case may be. Leave under the ACRS was granted to Afghan nationals and nationals of other countries (for example in mixed-nationality families). SLC will require proof of leave under the relevant scheme, regardless of the nationality of the applicant or the applicant's family member.

Those who were granted limited leave to enter are eligible for student funding under the ARAP whether or not they have transferred their limited leave into indefinite leave.

Example of a student eligible under paragraph 14:

**Amina** is an Afghan national who worked for the British government in Afghanistan. Amina is relocated to the UK under the ARAP and arrives in the UK in November 2024. Amina starts a UG degree course in AY 26/27.

As Amina has leave under the ARAP, is resident in England on the first day of the course and has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since being awarded leave under the ARAP, Amina is eligible for full funding from SFE.

### **3.35 Paragraph 14 – Persons granted leave under the Afghan Response Route (ARR) and their family members from AY 25/26**

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The Afghanistan Response Route (ARR) was a scheme open to individuals who met certain criteria but were not found to be eligible for leave under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) or any other

route which provides settled status. The ARR scheme was opened in April 2024 and was closed to new applications on 4 July 2025.

From AY 25/26, new and continuing students with leave under the ARR and their family members are eligible to apply for full funding without having to meet a three-year ordinary residence requirement. Continuing students are not eligible for any funding under this category for years of their course prior to AY 25/26.

The following family members of ARR leave holders are eligible to apply for funding under this category:

- A person who is the spouse or civil partner of the ARR leave holder (and who was the spouse/ civil partner of the ARR leave holder on the leave application date),
- A person who is the child\* of the ARR leave holder (and who was the child of the ARR leave holder on the leave application date),
- A person who is the child\* of the spouse or civil partner of the ARR leave holder (and who was the child of the spouse or civil partner of the ARR leave holder on the leave application date).

\*In the case of a child/stepchild applicant, there is no requirement for the applicant to be under 18 or dependent on the leave holder when applying for student funding. However, the applicant would need to have been under 18 on the date of application for leave with the Home Office.

Note that Afghan nationality is not a student funding requirement; the requirement is that the applicant has leave under the ARR or is an eligible family member.

All applicants, whether ARR leave holders or family members, must be:

- ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the course, and
- ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period from the date their most recent leave was granted.

For example:

**Ariana** is granted ILR under the ARR on 1 July 2024. Ariana has remained ordinarily resident in the UK since that date. Ariana starts a FT UG course on 15 September 2026. As Ariana has leave under the ARR, is ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the course and has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since being awarded leave under the ARR, she is eligible for full UG funding from SFE for AY 26/27 and future years of the course.

**Abdul** is the spouse of a person who is granted ILR under the ARR on 1 July 2024, and was the spouse of that person on the leave application date. Abdul starts a FT UG course on 13 September 2024. Abdul has leave under the ARR and was ordinarily

resident in England on the first day of the course. Abdul is eligible for full UG funding from SFE for AY 25/26 and future years of his course. Abdul is not eligible for funding for AY 24/25.

Students who are granted leave under the ARR and their family members can become eligible as an event after the start of their course. Where a student becomes eligible as an event under this category, the student will be treated as if they were ordinarily resident (i.e. lawfully resident) in the place where they were resident on the first day of the course.

For example:

**Mohamed** is an Afghan national who starts a FT UG course on 15 September 2025. He is resident in England on 15 September 2025 and is awarded ILR under the ARR on 1 October 2025. Although he did not have a lawful status in the UK on 15 September 2025, he is treated as if he were ordinarily resident in England on that date to allow him to meet the requirements of this category.

Mohamed is awarded:

- Fee support in respect of the whole academic year in which the event occurred, as the event occurred within the first three months of the academic year.
- Loans for living costs, grants for dependants and travel grant in the academic year quarters following the first academic year quarter of the course (subject to an assessment of the household income and circumstances).
- DSA (if applicable) from the date of the event.
- Full support in any subsequent years of the course.

### **3.36 Paragraph 15 – British nationals evacuated from or assisted in leaving Afghanistan under Operation Pitting**

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Operation Pitting was a British military operation, the purpose of which was to evacuate British nationals and eligible Afghan nationals from Afghanistan between 14 and 28 August 2021, following the Taliban offensive. Assistance was also provided to British nationals and eligible Afghan nationals by the UK Government to leave Afghanistan after Operation Pitting (with assistance starting before 6 January 2022).

British nationals evacuated from or assisted in leaving Afghanistan under Operation Pitting will be eligible for home fee status and student finance (fee and maintenance support) without being subject to a three-year ordinary residence requirement. In order to be eligible under this category they must:

- be ordinarily resident in England on the course start date,
- have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since they were evacuated from or assisted in leaving Afghanistan, and
- meet all other personal and course eligibility requirements.

Afghan nationals and any other non-British nationals who were evacuated from or assisted in leaving Afghanistan under Operation Pitting are not eligible for funding under this category but may be eligible under paragraph 14 of the Regulations if they have leave under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. For example:

- **Olive** is a British national who was evacuated from Afghanistan to the UK under Operation Pitting. Olive starts a UG degree course in AY 26/27 and applies to SFE for funding.

As Olive is a British national, is ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the course and has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since being evacuated from Afghanistan under Operation Pitting, Olive is eligible for full funding from SFE.

### **Family members**

There is no 'eligible family member' definition for this category. British nationals will apply for student support in their own right, rather than as the family member of another person. Note that this also applies where the person who was evacuated from or assisted in leaving Afghanistan under Operation Pitting is a British child.

Non-British national family members of eligible British nationals who were evacuated from or assisted in leaving Afghanistan under Operation Pitting are not eligible under this category. Non-British nationals evacuated from or assisted in leaving Afghanistan under Operation Pitting may instead be eligible for leave under the ACRS. Family members of British nationals in this scenario, if awarded leave under the ACRS, will be granted leave in their own right rather than leave in line as a family member.

### **Eligibility as an event**

The time period for individuals to be evacuated or assisted from Afghanistan to the UK is now complete. As assistance in leaving Afghanistan under Operation Pitting had to commence before 6 January 2022, it will not be possible to become eligible as an event by becoming a person in this category after the start of AY 22/23 or in future academic years.

### **3.37 Paragraph 16 – Leave granted under the Ukraine schemes**

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From AY 22/23 support is available to individuals who have been granted leave in the UK under one of the following schemes, referred to collectively as the 'Ukraine Schemes':

- The **Ukraine Family Scheme** (launched on 4 March 2022 and closed on 19 February 2024), which allowed Ukrainian nationals and their family members to come to the UK or extend their stay in the UK if they have family members who already have leave to remain in the UK.
- The **Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme** (launched on 18 March 2022), which allows Ukrainian nationals and their family members to come to the UK if they have an approved sponsor under this scheme.
- The **Ukraine Extension Scheme** (launched on 3 May 2022, closed on 4 February 2025) which allowed Ukrainian nationals and their family members who already

have leave to remain in the UK to extend their leave in the UK because they cannot return to Ukraine.

- The **Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme** (opened for applications on 4 February 2025), which allows Ukrainian nationals, or their family members who are living in the UK with existing permission on one of the above Ukraine schemes, to apply to continue living in the UK for a further 18 months. The UK government announced on 1 September 2025 that applicants with leave under this scheme can apply to have their leave extended for another two years following the initial 18-month period of leave.

Those who are granted leave under one of the Ukraine Schemes will be eligible for home fee status, the home student undergraduate tuition fee cap, and student finance (HE UG fee and maintenance support) without being subject to a three-year ordinary residence requirement, as long as they:

- are ordinarily resident in England on the course start date. (Where a student qualifies under this category as an 'event', they will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date. See Section 3.37 for further details.)
- are ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands and have not ceased to be so resident since being granted such leave, and
- meet all other personal and course eligibility requirements.

All those who are granted leave under one of the Ukraine Schemes are granted up to three years\* of limited leave to enter or remain in the UK. They will fall into one of the following groups:

- Those who have been granted leave for three years under a Ukraine scheme.
- Those who have been granted leave for six months outside the immigration rules, having either:
  - arrived at the UK border with a permission to travel document on the basis they fall within one of the Ukraine Schemes, or
  - arrived at the UK border with another form of leave, which is transferred thereafter to six months of leave on the basis they will fall within one of the Ukraine Schemes.

Note that where the student has been granted leave to enter the UK (i.e. where leave is granted either prior to arrival in the UK or at the UK border), the leave start date should be taken as the date of arrival in the UK.

\*This excludes the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme, under which an 18-month extension to leave is granted in all cases, noting that the leave holder has the option to apply to extend this leave by a further two years.

## Family members

From AY 23/24, eligible family members of persons who are granted leave under one of the Ukraine Schemes will be eligible for the full package of support (in AY 22/23, family members of persons granted leave under one of the Ukraine Schemes would need to have been granted leave under the scheme in their own right to qualify under this category). SLC will request details of the family relationship and proof of the relationship.

Eligible family members are defined as follows:

- spouse or civil partner of a person who has been granted Ukraine Scheme leave,
- child/step-child of a person who has been granted Ukraine Scheme leave.

Note that:

- persons of any nationality may be granted leave under a Ukraine Scheme. Any undergraduate student who is eligible for student support under the Ukraine Schemes category would be assessed for full fee and maintenance support, even if the applicant happens to be an EU national, rather than EU student 'fees only' support.
- family members of EEA/Swiss nationals may be eligible for the EUSS as a joining family member, if the EEA/Swiss national already has either settled or pre-settled status in the UK under the EUSS. Individuals in this scenario can choose which scheme they want to apply for, but Home Office advice is that they should not apply to both the EUSS and a Ukraine Scheme.

Ukrainian nationals and their family members, who in either case do not meet the eligibility criteria for any of the Ukraine Schemes, may potentially be granted refugee status or humanitarian protection leave instead, so may be eligible to apply for support under those categories.

### **Expiry of Ukraine Scheme leave during the course**

Where a student's Ukraine Scheme leave, or the student's family member's Ukraine Scheme leave, expires during the course, the student will remain eligible for home fee status and student funding for the whole course as long as they have a legal immigration status (for example, a student visa) following the expiry of the Ukraine Scheme leave. See Section 3.39 'Review of immigration status for returning students' for further details.

For example:

- **Galina** is a Ukrainian national who is granted three years of leave in the UK on 1 February 2024 under the Ukraine Family Scheme. Galina starts a four-year UG degree course in AY 26/27 and applies to SFE for funding as they are living in England.

As Galina is ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the course (1 September

2026) and has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since being granted leave under a Ukraine Scheme, Galina is eligible for full UG funding from SFE for AY 26/27.

Galina's period of leave in the UK expires on 31 January 2027. As their leave expires during AY 26/27, support will be awarded for the whole of AY 26/27 but will only be awarded for AY 27/28 if Galina provides proof that they have been granted another valid form of leave by the end of AY 26/27.

### **3.38 Students who become eligible under paragraphs 2, 2A, 3-6A, 9A, 9B, 9BB, 9C, 9D, 11, 11A, 12, 14 and 16 after the start of the course**

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Where the statuses under paragraphs 2, 2A, 3-6A, 9A, 9B, 9BB, 9C, 9D, 11, 11A, 12, 14 or 16 are acquired before the start of the academic year (or before the start of the course, for students eligible under paragraphs 4-5 and 14 and 16), the student will be eligible to be assessed for support for the entire year subject to meeting any ongoing eligibility requirements.

Students with these statuses can also become eligible in the course of an academic year (regulations 2A and 17).

For those students who qualified via an event and were applying for support in respect of AY 22/23, different ordinary residence requirements applied - please refer to the AY 22/23 Assessing Eligibility guidance for more information.

Any applications for support must be made in line with the general time limits as set out in regulation 9 of the Regulations (see Section [1.1](#)). If an application for support is received within the initial nine-month period and the student subsequently wishes to apply for an additional amount of loan, the new loan application must be received no later than one month before the end of the academic year to which the application relates. Applications for support relating to multiple academic years should only be processed if they were received within the applicable timeframes for each academic year.

Students granted one of the statuses described under paragraphs 2, 2A, 3-6A, 9B, 9BB, 9C, 9D, 11, 11A, 12 or 14 prior to the start of their course will be eligible for support for the duration of their course provided they meet all applicable criteria after each year's application.

The following events are not available for a student to become eligible under from AY 21/22:

- the student becomes the child of a Turkish worker (*unless the student is a continuing student who was eligible for support (or would have been eligible if they applied for support) under another eligibility category prior to AY 21/22*)
- a state accedes to the EU where the student is a national of that state or a family member of a national of that state.

Additionally, the following rules apply:

- *New students from AY 21/22:* Where the student becomes eligible after an event, their eligibility will be assessed under the requirements of the current eligibility categories.
- *Continuing students who started their period of study before AY 21/22:* Where the student was eligible for support before AY 21/22 (whether or not they actually applied for support) and is continuing in that period of study, they may become eligible under any category (under a post-AY 21/22 category if they qualify, but otherwise under pre-AY 21/22 category).

Where the student was ineligible for support before AY 21/22, they will only become eligible if they fall into one of the protected categories (i.e. those with protected rights) or another of the relevant eligibility categories in the Schedule valid from AY 2021/22.

If a student becomes eligible under paragraphs 2, 2A, 3-6A, 9A, 9B, 9BB, 9C, 9D, 11, 11A, 12, or 14 after the start of the course they will be eligible for:

- loans for living costs, Adult Dependants' Grant (ADG) and Parents' Learning Allowance (PLA) in any subsequent years of the course (and in the quarters following the award in the year of the award, except the quarter in which the longest vacation falls),
- Childcare Grant (CCG) and Travel Grant in any subsequent years of the course and in the quarters following the award in the year of award, (see the AY 26/27 Grants for Dependants (GFDs) and AY 26/27 Assessing Financial Entitlement guidance for further information on the support available to students who become eligible during the course),
- DSA from the date of the award,
- (2012 cohort students) maintenance grant or special support grant in any subsequent years of the course and in the quarters following the award of the status (if the status was acquired within three months of the first day of the academic year),
- tuition fee support in the academic year in which the award of the status occurs (provided that the event occurred within the first three months of the academic year) \*.

\*Where the award of the status occurs more than three months after the first day of the first academic year, the student would not qualify for tuition fee support during that academic year. Tuition fee support would be available in subsequent academic years of the student's course.

### 3.39 Students who become settled from AY 24/25

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From AY 24/25, students who are granted settled status for any reason will be able to become eligible as an event, subject to satisfying other eligibility requirements. The requirement to hold settled status on the first day of the first academic year of the course/ first day of the course was removed from AY 24/25. This means that students are able to become eligible as an event under paragraphs 2, 2A, and 9BB, provided they meet all of the stipulations of the category in question.

For example:

**Chris** starts a HE UG course in England in September 2026. On the first day of the first academic year of the course, Chris is ordinarily resident in England and holds an immigration status of limited leave to remain in the UK. Chris has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for five years prior to commencing the course. As Chris does not meet the requirements of any of the regulatory categories at the beginning of the course, Chris is not eligible for support.

In October 2026, Chris is granted indefinite leave to remain (settled status) by the Home Office.

- As Chris acquired settled status within the first three months of the academic year, he qualifies for tuition fee support for the full course.
- Chris will qualify for maintenance support from the beginning of the next quarter (the quarter starting on 1 January 2027).

**Benjamin** started a HE UG course in September 2024. On the first day of the first academic year, Benjamin has been ordinarily resident in the UK for three years and is ordinarily resident in England. However, Benjamin did not meet the requirements of any of the regulatory categories at the beginning of the course so is not eligible for support. In August 2026, Benjamin is granted indefinite leave to remain (settled status) by the Home Office. Benjamin applies to SLC for the third and final year of the course in AY 26/27.

- Benjamin is eligible for tuition fee and maintenance support for AY 26/27 as they have settled status and were ordinarily resident in the UK for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, and ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course.
- Benjamin remains ineligible for AY 25/26 as the event occurred during the final quarter of AY 25/26.
- Benjamin remains ineligible for AY 24/25.

**Heather** starts a HE UG course in England in September 2026. On the first day of the course, Heather does not meet the requirements of any of the regulatory categories. Heather's three-year ordinary residence history is as follows:

- 1 September 2021 to 31 December 2024 – Anguilla
- 1 January 2024 to present – England

In November 2026, Heather is granted indefinite leave to remain (settled status) by the Home Office. Heather qualifies for tuition fee support for AY 26/27 as they now fall within paragraph 9BB and the event occurred within the first three months of the academic year.

### **3.40 Students in protection-based categories becoming eligible following an event from AY 23/24**

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Students in the following categories, referred to collectively as ‘protection-based categories’ will be treated as being lawfully resident on the course start date when applying for support via an ‘event’, even where they did not hold valid leave to enter or remain on that date:

- Calais leave
- Section 67
- Stateless Persons
- HP Status
- Refugees
- ARAP/ACRS/ARR
- Ukraine Schemes
- Domestic Violence
- Bereaved Partners

This also applies to any qualifying family member who is eligible for support via their relationship with an individual within the above residency categories.

Students in these categories will still be required to meet the other standard elements of ordinary residence on the first day of their course in order to qualify for support, i.e. the student must be living in the UK/England:

- habitually
- voluntarily
- for settled purposes as part of the regular order of their life, for the time being.

Note that students can still be considered to meet the ordinary residence requirement where they are considered to be temporarily absent from their place of residence.

Where a student receives one of the statuses noted above after the first day of their course, the requirements for these students to qualify for support as an event will be as follows:

- The student is ordinarily resident in England on the course start date (the student can be treated as lawfully resident even where they did not hold leave to enter or remain on the relevant date), and
- The student has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since being granted their status. Note that where the student has been granted leave to enter the UK

(i.e. leave is granted either prior to arrival in the UK or at the UK border), the leave start date should be taken as the date of arrival in the UK.

### **3.41 Home fee status only – British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.**

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See Section 3.23 for persons settled when in the UK who have been resident in the specified BOTs and who are eligible for fee support from AY 22/23.

From AY 22/23, family members from the British overseas territories of persons who would be settled when in the UK are not eligible for fee support under paragraph 9BB, but are eligible for home fee status only, where they have been ordinarily resident for the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course in the UK, Islands and the specified BOTs and are undertaking a course in England.

#### **Residents of the Crown Dependencies**

From AY 21/22, new and continuing students living in the Crown Dependencies (the 'Islands') who are settled in the UK and who come to England solely for the purposes of higher education study, are eligible for home fee status on the basis of three years of residence in the UK or Islands. Those who come to the UK for purposes other than study were already eligible prior to AY 21/22 for home fee status as well as student support.

### **3.42 Review of immigration status for returning students**

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If the student is a returning student and applying for support under paragraphs 4 to 5, 6A, 7A, 9A 11A, 13, 14 or 16 of the Regulations, they are required to provide the date of expiry of their or their family member's immigration status (if applicable). Before allowing student support to continue in the next academic year, SFE will be required to check whether the student is still entitled to student support. SFE should request revised documentary evidence of the student's or family member's immigration status from the Home Office.

If a student (or family member) has been awarded support under paragraphs 4 to 5 and their case is still under review by the Home Office, or the Home Office are considering an appeal, student support should not be withdrawn. SFE will require evidence from the Home Office that this is the case before processing the student support application.

In order for a student's support to continue after the expiry of a relevant immigration status, further evidence will be required. Ideally, SFE will receive confirmation that the status or a different qualifying immigration status has been awarded by the Home Office. Additionally, evidence that the Home Office is considering awarding an appropriate immigration status, or that an appeal is pending, would be acceptable. Consideration should also be given as to whether the student may qualify under another category.

As new stamps may be introduced or amended after the issue of this guidance, please refer to the Home Office's Visas and Immigration website : <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>

It is the expiry date of the main leave holder's immigration status that should trigger the termination provision checks. This applies whether the student is the main leave holder or the student's family member is the main leave holder.

- Where the student is the family member of the main leave holder, it is sufficient to ensure that the student has a valid lawful status on the first day of the first academic year of the course, or the course start date, as appropriate to the category they are eligible under.
  - No further checks on the student's ongoing immigration status are required, as long as the main leave holder's leave has been replaced with a new valid leave status as required during the course.
  - If the main leave holder's leave expires and is not replaced with a new valid leave status, the student should be invited to provide evidence of their own status if this allows them to remain eligible (e.g. the student has been granted British citizenship).

## 4 Course eligibility

### 4.1 Designated courses

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Only designated courses will attract support under the Regulations. The provisions in relation to the designation of courses for tuition fee support, living cost support and supplementary grants are as follows:

- regulation 5 for FT courses including FT distance learning courses that begin on or after 1 September 2012
- regulation 139 for PT courses including PT distance learning courses
- Schedule 2 for course types that can be designated
- regulation 161 sets out provisions in relation to the designation of postgraduate courses for Postgraduate DSA only.

Courses beginning on or after 1 September 2012 which fall within paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 of Schedule 2 should lead to a qualification which is granted by a body which is recognised to award UK degrees, i.e. a recognised body, or by a body that is permitted to act on behalf of a recognised body in the granting of degrees, i.e. a listed body.

Regardless of the mode of study, from AY 19/20, courses that are provided in part or entirely by a franchisee provider in England are automatically designated. Franchised provisions at private providers in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland are still required to apply for specific designation.

## 4.2 Automatic designation of full-time courses (regulation 5)

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A course will automatically be designated for FT or FT distance learning support under regulation 5 if it is:

- of a type which is listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations (this list is set out under the paragraph below)
- one of the following:
  - a FT course (including FT distance learning courses)
  - a sandwich course
- of at least one academic year's duration and
- either:
  - wholly provided by a registered provider, or provided by a registered or unregistered provider on behalf of a registered provider in England,
  - wholly provided by an authority-funded institution in Scotland or Northern Ireland, or in Wales where the course began before 1 September 2017,
  - provided by a registered provider on behalf of an authority-funded institution in Scotland or Northern Ireland, or in Wales where the course began before 1 September 2017,
  - provided by a registered provider on behalf of a regulated institution in Wales where the course began on or after 1 September 2017,
  - provided by a publicly funded institution situated in Scotland, Northern Ireland, or Wales on behalf of a registered provider in England, or by a publicly funded institution situated in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales on behalf of an authority-funded institution in Scotland or Northern Ireland, or in Wales where the course began before 1 September 2017,
  - provided by a publicly funded institution in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales on behalf of a regulated institution in Wales where the course begins on or after 1 September 2017,
  - provided by a registered provider in England in conjunction with an institution which is situated outside the United Kingdom,
  - provided by an authority-funded institution in Scotland or Northern Ireland, or in Wales where the course began before 1 September 2017, in conjunction with an institution which is situated outside the United Kingdom,
  - provided by a regulated institution in Wales or a regulated institution in Wales in conjunction with an institution which is situated outside the United Kingdom, where that course begins on or after 1 September 2017, or

- a Welsh designated FT course, a Scottish designated FT course or a Northern Irish designated FT course.

A Welsh designated FT course is a FT course provided by an institution situated in Wales:

- designated by the Welsh Ministers under regulation 5(8) of the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 for the purposes of section 22 of the 1998 Act and Regulation 4(1) of those Regulations, or
- specified to be treated as a designated course by the Welsh Ministers regulation 8(1) of the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018, for the purposes of those Regulations.

A Scottish designated FT course is a FT course provided by an institution situated in Scotland:

- determined as designated by the Scottish Ministers under regulation 4(9) of the Education (Student Loans) (Scotland) Regulations 2007 for the purposes of regulation 3(2) of those Regulations
- designated by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland under regulation 6(9) of the Education (Student Support) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 for the purposes of Article 3 of the Education (Student Support) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and regulation 5 of those Regulations and
- either—
  - (i) designated by the Welsh Ministers under regulation 5(8) of the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 for the purposes of section 22 of the 1998 Act and Regulation 4(1) of those Regulations, or
  - (ii) specified to be treated as a designated course by the Welsh Ministers regulation 8(1) of the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018, for the purposes of those Regulations

A Northern Irish designated FT course means a FT course provided by an institution situated in Northern Ireland designated by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland under regulation 6(9) of the Education (Student Support) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 for the purposes of Article 3 of the Education (Student Support) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and regulation 122 of those Regulations.

Since AY 15/16 combined study courses between the UK and abroad can only be designated for student support where at least 50% of the teaching and learning that comprise the course takes place at a UK institution. DfE has advised that the determination of 50% of the teaching and learning should be based on the number of weeks of study. For example:

Course A is comprised of two years of study in the UK and two years of study abroad. 53 weeks of study are scheduled in the UK and 54 weeks of study are scheduled abroad. Course A would not be designated for support.

Course B is four years in length, with a one-year work placement (23 weeks), one year of study in UK (24 weeks), and two years study abroad (46 weeks). As Course B does not meet the requirement for 50% of the teaching and learning time to take place at a UK institution, course B would not be designated for support.

The Regulations do not define how the time spent in the UK/abroad should be split and therefore combined courses may consist of:

- full years abroad (for example, two years in the UK and two years abroad),
- part years abroad (for example half the academic year is studied in the UK and the other half abroad), or
- a combination of both.

These courses may be subject to fee loan restrictions by virtue of the provisions set out in regulation 23(7B). If the student is attending a FT course at an approved (fee cap) provider with an Access and Participation plan and TEF award, Regulation 23(7B) provides that if the student undertakes less than 10 weeks of study at the UK institution in an academic year a reduced fee loan limit applies. The reduced fee loan limit for a course in such circumstances is 15% of the maximum fee loan limit, therefore up to £1,465 where the maximum fee loan limit is £9,790.

However, if a student studies at the UK institution for 10 weeks or more in an academic year then the full fee loan amount will be available (up to £9,790 under regulation 23(3)(b)) if students do not meet the provisions set out under regulation 23(7B)).

For more information on how the provisions of regulation 23(7B) impacts entitlement where the student is at another category of provider or on an Accelerated Degree course, please see the AY 26/27 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance.

Regulation 23(7B) also restricts fee loans for an academic year to the abroad rate where the periods of FT study which are not undertaken at the UK institution exceed 30 weeks for the current academic year and any preceding academic year.

Therefore, courses where two full years are studied in the UK and two full years are studied abroad attract two years of full fees and two years of abroad rate fees. Whereas courses comprised of study in the UK and abroad in each academic year may attract full fees (where 10 weeks or more are studied in the UK) until the academic year which the 30-week rule becomes applicable and the abroad rate should be charged.

As long as each year of the course satisfies the guidance criteria for a FT course, a student would be entitled to apply for travel grant for each year of the course. In order to qualify for a travel grant a student would need to study abroad for a minimum of 50% of any qualifying quarter. The travel grant is means tested and is paid towards reasonable travel costs. For more information on how entitlement to travel grant is determined please see the AY 26/27 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance.

‘Quarter’ in relation to an academic year means a period in that year:

- beginning on 1 January and ending on 31 March,
- beginning on 1 April and ending on 30 June,
- beginning on 1 July and ending on 31 August, or
- beginning on 1 September and ending on 31 December.

### **4.3 Automatic designation of part-time courses (regulation 139)**

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To potentially qualify for PT fee and maintenance support the student must undertake a designated PT course. Regulation 139 sets out which courses are considered designated PT courses. A course will be a designated PT course if it meets the criteria in regulation 139(1) or it has been designated by the Secretary of State under regulation 139(7).

For further information on the designation of PT courses as well as franchise arrangements and minimum course length, please see the Course Designation section of the AY 26/27 ‘Support for Part-Time Students’ guidance.

### **4.4 Automatic designation of postgraduate courses for Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) (regulation 161)**

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A postgraduate course will be automatically designated for postgraduate DSA only if it is:

- a course for which entry requirements are normally a first degree (or equivalent qualification) or higher,
- at least one academic year in duration and in the case of a PT course, should not exceed
  - four times the period normally required to complete a FT course leading to the same qualification, where the student starts the course on or after 1 September 2012, and
- either:
  - wholly provided by a registered provider, or provided by a registered or unregistered provider on behalf of a registered provider in England,
  - wholly provided by an authority-funded institution in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales,
  - provided by a registered provider on behalf of an authority-funded institution in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales,
  - provided by an institution situated in Scotland, Northern Ireland, or Wales on behalf of a registered provider in England, or by a publicly funded institution situated in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales on behalf of an authority-funded institution in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales,

- provided by a registered provider in England in conjunction with an institution which is situated outside the United Kingdom, or
- provided by an authority-funded institution in Scotland Northern Ireland or Wales in conjunction with an institution which is situated outside the United Kingdom or
- a Welsh designated postgraduate course

A Welsh designated postgraduate course is a postgraduate course provided by an institution situated in Wales:

- designated by the Welsh Ministers under 112(4) of the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 for the purposes of section 22 of the 1998 Act and regulation 110 of those Regulations, or
- specified to be treated as a designated course by the Welsh Ministers under paragraph 3 of Schedule 4 to the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018, for the purposes of those Regulations.

A Scottish designated postgraduate course is a postgraduate course provided by an institution situated in Scotland:

- determined as designated by the Scottish Ministers under regulation 4(9) of the Education (Student Loans) (Scotland) Regulations 2007 for the purposes of regulation 3(2) of those Regulations,
- designated by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland under regulation 141(4) of the Education (Student Support) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 for the purposes of Article 3 of the Education (Student Support) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (and regulation 139 of those Regulations), and
- either—
  - (i) designated by the Welsh Ministers under 112(4) of the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 for the purposes of section 22 of the 1998 Act and regulation 110 of those Regulations, or
  - (ii) specified to be treated as a designated course by the Welsh Ministers under paragraph 3 of Schedule 4 to the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018, for the purposes of those Regulations.

A Northern Irish designated postgraduate course means a postgraduate course provided by an institution situated in Northern Ireland designated by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland under regulation 141(4) of the Education (Student Support) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 for the purposes of Article 3 of the Education (Student Support) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (and regulation 139 of those Regulations).

Some courses designated under this regulation may also be designated for further support under the provisions of the Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) Regulations 2016 (as amended). Further guidance on postgraduate master's loans can be found in the

AY 26/27 'Postgraduate Loans for Master's Courses' guidance. For guidance on postgraduate loans for doctoral degrees, please see the AY 26/27 'Postgraduate Loans for Doctoral Degrees' guidance.

#### **4.5 Automatic designation of courses (Schedule 2)**

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Providing they meet the other criteria in regulations 5 and 139, the following types of course are designated automatically:

- a first degree course
- a course for the Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE)
- a course for the Higher National Diploma (HND) or Higher National Certificate (HNC) of
  - The Business and Technician Education Council, or
  - The Scottish Qualifications Authority
- a course for the Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)
- a course of initial training for teachers
- a course in preparation for a professional examination of a standard higher than that of,
  - the examination at advanced level for the General Certificate of Education or the examination at the higher level for the Scottish Certificate of Education, or
  - The examination for the National Certificate or the National Diploma of either of the bodies mentioned in paragraph 3
  - not being a course for entry to which a first degree (or equivalent qualification) is normally required
- a course:
  - providing education (whether or not in preparation for an examination) the standard of which is higher than that of courses providing education in preparation for any of the examinations mentioned in paragraph 7(a) or (b) above but not higher than that of a first degree course, and
  - for entry to which a first degree (or equivalent qualification) is not normally required (e.g. an NVQ level 4 where this is awarded along with a first degree, Dip HE or HND)
- a postgraduate pre-registration healthcare course (for more information on these courses and the support available please see the AY 26/27 'NHS' guidance)

- a graduate entry accelerated course leading to qualification as a medical doctor or dentist (for more information on these courses and the support available please see the AY 26/27 'NHS' guidance)
- A graduate entry veterinary course
- A course for an approved Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ)

Further detail on these course types can be found in Section 4.6 below.

#### **4.6 Interpretation of provisions on automatically designated courses**

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DfE does not normally maintain any lists of courses which are automatically designated under regulation 5 (FT) and 139 (PT). All of these courses should appear on the Course Management System, which is the SLC course database. The courses on this system should meet the designation criteria, however it will be for SFE to decide which of them are eligible for support. SFE may decide to contact the student or HE provider directly if the information is required to establish whether a course is eligible for designation (the entry qualification required and the qualification it leads to).

Note that whilst DfE does not generally maintain a list of HE courses which are automatically designated for student support, DfE will produce and maintain an operational list of qualifications that have received HTQ approval from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). The operational list will identify qualifications with HTQ approval that are fundable through HE student finance, ALL or through both funding streams. The purpose of this operational list is to assist SLC in identifying which qualifications are eligible for HE student finance by virtue of their status as an approved HTQ, rather than relying on an underpinning status conferred elsewhere in the Regulations.

#### **4.7 The Office for Students (OfS)**

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The regulatory framework for HE providers changed in line with the Higher Education Research Act 2017. The Act established the OfS, who are responsible for certain functions surrounding HE provider regulation, such as quality, financial sustainability, governance and regulatory monitoring of registered English HE providers.

From 1 August 2019 all English HE providers who wish to access student finance support must register with the OfS. Providers who previously had courses specifically designated for student support will no longer need to apply for specific designation.

Designation of English providers is linked to registration with the OfS, in that all registered HE providers will be automatically designated for student support. However, the Secretary of State will retain the ability to designate or de-designate for student support purposes outside of this system. Further detail can be found in Section 4.8 below.

From AY 19/20, providers in England are no longer categorised as publicly/authority funded or privately funded and the categories of registration with the OfS are:

- Approved (fee cap) and
- Approved

Whilst there are only two categories of registration with the OfS, tuition fee loan amounts are also dependent on other factors including:

- Access and Participation Plans (where the provider is in the Approved (fee cap) category)
- TEF awards (both categories)

For more information on fee caps, and tuition fee loan rates please see the AY 26/27 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance.

From AY 19/20, the OfS grants teach out where a provider was designated in AY 18/19 but does not register with the OfS in AY 19/20. Unregistered providers in England (other than on behalf of an approved or approved (fee cap) provider) that were publicly funded in 2018/19 and offering designated courses starting before 1 August 2019 attract fee loans at the approved provider rates under Regulations 23(4), 23(4ZA), 23(4A) and 23(4B).

#### **4.8 Specific designation (regulations 5(10), 139(7), 161(4))**

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The Secretary of State has the power to designate courses that are not automatically designated under the Regulations: regulation 5(10) for FT courses (including FT distance learning courses starting on or after 1 September 2012), and regulation 139(7) for PT courses and regulation 161(4) for postgraduate courses.

The OfS publishes a register of providers currently designated for student support by the Secretary of State: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/>

#### **4.9 Designation of School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) schemes**

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If a student is undertaking an ITT course as part of a SCITT scheme at an institution that is not registered with the OfS then they will not be eligible to apply for funding unless the course is specifically designated by DfE. The OfS is responsible for maintaining and publishing a separate register of SCITT providers.

#### **4.10 Franchising arrangements**

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Many institutions of higher education enter franchising arrangements for their courses with other institutions of higher and of further education (including Approved and non-OfS registered institutions). Franchising arrangements take a number of forms. For example, the parent institution may determine to a varying degree the course content, they may provide some or all of the course materials and may also provide some or all of the lecturers. The parent institution may also enrol the students itself and receive grants from its Funding

Council in respect of them and be responsible to its Funding Council for the quality of the teaching on the course.

Where a whole course is franchised, it should be regarded for the purposes of the Regulations as being provided by the franchisee as long as the franchisee is providing the training and supervision. A course is provided by the institution which provides the teaching and supervision of the course (regulation 5(7)(a)). Providers in England running franchised courses in AY 19/20 or later regardless of whether the franchisee is a registered or non-registered provider are automatically designated courses in England.

For providers in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland the designation of franchised courses remains unchanged from previous academic years. If the franchisee is a publicly funded institution, and the course is one which is capable of designation under regulation 5, it will be automatically designated. However, if it is a private institution, specific designation will have to be sought from DfE.

Courses which have been partly franchised should be regarded as courses which are being jointly provided by both institutions.

#### **4.11 Schedule 2 courses - further information**

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##### **First degree courses – (Schedule 2, paragraph 1)**

For the purposes of student support, a first degree includes honours degrees and ordinary degrees (e.g. BA, BSc, LLB etc.), first degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science (e.g. MBChB or BM BS, BDS, BVetMed and BVSc), integrated Master's degrees (e.g. MEng, MChem, MPhys, MPharm) and Foundation Degrees.

A first degree course (excluding a graduate entry course designated under paragraphs 10 and 11 of Schedule 2 leading to qualification as a medical doctor, dentist or veterinary surgeon) that began on or after 1 September 2009 is not a designated course where it leads to the award of a professional qualification and where a first degree (or equivalent qualification) would normally be required for entry to a course leading to the award of that professional qualification.

##### **Integrated Master's degree**

Integrated Master's degree courses are generally four-year programmes of study in science, engineering and mathematics disciplines. They comprise an integrated programme of study including, typically, three years of study at undergraduate level and one year of postgraduate study leading to a single, integrated undergraduate qualification. Students enrol at the outset for the full course. For the purposes of the equivalent or lower qualification (ELQ) policy, they are treated as equivalent to an honours degree for undergraduate student support purposes.

## Cambridge Tripos

Courses at Cambridge University are divided into parts, each lasting one or two years. In some subjects there are two parts, Part I and Part II, while in others, especially in science and engineering, there is an optional Part III. Students enrol at the outset for the full course. If they have successfully passed each part, they continue on to Part III. This three-part degree is known as a Cambridge Tripos. On successful completion of all three parts, students may be awarded an undergraduate Master's award such as MEng or MSci. Cambridge students must state that it is their intention to take Part III of the Tripos before completion of the third year of the course.

As a whole, the four-year course can attract student support. However, Part III is also offered as a separate one-year postgraduate course. Graduates of other universities who wish to take Part III of the Tripos at Cambridge would not be enrolled on the four-year course but on the separate one-year course. As a stand-alone postgraduate course this does not qualify for UG support, but may qualify for postgraduate DSA under the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (as amended), and support under the Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) Regulations 2016 (as amended).

## Foundation degrees

Foundation degrees are vocational higher education qualifications that feature work-based learning. Many foundation degrees, particularly PT ones, combine academic study with learning in the workplace. Foundation degrees were introduced to help address the skills gap at the associate professional and higher technician level. They are typically developed with substantial help from employers and other stakeholders such as professional bodies. Foundation degrees constitute 240 credits and provide a defined progression route to some bachelor's degrees.

Many foundation degree courses are automatically designated for support, provided they meet all parts of regulation 5(1) or 139(1). However, HE providers have been encouraged to be flexible in their provision of foundation degrees, and consequently a number may be organised so that days of learning in the workplace and days of study are combined in the same week. DfE do not want students on these courses to be penalised relative to those doing a similar amount of study but via a more traditional route.

Foundation degree courses are usually two years in duration though some may take longer to complete. They may be FT courses or sandwich courses. Some may be PT as they do not contain enough FT study per year on average to meet the definition of a sandwich course, and they meet the definition of a PT course under regulation 139.

Some foundation degree courses feature learning in the workplace, which should be treated as FT study in an institution in the same way as applied in the definition of a sandwich course and of determining levels of support.

#### **4.12 Approved Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) (Schedule 2 - paragraph 12)**

Existing and new Level 4 and 5 qualifications can be put forward for approval by IfATE as an HTQ. HTQ approval signals that the qualification delivers the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the relevant occupational standards. Occupational standards are developed by employers and underpin apprenticeships, T levels and HTQs.

Level 4 and 5 technical qualifications, regardless of their current designation status, can be submitted to IfATE for approval as an HTQ. This can include existing HE qualifications (e.g. HNDs, HNCs, Dip HE's etc), existing level 4 and 5 FE qualifications (e.g. Level 4 Diplomas) from Ofqual-regulated awarding organisations, and newly developed qualifications.

Where an existing course is awarded HTQ approval by IfATE, it retains its underlying qualification, e.g. a foundation degree would retain its foundation degree qualification status whilst also being recognised as an approved HTQ following IfATE approval.

#### **Available Funding for HTQs**

From AY 23/24, all qualifying HTQs that satisfy the necessary HE designation requirements (see Annex E of this guidance for further information on HTQ designation requirements) are eligible for HE student finance in their own right. The funding package that is available to a qualification with HTQ approval depends on wider designation/eligibility rules, including the status of the provider that is offering the qualification. Existing Level 4 and 5 qualifications (e.g., HND, Dip HE etc.) that are already designated for HE student finance under Schedule 2 of the Regulations, prior to HTQ approval, continue to be funded solely through HE student finance and delivered through an OfS registered provider.

Level 4 and 5 qualifications not previously designated for HE student finance (e.g. traditional FE qualifications) that are approved as an HTQ and meet the wider designation/eligibility criteria for HE student finance may also attract HE student finance under the new provisions of the Regulations from AY 23/24. To attract HE student finance, a qualification with HTQ approval must meet minimum duration requirements and be offered through an OfS registered provider (or delivered in conjunction with an OfS registered provider).

In addition, the same qualification with HTQ approval can also be offered through non-OfS registered providers that do not have a franchise agreement in place. In such cases, the HE student finance designation requirements will not be satisfied and the HTQ can consequently only attract ALL funding, where eligible.

#### **Provider Funding Options**

There may be instances where a single qualification that is offered by an awarding body that has received HTQ approval from IfATE is delivered via multiple providers. As a result, the qualification with HTQ approval may be eligible to attract different forms of student funding at different providers (e.g., HE student finance and ALL). Please see below summary of the funding options that are available for HTQs, depending on the status of the provider offering the course:

HTQ STUDENT FUNDING OPTIONS		Does the provider of the HTQ hold a contract with DfE for ALL delivery and is the HTQ approved for ALL?	
		No	Yes
Is the provider of the HTQ OfS-registered?	Yes	HE student finance funding only.	Provider must choose between HE student finance and ALL for the HTQ. The chosen option will apply to all students enrolled on the HTQ course.
	No	No student funding by either route unless the provider successfully seeks OfS registration or an ALL contract.	ALL funding only (unless the provider successfully seeks OfS registration, at which point the provider would need to decide the funding stream to use).

For the avoidance of doubt, an HTQ course cannot be offered through both funding systems by the same provider. Consequently, a single provider will not be able to simultaneously attract ALL and HE student finance funding for the same HTQ course. For confirmation purposes, a course is considered to be a single offering from a single provider. Therefore, whilst a single HTQ qualification with HTQ approval can attract different forms of student funding at different providers, a single HTQ course offering cannot.

**Designated HTQs**

As noted in the above table, where a provider is registered with the OfS and also has a contract with DfE to deliver ALLs-funded provision, the provider must determine which funding route will apply to their HTQ course.

A traditional FE qualification with HTQ approval can attract HE student finance where the necessary HE designation criteria is satisfied and the OfS registered provider offering the course chooses to attract HE student finance. Where an OfS registered provider selects HE student finance as the funding option for a traditional FE course with HTQ approval, HE student finance will be made available for new students commencing their course in an academic year following HTQ approval. However, where a student is continuing on or joining a traditional FE course that commenced in an academic year prior to HTQ approval, they will not qualify for HE student finance and may instead attract ALL support (where applicable).

For example:

**Sarah** is studying towards a Healthcare Science Associate Level 4 Diploma at an OfS registered provider in AY 25/26. HE student finance is not available for this course and Sarah qualifies for ALL support instead, as her provider also has a contract with DfE to deliver ALL

funding. The Healthcare Science Associate Level 4 Diploma course offered by Sarah's provider receives HTQ approval from IfATE for AY 26/27. The course satisfies the necessary HE designation requirements and Sarah's provider has decided to offer the newly approved HTQ through the HE student finance route from AY 26/27. As a result, new students starting year one of this course from AY 26/27 can qualify for HE student finance. However, as Sarah is a continuing student and as her course started prior to AY 26/27 (i.e., prior to the point at which the course became an approved HTQ that is designated for HE student finance), Sarah will not be eligible for the HE student finance and will instead continue to qualify for ALL.

**Rebecca** is also studying on the Healthcare Science Associate Level 4 Diploma at the same provider as Sarah. However, Rebecca joins her course in AY 26/27 as a direct entrant into year two. Despite Rebecca joining the course in AY 26/27 (i.e., following the course becoming an approved HTQ that is designated for HE student finance) she is not eligible for HE student finance as she has joined a programme of study/cohort of students that started in AY 25/26 (i.e. prior to the course becoming an approved HTQ that is designated for HE student finance). Rebecca may instead qualify for ALL support, where eligible.

**Kevin** is studying the Healthcare Science Associate Level 4 Diploma at the same provider as Sarah and Rebecca and begins year one in AY 26/27. As the course has received HTQ approval and the provider has chosen to offer the course through the HE student finance route from AY 26/27, Kevin can qualify for HE student finance.

### **Non-designated HTQs**

Where a traditional FE course receives HTQ approval from IfATE but does not satisfy the standard HE designation requirements (e.g. because the course does not meet the minimum duration requirements under regulation 5(1)(c) of the Regulations or is not delivered in an OfS registered provider), the course will not qualify for HE student finance despite its HTQ approval. New and continuing students undertaking an approved HTQ that does not satisfy the HE student finance designation requirements may instead be eligible to attract ALL support, providing the course represents a designated FE learning aim under the Further Education Loans Regulations 2012. For more information on ALL support, please refer to the 'ALL' guidance.

See Annex E of this guidance for further information on HTQ designation requirements.

### **4.13 Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses (Schedule 2 – paragraph 5)**

There are only two types of ITT courses which can be designated for the purposes of student support under Schedule 2, paragraph 5. These are ITT courses for those wishing to teach in the school sector (primary and secondary teaching training that leads to the award of Qualified Teacher Status) and ITT courses for those wishing to teach in the further education (FE) sector, which do not confer Qualified Teacher Status. These courses can be delivered under a range of different models and the designation and approval arrangements vary. ITT courses leading to QTS can be delivered by registered Approved (fee cap) and registered Approved institutions or by SCITT providers (some of these may be delivered under the School Direct programme). ITT courses for the FE sector are delivered mainly by registered

Approved (fee cap) institutions and in some cases by registered Approved institutions. Further details are provided below:

The Regulations define ITT courses as being any of the following (but excluding any employment-based teacher training schemes):

(a) a course of initial teacher training undertaken in England and leading to qualified teacher status in England,

(b) a course of initial teacher training undertaken in Wales and accredited as initial teacher training by the Education Workforce Council,

(c) a course of initial teacher training undertaken in Scotland and accredited as initial teacher training by the General Teaching Council for Scotland,

(d) a course of initial teacher training undertaken in Northern Ireland and accredited as initial teacher training by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland,

(e) a course for the initial training of teachers in further education undertaken in England leading to a Diploma in Education and Training awarded by a recognised body, or with content equivalent to a Diploma in Education and Training and leading to a qualification awarded by a relevant provider, which—

- (i) is not a recognised initial further education teacher training course, and
- (ii) begins before 1st September 2024,

(f) a recognised initial further education teacher training course undertaken in England,

(g) a course for the initial training of teachers in further education which is undertaken in Wales and leads to a qualification the standard of which is at least equivalent to a Diploma in Higher Education,

(h) a course for the Teaching Qualification in Further Education which is undertaken in Scotland,

(i) a course for the initial training of teachers in further education undertaken in Northern Ireland which leads to a qualification which is approved by the Department for the Economy as a qualification which entitles a person to work as a full-time, associate or essential skills lecturer in a further education college in Northern Ireland.

In the above definition of ITT courses:

- a course mentioned in (a), (b), (c), (d), (g), (h) or (i) includes a course leading to a first degree,
- "recognised body" means an awarding body (within the meaning of section 132 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) which is recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in accordance with that section,

- "recognised initial further education teacher training course" means a course included in the list maintained by the Secretary of State in accordance with regulation 2B,
- "relevant provider" means an English HE provider which has been granted degree awarding powers by either a Royal Charter or an Act of Parliament.

The Regulations specify that "employment-based teacher training scheme" means:

- (a) a scheme established by the Secretary of State whereby a person may undertake ITT in order to obtain qualified teacher status while being employed to teach at a school or other educational institution except a pupil referral unit, or
- (b) a scheme established by the National Assembly for Wales or the Welsh Ministers whereby persons who are or who have been employed in a school or other educational institution except a pupil referral unit may become qualified teachers. This definition is only relevant to schools-based ITT courses leading to qualified teacher status (QTS).

This definition is only relevant to schools-based ITT courses leading to qualified teacher status (QTS). It does not apply to courses leading to a qualification to teach in the FE sector.

#### **4.14 Full-time ITT courses**

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FT ITT courses that lead to a first degree are defined in the Regulations as per all FT non-ITT courses that lead to a first degree.

FT ITT courses that do not lead to a first degree (i.e. graduate courses leading to QTS or that enable someone to teach in FE) are courses of at least one academic year but no more than two academic years in length, where the periods of study in each academic year are at least 300 hours. A week of study can be considered as 30 hours.

All students commencing FT undergraduate or postgraduate ITT courses are eligible for maintenance support as per undergraduate FT students.

#### **4.15 Part-time ITT courses**

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ITT courses that are at least one academic year in length and do not meet the minimum hours criteria as set out above for FT non-first-degree courses are considered to be PT ITT courses if they meet the appropriate intensity of study conditions. For courses beginning before 1 September 2012, intensity of study is at least 50% of an equivalent FT course over the duration of the PT course. For courses beginning on or after 1 September 2012, intensity of study is at least 25% of an equivalent FT course over the duration of the PT course and in each year. These courses attract the PT support package only, regardless of whether or not the course leads to a first degree.

All students commencing PT undergraduate or postgraduate ITT courses will be eligible for the PT support package as other undergraduate PT students.

#### 4.16 School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) scheme (QTS only)

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Programmes offered by SCITT providers are typically postgraduate ITT courses designed and delivered by organisations including schools, local authorities, private companies or FE colleges. Responsibility for accrediting these providers now sits with DfE. The courses lead to QTS with many also awarding an academic award such as a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) that is validated by an HE provider. There are partnerships of schools running SCITT courses all over England providing different kinds of teacher training covering primary, middle years and the full range of secondary subjects. SCITT courses generally last for one FT academic year.

#### School Direct Training Programme

School direct places are available in certain primary and secondary schools across England and are delivered in partnership with an accredited ITT provider (either a SCITT or an HE provider). These programmes generally last for one academic year, although where the programme is undertaken on a PT basis it will usually take longer. Successful completion of the programme will lead to the award of QTS. School Direct programmes will often include an academic award such as a PGCE. There are two separate School Direct training options:

- **School Direct Training Programme (unsalaried)** is for graduates who will be part of a school team from enrolment. These graduates may be eligible for a bursary paid by DfE to support them in training. Where undertaken on a FT or PT basis, students on these courses can attract the FT or PT package of support respectively.
- **School Direct Training Programme (salaried)** is an employment-based route for graduates. These graduates will earn a salary while they undertake this programme through School Direct salaried programme. Where a student opts for the ‘salaried’ programme they are ineligible for support under the Regulations.

#### 4.17 ITT courses for teaching in the FE sector – England only

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Courses for teaching in the FE sector in England do not lead to the award of QTS. From AY 24/25 the only courses that are eligible for HE student support funding for new students training to teach in the FE sector are those included on a list published by the Secretary of State for Education that are “recognised initial further education teacher training courses” (as provided for by the Regulations).

The list of eligible [courses](#) for AY 26/27 was published in January 2026. It restricts funding to those courses developed by an English HE education provider which has been granted degree awarding powers, at the following levels:

- level 5, a course leading to the
  - Diploma in Teaching (Further Education and Skills)
  - Certificate in Education (CertEd)
- level 6, a course leading to the
  - Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PgCE)

- Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PgDE)
- level 7, a course leading to the
  - Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)

Note that a person undertaking the Level 5 Learning and Skills Teacher (LST) apprenticeship are not eligible to receive student support as the course is delivered as part of an apprenticeship.

Eligible courses can be offered by HE providers with degree awarding powers, or by other OfS-registered providers that have validation arrangements with HE providers with degree awarding powers. To be eligible for HE student support funding, the above courses must allow a person to meet the [occupational standard for a learning and skills teacher](#) in full.

Although course names are not prescribed, providers have been advised that courses should clearly identify that they are for the training of teachers to work in the FE sector and, where possible, course titles should include the subject of the training, aligned with subjects at sector subject area [level](#).

No other courses are eligible for funding as ITT courses for teaching in the FE sector from AY 24/25 onwards.

Previously designated courses such as the Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training and courses at levels 5, 6 and 7 developed by higher education providers with degree awarding powers that were consistent with the Diploma in Education and Training can only be funded where these are being taught out, for students whose courses began before the start of AY 24/25.

#### **4.18 Which FE ITT courses can be designated for student support in different parts of the UK?**

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##### **England**

FE ITT courses that have been recognised by the Secretary of State and appear on the list published by DfE.

That list currently includes FE ITT courses at level 5, 6, and 7 that allow a person to meet the occupational standard for a learning and skills teacher and are developed by HE providers that have degree awarding powers.

##### **Wales.**

Acceptable qualifications for teaching in Wales are Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET), Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PgCE) in PCET and Certificate in Education in PCET.

##### **Northern Ireland**

The Further Education Teachers' (Eligibility) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007, as amended, require that every full-time and Associate lecturer employed as a Further Education (FE) lecturer must have such qualifications which are approved by the Department for the Economy.

Only the following qualifications are recognised for teaching in the Northern Ireland FE Sector:

- University of Ulster BA (Honours) in Education;
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), obtained in the Republic of Ireland (provided the individual also holds a 'conditional registration' or 'full registration' with the Teaching Council in Ireland);
- The Northern Ireland Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Education (PGCFHE);
- The Northern Ireland Postgraduate Diploma in Further and Higher Education (PGDFHE); and
- The Northern Ireland Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Further Education) (PGCE (Further Education))

### **Scotland**

All FE teachers must be registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. To register an individual needs either the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) from a Scottish Higher Education Institution or an equivalent to a minimum of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 9 (FHEQ levels 5/6). Accepted equivalents include those with a recognised Primary or Secondary teaching qualification awarded in Scotland and teaching experience in Further Education. Qualifications from the other DA's are also accepted if they are comparable to the TQFE.

English providers who are registered with OfS and Public/Authority funded providers in Wales, Scotland and NI may have courses automatically designated and will need to add their new FE ITT courses to their existing list of courses on the Course Management System.

English providers who are not registered with OfS or private/non-authority funded providers in Wales, Scotland and NI (for example some further education colleges and sixth form colleges) would, prior to 1 April 2018, have applied to the Secretary of State/HEFCE to be specifically designated. From 1 April 2018, non-authority-funded providers that plan to deliver FE ITT qualifications have to apply to the Secretary of State, through the OfS, for the course(s) to be specifically designated. This is the case regardless of whether or not they had a course specifically designated previously.

#### **4.19 Courses falling under paragraph 7 of Schedule 2 (Part 2)**

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The provision under paragraph 7 of Schedule 2 is a very general one. It has the effect of designating any course which meets the other requirements of regulation 5 and:

- is at a standard higher than GCE A levels, Scottish Highers, the National Certificate and National Diploma, but
- is at a standard not higher than a first-degree course, and
- for which a first degree or equivalent qualification is not normally required.

The SFE will therefore find in many cases that they can establish whether a course falls under paragraph 7 of Schedule 2 without having to establish whether it falls under either of paragraphs 3 or 4.

Paragraph 7 of Schedule 2 specifies courses leading to professional examinations, i.e. above A-level/Scottish Higher/NC/ND and not higher than a first degree and for which a first degree or equivalent qualification is not normally required.

Courses under this paragraph must lead to a qualification awarded by a provider with UK degree awarding powers in order to attract student support.

In establishing whether a course is within this paragraph, SFE will need to determine:

- the level of the qualification which the course leads to, and
- the normal entry requirement for the course.

Courses can only qualify under these paragraphs if a first degree or equivalent qualification is not a normal entry requirement.

It is recognised that some courses may allow for some students to enrol with prior experience. However, as the determination under this paragraph is for the course as a whole; it will not be sufficient to establish that entry may be obtained without a first degree on an individual basis. SFE must be satisfied that the normal entry requirement for the entire course is without a first degree or equivalent qualification.

In the case of many courses leading to postgraduate qualifications, the likelihood is that they will not meet this criterion as the normal entry route will be via a first degree or equivalent.

#### **4.20 Course designation event**

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As outlined in regulation 2A(5), there are occasions when a course may become designated during the course of the AY. This is referred to as a course designation event and can occur under the following circumstances:

- The course is specifically designated by the Secretary of State (regulation 5(10)),

- The English HE provider that is providing the course, or on whose behalf the course is being provided, becomes a registered provider,
- The course becomes a Northern Irish designated full-time course, a Scottish designated full-time course or a Welsh designated full-time course,
- The course becomes a recognised initial further education teacher training course,

Where a student becomes eligible as the result of a course designation event they will be eligible for:

- loans for living costs, Adult Dependants' Grant (ADG) and Parents' Learning Allowance (PLA) in any subsequent years of the course (and in the quarters following the award in the year of the award, except the quarter in which the longest vacation falls),
- Childcare Grant (CCG) and Travel Grant in any subsequent years of the course and in the quarters following the award in the year of award, (see the AY 26/27 Grants for Dependants (GFDs) and Assessing Financial Entitlement guidance for further information on the support available to students who become eligible during the course),
- DSA from the date of the award,
- (2012 cohort students only) maintenance grant or special support grant in any subsequent years of the course and in the quarters following the award of the status (if the status was acquired within three months of the first day of the academic year),
- tuition fee support in the academic year in which the course designation occurs (unlike the events provisions outlined in [Section 3.37](#), there is no requirement that the course designation event must have occurred within the first three months of the academic year (regulation 16(1)).

## 5 Non-standard courses

### 5.1 Access courses

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Access courses are separate and distinct courses that prepare students for entry to courses in HE. They are Level 3 courses of further education. They do not meet the designation criteria for HE student support purposes because they do not lead to one of the qualifications shown in Schedule 2. They do not meet the criteria for foundation years (see [Section 4.10.4](#)) as part of a designated extended degree course and so will not attract support on that basis either.

However, access courses are in scope for Advanced Learner Loans that have some different eligibility criteria not captured in this guidance. For more information, please see the AY 26/27 Advanced Learner Loans guidance.

## **5.2 Accelerated Degree courses**

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These courses are FT undergraduate degree courses compressed into a shorter timescale than a standard-length degree. The most common scenario is where an undergraduate degree course is delivered over two academic years instead of three as is the case for a standard intensity course.

Up until AY 19/20 there was no distinction made between the fee charge cap and maximum tuition fee loan amount available per academic year of standard-length HE degrees and accelerated degree courses. The living costs support package for academic years of accelerated degrees has also been as per academic years of standard intensity HE courses, with the exception that the 'full year' rather than 'final year' loan for living costs rate has been paid in the final year of an accelerated degree course.

New students starting accelerated degree courses since AY 19/20 can apply for a higher maximum tuition fee loan to match the higher fee cap per academic year that Approved (fee cap) providers can charge. New students at Approved HE providers who are undertaking an accelerated degree course can also access a higher tuition fee loan amount than for a standard intensity course, however the fee itself is not capped. Note that students undertaking an accelerated degree course apply for the same level of living costs support as students on a standard length HE course, with the exception that the 'full year' loan for living costs rate is paid in the final year of an accelerated degree course.

Regulation 2(1) defines an accelerated degree course as follows:

'where the course begins on or after 1st August 2019, a higher education course as defined in section 83(1) of the 2017 Higher Education and Research Act where the number of academic years applicable to the course is at least one fewer than would normally be the case for that course or a course of equivalent content leading to the grant of the same or an equivalent academic award'

The Office for Students (OfS) approves the HE providers that are to deliver accelerated degree courses. The HE provider then uploads their accelerated degree courses to SLC's course management system.

For information on the support available for accelerated degree courses please refer to the AY 26/27 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance.

Students undertaking an accelerated degree course starting on or after 1 August 2019 must be attending the course in order to qualify for loans for living costs, dependants grants and travel grants (unless they are undertaking a course by distance learning due to their disability).

### **5.3 Compressed degree courses (regulation 2(2)) – courses starting before 1 August 2019**

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These courses are FT undergraduate honours degree courses delivered over two long academic years (24 months) by higher education institutions which started before 1 August 2019. Compressed degree courses are intensive courses which may include an element of distance learning. For the purposes of student living costs support, students on intensive degree courses are considered to be in attendance whilst undertaking the distance learning.

A number of compressed degree courses were introduced from 2006 through a pilot scheme that was supported by HEFCE as Flexible Learning Pathfinders. These were specifically designated for the purpose of student support.

Regulation 2(2) defines a ‘compressed degree course’ as a course meeting certain specific criteria that has been determined to be a compressed degree course by the Secretary of State which started before 1 August 2019.

Regulation 2(1) defines a ‘compressed degree student’. SFE will wish to note the criteria that a student must satisfy in order to be treated as a compressed degree student for the purposes of the Regulations. In particular, SFE should note that, unless they are a disabled student who cannot attend the course for a reason connected to their disability, a student can only be treated as a compressed degree student if they are required to be in attendance on the course for part of that year.

### **5.4 Foundation years as part of an extended course**

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Some courses are extended beyond their normal length to include a foundation year designed to prepare students for study in their chosen subject whose qualifications or experience, while acceptable for entry to higher education, are not entirely appropriate for normal entry to their particular course. The whole of this type of extended course is designated for support provided that:

- the foundation year is an integral part of the course and that the course as a whole is designated by or under the Regulations, and
- students enrol at the outset for the full duration of the extended course.

Foundation years are not the same as foundation degrees and the two should not be confused. Free-standing foundation or conversion courses are typically one academic year in length. Therefore, they are not normally designated in their own right as they are not an integral part of a designated course.

SFE may have to review an apparent free-standing foundation/conversion course. It is DfE’s view that such a course may be regarded as an integral part of a designated course provided that:

- where the foundation year is undertaken at another institution, students are enrolled with the parent institution providing the designated course and for the full duration of the extended course,
- the foundation year does not normally lead to any separate award or qualification in its own right, and
- the whole course provides for students to proceed automatically on successful completion of the foundation year to the next year of the course.

From AY 25/26, lower fee limit and tuition fee loan entitlement caps apply to classroom-based foundation years. The term “classroom-based” refers to subjects that are taught in a classroom setting and do not include a laboratory, studio, or fieldwork element. The fee cap is determined by the course’s Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) code.

For further information on the amount of tuition fee loan available for foundation years, please see the AY 26/27 ‘Assessing Financial Entitlement’ guidance.

DfE have confirmed that students who are domiciled in England will be subject to the lower fee entitlement for relevant classroom-based subjects when studying elsewhere in the UK, regardless of the fee limit for the HE provider offering a foundation year in any subject at that HE provider. This is to ensure that the application of policy and student loan funding is consistent for students domiciled in England regardless of their place of study. This means students may be required to self-fund any amount additional to the fee loan available to them.

### **5.5 Conversion courses**

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A conversion course is a free-standing course which, like a free-standing foundation course, is typically one academic year in length. These courses are not normally designated in their own right as they are not an integral part of a designated course.

### **5.6 Irish colleges**

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HE providers in the Republic of Ireland, such as Trinity College Dublin, are not in the UK and are therefore classed as overseas institutions for students who are resident in England. Courses at Republic of Ireland institutions are therefore not designated for support under the Regulations and English domiciled students undertaking courses at these institutions are not eligible for student support from SFE.

Assessors should note that courses at institutions in the Republic of Ireland appear on the HE provider database but are only designated for students domiciled in Northern Ireland or Scotland. This is because students from Scotland and Northern Ireland are eligible for student loans for study in the Republic of Ireland and, in order to allow payments to these students to be authorised, the courses need to be listed on the database.

SFE should not provide advice on the support available to English students intending to study at Irish Colleges, but may refer them to the Higher Education Authority in Dublin for

advice on possible sources of financial assistance. They can be contacted at the following address:

Higher Education Authority  
3 Shelbourne Buildings,  
Crampton Avenue,  
Shellbourne Road  
Ballsbridge,  
Dublin 4,  
DO4 C2Y6  
Ireland  
Telephone: 00 353 1 231 7100

Email: [info@hea.ie](mailto:info@hea.ie)

### **5.7 Intercalated study**

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Certain courses which are not higher than first degree level and which lead to more than one qualification, either as an optional or integral part of the course, will be considered to be single courses (regulations 5(8) and (9)). These are:

- medical, dental and veterinary science courses which include an intercalated first degree such as a BSc,
- courses in architecture, landscape architecture, landscape design, landscape management, town planning and town and country planning where qualifications are awarded both at an intermediate point in the course and at the end, and
- courses in architecture which cover Part 1 (which are prescribed by the Architects Registration Board (ARB) for pre-AY 25/26 starters, or which are full degrees/integrated master's degrees and have the Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) code 100122 (architecture) for AY 25/26 starters onwards) and Part 2 (which are prescribed by ARB) but not Part 3. Part 2 of the course (years 4-5 of study) will attract support even if the student is additionally awarded a postgraduate degree (such as a MArch) where the course is studied as a single course in conjunction with Part 1. See Section [4.16.9](#) Architecture Courses for further detail.

Note that there is no support provided under the Regulations during a year that a master's degree level course is intercalated into an undergraduate degree (although the student may be eligible for Postgraduate Loan).

Maintenance grant/Special Support Grant (2012 cohort only): maintenance loan and tuition fee loan are not available post-intercalation of master's where a student holds the master's award, as the student would now be undertaking an ELQ. The exception to this is where the course leads to a qualification as a social worker, medical doctor, dentist, veterinary surgeon or architect in which case maintenance loan is available as these are exception courses.

## 5.8 Single course provisions

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In accordance with Regulation 13(1) of the Regulations, a student will not normally be eligible for fee support where the course leads to a qualification that is equivalent to, or lower than, a qualification that has previously been awarded to that student (subject to limited exceptions, which are outlined in Section [5.16](#) below).

Regulation 13(4) makes an exception to this rule. A course can be designated for fee support if it is a 'single course' and that course leads to an honours degree being conferred before the qualification for the first degree is awarded. Students registered on undergraduate courses leading to a qualification as a medical doctor, dentist, veterinary surgeon, architect, landscape architect, landscape designer, landscape manager, town planner or town and country planner who intercalate to obtain an honours degree are not precluded from receiving student support for the remainder of their first degree, even when the honours degree is conferred prior to the award of the first degree. Funding is available for both the intercalated course and first degree.

Students who intercalate to undertake a postgraduate qualification will not be eligible to receive support for their first degree following conferment of the postgraduate qualification. This is in accordance with regulation 13(1); the conferment of a postgraduate qualification means that the student has a higher qualification than a first degree. However, where the intercalated postgraduate qualification is conferred by an institution at the same time or later than the first degree (despite the postgraduate course being completed at an earlier date), this will not preclude the student from being eligible for undergraduate funding for the entirety of their first degree.

Intercalating students will not be eligible for undergraduate student support for the postgraduate qualification but may be eligible for a Postgraduate Master's Degree Loan, subject to meeting the normal eligibility criteria.

Maintenance grant/Special Support Grant (2012 cohort only), maintenance loan and tuition fee loan are not available post-intercalation of master's where a student holds the master's degree award, as the student would now be undertaking an ELQ. The exception to this is where the course leads to a qualification as a social worker, medical doctor, dentist, veterinary surgeon or architect in which case maintenance loan and supplementary grants are available as these are exception courses (see Section [5.16](#)).

## 5.9 Architecture courses (regulation 5(8) & (9))

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In order to qualify as an architect, a student is required to complete a programme of study that leads to registration with the Architects Registration Board (ARB). This is primarily achieved via study on a course prescribed by ARB:

<http://www.arb.org.uk/student-information/schools-institutions-architecture/>

These courses are composed of distinct 'Parts'. Part 1 (typically the first three years of the student's programme of study) is studied at undergraduate level and provides students with

a graduate qualification, even if they do not continue with architecture as a profession. Part 2 is usually studied at a postgraduate (predominantly master's) level. Part 3 is also studied above the level of a first degree and does not attract student support.

ARB ceased accreditation of new part 1 courses as of 31 December 2023. For those students who began their Part 1 study prior to 1 August 2025, only the Part 1 courses accredited by ARB on 31 December 2023 will be considered to lead to qualification as an architect. However, for the purpose of determining whether a Part 1 course can be considered to lead to qualification as an architect, for new students who begin study on Part 1 from 1 August 2025 onwards, only those full degree/integrated master's degree courses which are assigned the HECoS code 100122 (architecture) will be considered to meet this requirement.

In general, a student is not entitled to support for a master's level course under the Regulations as these courses are higher in level than a first-degree course. However, there are a number of exceptions, one of which being master's courses leading to qualification as an architect, where the master's level course (Part 2) is undertaken in conjunction with a first-degree course (Part 1). Regulation 5(8) and 5(9) allow FT Part 1 and Part 2 architecture courses to be treated as a single course for a first degree (irrespective of the fact that the student will receive a graduate qualification prior to the commencement of Part 2), thus allowing them to be designated for support under Schedule 2, Paragraph 1 for the entirety of Parts 1 and 2 combined. In this scenario, both courses would be considered a single course not higher in level than a first degree, similar to integrated master's courses.

Part 1 and Part 2 architecture courses can be considered a single course, and therefore a designated course under the Regulations, where the student has:

- not withdrawn from their course between completing Part 1 and commencing Part 2,
- not changed their mode of study between completing Part 1 and commencing Part 2, and
- not broken their period of eligibility due to an excessive\* gap between completing Part 1 and commencing Part 2.

\*In general, it is understood that students will frequently undertake a period of practical work experience between completing Part 1 and commencing Part 2 of their architecture course. This period is not considered to represent an excessive gap, and the student's Part 1 and Part 2 programmes will generally remain designated as a single course. An excessive gap is generally considered a break of more than three academic years between Part 1 and Part 2. However, where the gap between Part 1 and Part 2 exceeds three academic years, SLC has discretion to consider this a single course if the student has maintained a connection with architecture (e.g. undertaking an extended placement or other relevant work experience) or if the delay in undertaking a Part 2 course was due to a compelling personal reason.

It should be noted that if the student changes HE provider between their Part 1 and Part 2 courses, the student's entire programme of study will still be considered a single course under the Regulations, providing the student meets the above criteria.

If the student undertakes their programme of study in line with the above, Part 1 and Part 2 will be considered a single course and therefore designated under Paragraph 5 and Schedule 2 of the Regulations. Providing the student meets all other eligibility criteria, they will be entitled to full UG support (fee loan, maintenance loan, supplementary grants and DSA), irrespective of the fact that Part 2 of the course is studied at a level above that of a standard first degree (e.g. a Part 2 course leading to the award of a Master's of Architecture qualification).

A student will not be considered to be undertaking Part 1 and Part 2 architecture courses as a single course where:

- The Part 2 course is studied part time (irrespective of the mode of study of the previous course)
- The student has changed their mode of study (i.e. student has undertaken Part 1 on a part-time basis and then undertakes Part 2 on a FT basis)
- The student has withdrawn from their Part 1 course

Where the student's Part 2 course is a master's level course and is not considered to be part of a single course in line with the above criteria, it is not designated under the Regulations and therefore the student will not be entitled to support under those Regulations for their Part 2 course. The student may be entitled to a Postgraduate Loan for Master's Degrees providing the course meets the designation criteria within the Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) Regulations 2016 (as amended) and the student meets the eligibility requirements in the same regulations. Please refer to the AY 26/27 'Postgraduate Loans for Master's Degrees' guidance for further information.

Note, that the course content of the Part 2 programme and tuition fee levels charged (i.e. are fees charged in line with standard undergraduate level fee caps) have no bearing on the determination of whether a student has undertaken Parts 1 and Parts 2 as a single course for the purposes of designation under the Regulations.

### **5.10 Dance and Drama Award (DaDA)**

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DaDAs are funded by the DfE. Further information on the DaDA scheme can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/dance-drama-awards>

### **5.11 Dance and Drama schools offering HE and FE provision**

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Where the school offers HE and FE provision, students may undertake a course leading to a degree qualification at the same time that they are pursuing their Trinity College Level 5 or 6 diploma qualification. Students who are offered DaDA funding at an institution that offers HE degree courses are advised in their DaDA funding letter that they must choose either to take up their DaDA funding or to apply for HE support under the Regulations instead, they cannot take up DaDA funding and receive HE student support under the Regulations at the same time.

Some students may start their courses claiming HE student support and then subsequently transfer to DaDA funding. Such students will cease to be eligible for HE student support as soon as they transfer to DaDA funding.

It follows therefore, that if SFE receives an application for HE student support from a student for a course which leads to an HE qualification in dance, acting or musical theatre, and the applicant states that they have been awarded DaDA funding, SFE should refuse the application for student support. Also, if a student already in receipt of HE student support reports that they have transferred to DaDA funding, SFE should withdraw the HE support from the date on which the transfer took place.

The Dance and Drama schools who are currently offering HE and FE provision are:

- Arts Ed, London
- Bird College - Dance and Drama Theatre Performance
- Elmhurst Ballet School
- English National Ballet School
- The Hammond School
- Italia Conti Arts Centre
- KS Dance
- Laine Theatre Arts
- Liverpool Theatre School
- Northern Ballet School
- The Oxford School of Drama
- Performers College
- SLP College Leeds
- Stella Mann College
- Tring Park School

For enquiries on DaDA courses please contact DfE.

## **6 Guidance for determining mode of study**

### **6.1 Part-time courses**

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For guidance on PT courses, please refer to the separate AY 26/27 'Support for Part-Time Students' guidance.

### **6.2 Full-time courses**

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SFE will need to be satisfied that the student's course is either FT, a sandwich course or a FT ITT course, before determining whether the student is eligible for FT support. Although 'full-time' is not defined in the Regulations, the following guidance may be used to determine whether a course is FT.

FT courses normally require students to attend the institution or elsewhere for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year. Attendance is not defined in the Regulations, however, this can include study, lectures, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work-placement that does not meet the criteria to be sandwich year out, which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week (i.e. 504 hours over the duration of the year).

For courses of two years or more, FT students are normally required to attend the institution, or elsewhere, for periods of a minimum of eight weeks in the final year.

The requirement to be in attendance for a minimum of eight weeks in a final year refers to full years of study only. This does not apply where a student is repeating study either for full years or final years of courses. If a student is attending for a part-year repeat (full or final), they will qualify for prorated living costs support – please refer to the AY 26/27 ‘Change of Circumstances’ guidance for more information.

FT ITT courses that do not lead to a first degree (PGCE and equivalent courses) are courses of at least one academic year, but no more than two academic years in length, where the periods of study in each academic year are at least 300 hours. A week of study can be considered as 30 hours.

Study at premises outside the institution (for example at another institution) should be taken into account in determining whether it is a FT course. Such study outside the institution need not necessarily be at another HE provider or, indeed, at an institution in the UK. Therefore, a student who is required to attend the institution providing the course for 16 weeks in the academic year, and to attend another institution for a further eight weeks, would be considered to have been required by the institution to attend the course for 24 weeks.

When determining whether the course is FT, consideration is given to the number of weeks that a student would normally be required to undertake, rather than those which are undertaken by individuals.

It is anticipated that some Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) approved by IfATE may not meet the minimum FT duration provisions described here within the course of an academic year. FT HTQ courses, attracting HE student finance support, will require to be a minimum of one-year in duration – i.e. 504 hours of periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work-placement that does not meet the criteria to be a sandwich year out. Any course or qualification that receives HTQ approval from IfATE but does not meet the requirement under regulation 5(1)(c) of the Regulations of being a minimum of one-year in duration will not satisfy the necessary designation criteria to attract HE student finance and may instead qualify for ALL, where eligible. See Annex E for further information on HTQ designation requirements.

### **6.3 Sandwich courses (regulation 5(1)(b)(ii))**

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Regulation 5(1)(b)(ii) provides that a sandwich course can be designated for support under the Regulations, and regulation 2(10) defines a sandwich course. A course is a sandwich course if it is not a course for the initial training of teachers, if it consists of alternate periods of FT study in an institution and periods of work experience, and, taking the course as a whole, if the student attends the periods of study for an average of not less than 18 weeks in each year.

Regulation 2(10)(b) provides that, for the purposes of calculating the student's attendance, the course shall be treated as beginning with the first period of FT study and ending with the last such period.

Regulation 2(10)(c) provides that where periods of FT study and work experience alternate within any week of the course, the days of FT study shall be aggregated with each other and with any weeks of FT study in determining the number of weeks of FT study in each year.

Only full days of FT study (not part days) should be counted. Additionally, when counting days of study to make up a number of weeks of study, the divisor should be 5 rather than 7 (please see the example below).

As an example, a course that required 3 days FT study and 2 days of work experience per week, over a 30-week academic year, would give an aggregate of 18 weeks study (3 days x 30 weeks = 90 days, which, divided by 5, gives 18 weeks). If that were the pattern in each academic year of the course, so that the average of (not less than) 18 weeks FT study in a year was maintained throughout, this course would attract support as a sandwich course.

Conversely, a course would not attract support as a sandwich course if it required 2 days study and 3 days of work experience per week over 30 weeks, in each academic year of the course, because the number of days of FT study would add up to less than 18 weeks in each year (and thus less than 18 weeks a year on average). It could however attract part-time support if it met the definition of a part-time course in regulation 139.

Another possible example is of a two-year sandwich course that required:

- Year 1 - 4 days of study and 1 day of work experience each week for 30 weeks
- Year 2 - 2 days of study and 3 days of work experience each week for 30 weeks

There would be an aggregate of 24 weeks of study in Year 1 and 12 weeks of study in Year 2, averaging 18 weeks a year. The course would attract support as a sandwich course.

Where students will be undertaking weeks with alternate periods of FT study in an institution and periods of work experience, the term dates from the HE provider course database provided by the SLC will not provide sufficient information for SFE to determine the appropriate level of support (including extra weeks of support where appropriate). SFE will need to refer to the information provided by students in their applications, and they may also need to contact HE provider to ascertain attendance patterns.

There are specific provisions relating to the support available for current system students on sandwich placements. The fee amounts are determined under regulation 23(2) and (3) which prescribe that the amounts are the same as other FT qualifications.

Provisions relating to the support available for current system students on sandwich placements are in the appropriate parts of regulations 23(2) and (3) (amount of the fee loan), regulation 38(5) (general qualifying conditions for grants for living and other costs), and regulation 80(1)(b) (maximum amounts of loans for living costs).

Further guidance on support available for sandwich placements is in the AY 26/27 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance, which explains how the principle of aggregating days of study also applies to determining levels of support.

The intention of the definitions of FT and sandwich courses is to distinguish those courses which consist entirely of FT study from courses which involve work experience. Courses involving periods of study and of work experience, even if the work experience placements are very short and amount to only weeks or parts of weeks (as they often do in the case of FT HNC courses), should be treated as sandwich courses. Whether they are designated for student support will depend, among other things, on whether they meet the definition at regulation 2(10). Regulation 2(10) specifies that the periods of experience must form part of the course and that they must be associated with FT study at an institution.

'Periods of work experience' are defined in regulation 2(1) and may include periods during which modern language students spend living and working in a country whose language they are studying on their course.

#### **6.4 Learning in the workplace**

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For the purposes of determining whether a course is a FT course, the period for which the student is required to undertake the course can include learning in the workplace, where that learning forms a compulsory part of the course. Such learning is frequently a feature of foundation degree courses, but it may also occur in other courses, e.g. teaching practice for teacher training courses, practical placements on veterinary degrees, clinical placements on healthcare courses.

Learning in the workplace is a structured academic programme, controlled by HE providers, and delivered in the workplace by academic staff of the institution, or staff of the employer, or both.

Unlike work experience, which is one element of a course, learning in the workplace an integral part of an individual's learning programme and must be subject to the same level of academic supervision and rigour as any other form of assessed learning. It includes:

- the imparting of relevant knowledge and skills to students,
- opportunities for students to discuss knowledge and skills with their tutors, and

- assessment of students' acquisition of knowledge and skills by the institution's academic staff, or jointly with an employer.

Learning in the workplace, in DfE's view, may be a substitute for learning that would normally take place within an institution.

The actual machinery (whether lectures, tutorials, examinations or other means) is not crucial in identifying learning in the workplace, so long as knowledge and skills can be shown to be effectively imparted and assessed.

## **6.5 Distance learning courses**

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Distance learning, sometimes called flexible or open learning, is a programme of study that allows students to study at home. Distance learning programmes have become increasingly popular over the last few years as the internet has developed into a reliable channel of tuition.

The Regulations define a distance learning course as follows:

“distance learning course” means a course on which a student undertaking the course is not required to be in attendance by the institution providing the course, where “required to be in attendance” is not satisfied by a requirement imposed by the institution to attend any institution—

- (a) for the purposes of registration or enrolment or any examination,
- (b) on a weekend or during any vacation, or
- (c) on an occasional basis during the week

Most colleges and universities offer some distance learning programmes now, from language courses to full undergraduate degrees, postgraduate programmes and Masters of Business Administration (MBAs). Some even offer courses or programmes entirely over the Internet, often called e-courses or online courses. They provide a mode of delivery for students who do not attend traditional on-campus courses, although there may be some short periods of attendance.

For the purposes of this guidance, we are only concerned with undergraduate study.

Distance learning courses can be classed as FT or PT. FT distance learning courses at institutions registered with the OfS are automatically designated; PT distance learning courses at institutions registered with the OfS can be automatically designated provided they meet the other criteria for PT courses in regulation 139.

A distance learning course may be deemed FT by the HE provider because of the number of hours of study but only courses which meet all of the criteria below would in DfE's view be a FT course for the purposes of regulation 5(1) of the Regulations.

Students are normally required to undertake the course for a minimum of 24 weeks in each academic year, and for courses of two years or more, for a minimum of 8 weeks in the final

year. A whole year FT fee should be chargeable by the institution for the current year of the programme of study (exceptions to this will be made for students who are repeating part of a year).

It is understood that FT means that students are required to undertake their course on most days of the week and for most weeks of the year.

For student support purposes, overseas embassies, military bases or overseas missions are not considered as UK territory and regulation 144 confirms that all distance learning students, except those students outlined below, must be undertaking the course in England in order to receive student support.

Regulation 144(3) states that an eligible PT student qualifies for a fee loan under paragraph (1) if the Secretary of State considers that:

- the student is attending the course in the UK, or
- where the course is a PT distance learning course, the student is undertaking the course in England on the first day of the first academic year.

Please note that from AY 17/18 the requirement to be undertaking a distance learning course in England on the first day of the first academic year has been waived for currently serving armed forces personnel and their family members who are overseas as a result of their posting, whether they were starting or continuing their course in AY 17/18. From AY 18/19, this waiver was extended to include armed forces personnel who are living in another UK domicile as a result of their posting. The following family members may be eligible students under the amendment to the Regulations:

- the spouse or civil partner living with a member of the UK Armed Forces serving overseas or within another country in the UK,
- the child, stepchild or adoptive child of a member of the UK Armed Forces serving overseas or within another country in the UK who is also living with that member of the UK Armed Forces serving overseas or within another country in the UK (there is no requirement on the child's age or dependency),

or

- the dependent parent living with either:
  - a child who is a member of the UK Armed Forces serving overseas or within another country in the UK, or
  - the child's spouse or civil partner who is a member of the UK Armed Forces serving overseas or within another country in the UK.

## **6.6 Distance learning courses and student support**

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FT distance learners are potentially eligible for tuition fee loans at rates equivalent to FT students who are in attendance on their course and are also potentially eligible for FT DSA. These students are not eligible for any maintenance support (including targeted grants) as they are not in attendance.

## **6.7 The distance learning disability exception**

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The exception to this rule is disabled students who are undertaking in the United Kingdom either a FT course that normally requires attendance by distance learning or a FT distance learning course, because they are unable to attend a course for a reason which relates to their disability. Such students are treated as if they were in attendance and are eligible to apply for part and FT maintenance support (including targeted grants). Disabled students who are undertaking FT distance learning courses in the UK but are not treated as being in attendance on their course by virtue of this exception are potentially eligible for FT DSA only.

## **6.8 Mixed mode courses**

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In order to be a designated course, the course structure cannot include a mixture of study modes, for example, a three-year course where years one and two are PT and the final year is FT. Any courses with a structure like this cannot be designated for support under the Regulations. There are, however, provisions in the Regulations that allow students studying on designated fixed mode courses some flexibility in their studying arrangements.

## **7 Standard entitlement to fee support**

The personal eligibility requirements covered earlier in this guidance (regulation 4) apply to support for fees and support for living costs. Additional eligibility requirements are described in this section for fee loans for current system students (regulation 19 covers the general criteria that determine the availability of fee support for current system students).

The term 'fees', for this purpose, has the meaning given in section 85(2) of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. Section 85(2) of that act provides that fees mean fees in respect of, or otherwise in connection with, undertaking the course including admission, registration, tuition and graduation fees other than:

- fees payable for board or lodging,
- fees payable for field trips (including any tuition element of such fees),
- fees payable for attending any graduation or other ceremony, and
- such other fees as are prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State

An eligible student who started their course on or after 1 September 2006 may be eligible to apply for a tuition fee loan in accordance with the regulations explained in this section. Eligible students (with the exception of students eligible under fee-only regulatory categories, and those counting time in the overseas territories as part of the residence requirement) who qualify for fee support are generally eligible to apply for a loan for living costs, long courses loan (or the extra weeks element of loan for living costs), DSA, GFDs, grant for travel and, where they started a course before AY 16/17, either the maintenance grant or the special support grant. Whilst most students will qualify for support, there are exceptions to these principles (see Section 5.1 below).

A student will not qualify for fee support in an academic year which is a bursary year (defined in regulation 2(1)) or for an ERASMUS+, or Turing Scheme year provided by an institution in Northern Ireland. In addition, students are not eligible for grants for living costs for any academic year which is a bursary year (as defined in regulation 2(1)).

2012 cohort students: where a student is ruled out of tuition fee support either due to their previous study (for more information see years of previous study below), or because they already hold an equivalent or higher level qualification from a UK or overseas institution, they will not qualify for the Maintenance Grant (regulation 56(3)) or Special Support Grant (regulation 60(3)).

### **7.1 Previous study**

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Under regulation 20, eligible students may have tuition fee support for the standard length of their HE course plus an additional year if needed. This standard entitlement will, with exceptions, be reduced if the student has studied on a previous HE course.

For example, an applicant who is due to commence study in the AY 26/27 academic year and has studied on a previous FT course in the UK or overseas, regardless of whether the student received authority funding or not, will have their standard entitlement reduced by the number of years of previous study. This includes study on compressed degree, distance learning or ITT courses.

Previous part-time (PT) study that did not lead to a qualification and self-funded study at a private institution which did not lead to a qualification are not taken into account for previous study purposes.

Where previous study was undertaken but no qualification attained, regulation 21 should always be used to assess further entitlement for fee support and whether they qualify for the Maintenance Grant / Special Support Grant, where applicable.

The previous study rules primarily apply to fee loans, with eligibility to Maintenance Grant/Special Support Grant (where applicable) being determined by an entitlement to fee loans. For 2016 cohort students, due to the removal of grants, previous study only applies to fee loans.

The rules do not apply to supplementary grants, such as DSA or CCG.

## 7.2 Definition of a previous course

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Regulation 12 sets out what is a previous course for the purposes of Part 4 of the Regulations (tuition fee support). Generally, a course is a 'previous course' if:

- a) where the current course began before 1 September 2009, and paragraph (d) does not apply, any full-time higher education course, a course for the initial training of teachers or a course designated under regulation 5(10), which the student attended or, in the case of an intensive course or a full-time distance learning course, undertook before the current course and which meets any of the conditions below:
  - the course was provided by an institution which was a registered provider in England or by a publicly funded institution in the United Kingdom for some or all of the academic years during which the student attended or undertook the course
  - the course was provided by an accredited institution which was an unregistered provider for some or all of the academic years during which the student attended or undertook the course
  - a scholarship, exhibition, bursary, grant, allowance or statutory award of any description which was paid in respect of the student's attending or, in the case of an intensive course or a distance learning course, undertaking the course in respect of tuition fees was from public funds or funds attributable to public funds.
- b) where the current course begins on or after 1 September 2009, and paragraph (d) does not apply, a FT or part-time higher education course, part-time course for the initial training of teachers or a specifically designated course, which the student attended or, in the case of an intensive course or a distance learning course, undertook before the current course, and where the student achieved a qualification,
- c) where the current course begins on or after 1 September 2009, and paragraph (d) does not apply, a FT higher education course, part-time course for the initial training of teachers or a specifically designated course which the student attended, or in the case of an intensive course or a full-time distance learning course, undertook before the current course where the student studied but did not achieve a qualification and which meets any of the conditions below:
  - the course was provided at a registered provider or a publicly funded institution whether or not in the United Kingdom or a regulated institution for some or all of the academic years during which the student attended or undertook the course,
  - the course was provided by an accredited institution which was an unregistered provider for some or all of the academic years during which the student attended or undertook the course,

- any scholarship, exhibition, bursary, grant, allowance or statutory award which was paid in respect of the student's attending or, in the case of an intensive course or a full-time distance learning course, undertaking the course to defray fees was from public funds or funds attributable to public funds.
- d) where the current course begins on or after 1 September 2009, and the student's status as an eligible student has been transferred to the current course from a course which began before the 1 September 2009, a FT, higher education course, part-time course for the initial training of teachers or a specifically designated course, which the student attended or, in the case of an intensive course or a full-time distance learning course, undertook before the current course and which meets any of the conditions below:
- the course was provided by an institution which was a registered provider in England or by a publicly funded institution in the United Kingdom for some or all of the academic years during which the student attended or undertook the course,
  - the course was provided by an accredited institution which was an unregistered provider for some or all of the academic years during which the student attended or undertook the course,
  - a scholarship, exhibition, bursary, grant, allowance or statutory award of any description which was paid in respect of the student's attending or, in the case of an intensive course or a distance learning course, undertaking the course in respect of tuition fees was from public funds or funds attributable to public funds.

### **7.3 Years of previous study**

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Once it has been determined that the student has been on a previous course, paragraphs 7 to 12 of regulation 12 set out which years of that previous course count as previous study for the purposes of regulations 21 and 29.

The general rules are:

- all academic years that the student completed on the previous course are included, and
- an academic year that the student started but did not complete or began part way through the year is treated as one academic year (regulation 12(8)(b)).

Despite these general rules:

- where the student repeated a year of the previous course for compelling personal reasons, the repeat year is not to be treated as a year spent on a previous course (regulation 12(10)),

- where the student qualified for fee support for an academic year of the previous course (the ‘relevant year’) because they failed to complete a previous course for compelling personal reasons, the relevant year is not to be treated as a year spent on a previous course (regulation 12(10)),
- where the student transfers from one course (first course) to another before completing the academic year from which they are transferring, the time spent on the first course during that academic year is not counted as a year spent on a previous course (regulation 12(11)), and
- where the student undertook a previous course but was not in attendance because of a reason relating to their disability, the relevant year is only to be treated as a year spent on the previous course if it began on or after 1 September 2006 (regulation 12(12)).

#### **7.4 Exception for ITT courses**

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Students who intend to take a FT course of ITT of no more than two years in duration (or a PT course, the duration of which is not more than four years) are exempt from the previous study rules for fee support and (2012 cohort only) Maintenance Grant / Special Support Grant unless they are already qualified teachers.

Qualified teachers are those who are assessed as meeting the DfE’s Teachers’ Standards and issued with a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) certificate by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and DfE. Teachers in Further Education colleges who have achieved Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status but who have not been issued with a QTS certificate may be eligible for fee support and, for 2012 cohort only, Maintenance Grant/ Special Support Grant for a further ITT course to teach in the schools sector. Students holding QTLS who wish to take a further ITT course in the Further Education Sector with content equivalent to a Diploma in Education and Training, a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education are not exempt from previous study rules (or ELQ rules) and therefore do not qualify for fee support for a second FE ITT course.

#### **7.5 Compelling personal reasons (CPR) – current system students**

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Regulations 19(10) and 30(1) make provision for a year of fee support, in addition to the standard entitlement to be allocated, in certain circumstances where students need to repeat a year of the current course for compelling personal reasons. Academic performance alone would not normally be deemed a compelling personal reason, but SFE should consider all cases carefully.

A student cannot be allocated an additional year for compelling personal reasons unless the year to be repeated was a qualifying year of study (as defined in regulation 2) and the year of repeat study is not a bursary or Erasmus+, Turing Scheme or Taith year.

Additionally, regulation 19(8) provides that where a current system student to whom regulation 21 applies did not complete the most recent previous course because of compelling personal reasons, fee support is available in respect of the first year that the

student takes of the current course that is not a bursary or Erasmus+, Turing Scheme or Taith year. Provided that it was the most recent course that the student withdrew from for compelling personal reasons, it does not matter how long ago they withdrew from that course.

The exclusion of the Erasmus+, Turing Scheme or Taith year in both cases above is only applicable where the Erasmus+, Turing Scheme or Taith year was undertaken as part of a course provided by (i) an institution in England or Wales that began before 1 September 2012 or (ii) by an institution in Northern Ireland or Scotland.

The student will need to apply for fee support for any year for which they wish to claim support due to compelling personal reasons. Only one such year can be awarded at a time.

Where a student has failed a year for compelling personal reasons, an additional year will need to be added to the current course and the CPR year taken as the repeat year. In these circumstances, if the student fails the repeat year and SFE determines that the CPR criteria have been met, a further CPR year may be awarded.

However, if CPR does not apply, SFE will need to assess whether the student has sufficient standard entitlement remaining to complete the course with fee support for all remaining years of the course (including the possibility of allocating fee support to a year of repeat study where the year is repeated for reasons other than CPR), or whether self-funding is required for some of them.

For information on CPR and previous study calculations see [Section 7.3](#)

### **Evidence of compelling personal reasons**

As far as is reasonably practicable, evidence should be obtained from the student or elsewhere to support a claim that the withdrawal or repeat was for compelling personal reasons or the need to repeat a year is for compelling personal reasons.

For instance, the student might be able to provide medical evidence from their General Practitioner or ask a HE provider's student support advisory service to attest to a personal or family crisis. Other possible sources might include social services or the clergy (however DfE would not reimburse any costs incurred by the student in obtaining such evidence.) This guidance is not exhaustive and SFE should look at all cases carefully and on their individual merits.

## **7.6 Self-funded years**

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When allocating fee support from the standard entitlement to the remaining standard academic years of the course, it may be the case that there is insufficient standard entitlement to allocate fee support to all of those years. The student will need to self-fund the tuition fees in the years to which support has not been allocated.

The standard entitlement cannot be allocated to non-standard academic years of the course such as NHS bursary years on medicine and dentistry courses. As a result, a student who is required to repeat a year of the course for a non-compelling personal reason may still be eligible for fee support for that academic year.

### **7.7 Transferring students**

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Regulation 7 sets out the circumstances in which students may have their status as an eligible student transferred to another course.

SFE is required to transfer the student's status where:

- they receive a request from the eligible student to do so,
- they are satisfied that one or more of the grounds for transfer in regulation 7(2) applies, and
- the period of eligibility has not terminated.

The grounds for transfer are:

- on the recommendation of the academic authority the eligible student ceases one course and starts to attend or undertake another designated course,
- The eligible student starts to attend or undertake a designated course,
- after commencing a course for the Certificate of Education the eligible student is, on or before completing that course, admitted to a designated course leading to a BEd (including a course leading to the BEd (honours)), whether or not the course is at the same institution,
- having commenced a course leading to a non-honours BEd, the eligible student is, on or before completion of the course, admitted to a designated honours BEd course, whether or not the course is at the same institution, or
- having commenced a course for a first degree (other than an honours degree) the eligible student is, before the completion of that course, admitted to a designated course leading to an honours degree in the same subject(s) at the same institution.

Receiving institutions should notify course details to SFE so that SFE can check, and if necessary, reassess support. The notification will be taken as the receiving institution's consent to the transfer.

#### **Transferring and continuing eligibility for students eligible by virtue of regulation 4(2)(b)**

A student's eligibility can be transferred to a new course in AY 26/27 or later according to current transfer rules unless the following applies:

- the student started a course in AY 20/21 or earlier, and

- the student was eligible by virtue of regulation 4(2)(b), i.e. under one of the following regulatory paragraphs in AY 20/21 or earlier: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10A, 11 or 12,

and

- the student has already transferred their eligibility to a new course on or after 1 August 2021 from the course they were undertaking prior to AY 21/22.

This means that where a student started their course in AY 20/21 or earlier, is eligible under one of the above paragraphs, transfers on or after 1 August 2021 and then transfers for a second time, they must have their residency eligibility assessed at the point of the second transfer as per a new student starting a course in AY 21/22 or later.

Paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10A, 11 and 12 will no longer be available to students in this scenario, therefore they would need to meet the residency requirements of new students in AY 21/22 or later, which includes having protected rights under the Withdrawal Agreements (generally evidenced by a status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)) where relevant to the category they are being assessed under.

For example:

- **Lucas** is a French national who arrived in the UK in January 2021. Lucas started an undergraduate degree course in England in April 2021 (AY 20/21). Lucas is not eligible for a status under the EUSS.

Lucas is eligible for fee support in AY 20/21 as they are an EU national undertaking a course in England and who has been ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course (under paragraph 9 of the Regulations).

In September 2022, Lucas transfers to a new course. As they are transferring status for the first time on or after 1 August 2021, they remain eligible for fee support for his new course under his original residence category.

In September 2026, Lucas transfers to a different course. In order to remain eligible for student funding Lucas must prove that they are eligible under a residence category that is available to new students at the point of his latest transfer.

Lucas is not eligible for student funding from the date of the second transfer as they do not have a status under the EUSS (nor, in this case, any other appropriate status) and are not therefore eligible under paragraph 9A of the Regulations; nor do they meet the requirements of any other residence categories in the Regulations.

### **Current system students**

Where a student transfers courses, the standard entitlement to fee support applies, i.e. course length plus an additional year but less any years spent on previous courses

(regulation 21). It is the length of the course that the student is transferring to which should be taken into account when determining the student's standard entitlement to fee support in respect of the second course.

Regulation 7(4) provides the Secretary of State discretion to reassess the amount of fee and, where applicable, living costs support available for a second course after a student transfers from one designated (FT) course to another. Regulation 2(1) defines 'support' as "financial support by way of grant or loan made by the Secretary of State pursuant to Regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 22 of the 1998 Act".

#### **Transfer Example 1:**

**Erin** started a four-year degree course in 2024 (course A). Having completed the second year of the four-year course Erin transfers into year one of a five-year degree course (course B). Regulation 21 is applied using the following  $OD = 5$  and  $PC = 2$  and a standard fee entitlement of four years is calculated  $((5 + 1) - 2 = 4)$ . As Erin's entitlement to fees is less than the course duration, they will need to self-fund the first year of course B but should then receive support to complete the remainder of the course.

#### **Transfer Example 2:**

**Owen** started a three-year degree course in September 2025 (course A). Having passed the first year, Owen decides to transfer onto a four-year course in September 2024 (course B). Regulation 21 is applied using the following  $OD = 4$  and  $PC = 1$  and a standard fee entitlement of four years is calculated  $((4 + 1) - 1 = 4)$ . As the ordinary duration of course B is four years, Owen has enough entitlement to fees for the entire course, subject to not requiring a repeat year in a future academic year.

#### **Transfer Example 3:**

**Zayn** enrolled on a four-year course in September 2024 (course A) then having completed two years of course A, Zayn transfers in September 2026 to the 2nd year of a three-year course (course B). Regulation 21 is applied using the following  $OD = 3$  and  $PC = 2$  and a standard fee entitlement of two years is calculated  $((3 + 1) - 2 = 2)$ . As the ordinary duration of course B is three years and Zayn is entering the second year, the student has enough entitlement to fees for remainder of course B, subject to not requiring a repeat year in a future academic year.

### **7.8 Regulation 20 - Students with no previous study**

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Students who are starting an eligible HE course with no years of study on previous courses (see Section [7.2](#) for details of what is a previous course) will have their entitlement to fee support calculated under regulation 20. The calculation is as follows:

**OD + 1**

Where

**OD** is the number of academic years that make up the ordinary duration of the course

For example, a student who enrolls on a three-year Honours degree will have an entitlement to fee support of 4 years as in this case  $OD = 3$  ( $3 + 1 = 4$ ).

### **7.9 Regulation 21 - Students with previous study**

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Students who are starting an eligible HE course and have studied on previous courses (see Section 7.2 for details of what is a previous course) and do not fall within regulation 22 (Section 7.10 below) will have their entitlement to fee support calculated under regulation 21. For the purpose of this regulation, previous courses include students who have transferred from a previous course starting after 1 September 2006. The calculation is as follows:

#### **(OD + 1) - PC**

Where

**OD** is the number of academic years that make up the ordinary duration of the course

**PC** is the number of years that the student has spent on a previous course(s)

For example, a student with two years of previous study starting a three-year honours degree will have an entitlement to fee support of two years, as in this case  $OD = 3$  and  $PC = 2$ :  $(3 + 1) - 2 = 2$ .

### **7.10 Regulation 22 - Students with lower-level qualifications topping up to a degree**

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Under regulation 22, if a student holds a lower-level HE qualification such as an HNC, HND, Foundation Degree or an approved HTQ they are able to access additional support to 'top up' their qualification to a degree.

The mode, funding method and study location of the lower-level qualification studied has no impact on the student's ability to 'top up' their qualification. However, the previous study will be taken into account when carrying out the calculation for entitlement to fee support. This applies whether or not the current course is being undertaken immediately after the lower level HE qualification (disregarding any intervening vacation).

Please note that all preliminary courses previously undertaken should be taken into account when calculating further entitlement to fee support.

Regulation 22(2) and 22(5) sets out the calculation to establish entitlement to fee support for students who commenced their current course after 1 September 2009. The calculation is as follows:

#### **(D+X) – PrC**

Where

**(D)** is the greater of 3 or the number of academic years that make up the ordinary duration of the current course

**(X)** is 1 where the ordinary duration of the preliminary courses (in total) was less than 3 years

Or

**(X)** is the ordinary duration – 1 where the ordinary duration of the preliminary courses (in total) was 3 years or more

**(PrC)** is the number of academic years that the student spent on any preliminary course (including part years of study) excluding any years of repeat study for compelling personal reasons

For example, a student has studied for 1 year on an HNC, 2 years on an HND and now wishes to study on a 3-year degree course from year 1. The current course starts on or after 1 September 2009, therefore their entitlement is calculated in accordance with regulation 22(5).

In this case  $D = 3$ ,  $X = 2$ ,  $PrC = 3$ , making the entitlement to further fee support two years ( $3 + 2 - 3 = 2$ ).

As the student's current course is 3 years in duration, and the student only has two years of fee entitlement available they will have to self-fund their fees in the first year. Student support will be available for tuition fee loans from year 2. The student will be entitled to maintenance loan and supplementary grants for the full duration of the course.

Regulation 22(1) and 22(4) sets out the calculation to establish entitlement to fee support for students who commenced their current course before 1 September 2009. This calculation is the same as above, except (X) is 1 where the ordinary duration of the preliminary courses (in total) was less than three years and two where the ordinary duration of the preliminary courses (in total) was three years.

Please see the exit awards Section ([7.15](#)) for further explanation on when regulation 21 and 22 are used. In all other circumstances entitlement should be calculated in accordance with regulation 21.

### **7.11 ELQs and previous study**

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It is the intention that funding should be focused on those students studying in higher education for the first time.

Therefore, current system students who commenced their current course on or after 1 September 2009 will generally not be eligible for fee support for a further course if that course is equivalent or lower in level than their previous course (taken in the UK or overseas).

The Regulations state that a person who studies for a qualification which is deemed to be equivalent to or lower than a qualification they already hold are not entitled to financial support (for example, tuition fee loans or maintenance grants and loans). This rule applies whether their previous qualification was:

- studied in the UK or elsewhere,
- self-funded or publicly-funded,
- studied on a FT, FT distance learning, compressed or PT basis.

Under regulation 2(5), the Secretary of State may determine that a qualification is an equivalent or lower qualification if—

- (a) an eligible student holds a higher education qualification from any institution whether or not in the United Kingdom, and
- (b) the qualification referred to in sub-paragraph (a) is an honours degree from an institution in the United Kingdom or is of an academic level which, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, is equivalent to or higher than a qualification to which the current course leads.

Assessors should take into account a number of factors when assessing the level of a qualification. This may include the title and final award, how the final award allows for progression to postgraduate qualifications and the entry requirements for the qualification (noting that acceptance of relevant experience in place of academic qualifications will not necessarily result in the qualification being deemed to be of a lower level). They may also seek advice from the HE institution or awarding body.

Furthermore, if the HE qualification which someone already holds is an honours degree, postgraduate diploma, master's degree or doctoral degree from a UK HE provider then consideration does not need to be given to the academic level of the new course: the new course is automatically considered to lead to an equivalent or lower qualification.

If the student's new course leads to an equivalent or lower qualification, support will only be available where the new course is an exceptions course; see Sections 7.16, 7.17 and 7.18 below.

The following table sets out the academic levels as considered for the Regulations, however the list is not exhaustive.

E	Master's Master of Business Administration (MBA) PGCE
D	Honours Degree Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Integrated Master's Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary courses Scottish MAs Oxford and Cambridge Mas
C	Ordinary Degree
B	HNDs Dip HE Foundation Degrees Level 5 HTQ
A	HNCs Cert HE Level 4 HTQ

### 7.12 Integrated Master's

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For the purpose of providing student support, an Integrated Master's is an undergraduate first degree of the same level as an Honours degree and is to be treated in the same way when assessing eligibility for student support.

Therefore, students who hold an Honours degree and subsequently undertake an integrated Master's are not entitled to any further support.

### 7.13 Ordinary degree to Honours degree

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Students who hold an ordinary degree can receive further funding to top-up to Honours degree level. Fee entitlement for these students should be calculated in accordance with regulation 21 (for more information please see Section 7.15.1 below).

There may be certain circumstances where a student wishes to enrol on a standalone, one-year 'top-up' course. Fee support should be calculated in accordance with regulation 21. The top-up course should be treated as a three-year course to allow these students to receive support to top-up to an Honours degree.

### 7.14 Exit awards

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Where a student withdraws from their course after successfully completing enough credit for their HE provider to award them an exit qualification, the student holds previous study and a lower-level qualification.

When the student returns to study, their remaining entitlement to tuition loan is calculated in accordance with either regulation 21 or 22, dependent on the course that was initially started.

Students who qualify for a tuition loan may qualify for Maintenance Grant or Special Support Grant where applicable in line with regulation 56.

### **Student started on a degree course**

Students who start a degree (with or without Honours) and do not complete that course but are awarded a lower-level HE qualification or an exit award will be assessed under regulation 21 (previous study) if they begin a new HE course which does not lead to an ELQ.

In these cases, the student has taken in whole or in part a FT first degree, therefore regulation 22 does not apply (regulation 22(2)(c)).

There is a possibility for CPR to be awarded for failing to complete the original course.

### **Student started on a lower-level course**

Students who start a qualification mentioned in paragraphs 2, 3, 4 or 12 of Schedule 2, or a foundation degree, and do not complete the course but are awarded a lower-level exit qualification will have any further entitlement calculated in line with regulation 22(2) and 22(5). Please see [Annex D](#) for examples.

## **7.15 Medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, architecture, social work, and Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses as a second degree**

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The Regulations make an exception for students taking courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, architecture, social work and undergraduate ITT. Students will continue to be eligible for loans for living costs, even if they already hold an equivalent or higher-level qualification.

Please note that medicine, dentistry and veterinary science courses may be listed as level 7 on the Quality Assurance Agency's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Framework does not form part of the Regulations and for the purpose of providing student support such qualifications should be treated as equivalent to an Honours degree.

Therefore, students who already hold an Honours degree or an equivalent qualification and are studying these courses as a second undergraduate degree will not be eligible for any further fee support or maintenance grant.

Students studying undergraduate medical and dental programmes who are in their fifth and sixth years of study are eligible for NHS bursaries and therefore qualify for a reduced rate loan for living costs only from SFE.

Graduates entering a graduate entry accelerated medical and dental programme can access some tuition fee loan in addition to maintenance loan. For more information on the support available for these students, please see the AY 26/27 'NHS' guidance.

### **7.16 Nursing, midwifery and Allied Health Professions (AHP) as a second degree**

Students who commenced a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or AHP course prior to 1 August 2017 and who are eligible for a means-tested NHS bursary will continue to be eligible for a reduced rate loan for living costs, whether or not they already hold an equivalent or higher-level qualification.

From AY 17/18, new undergraduate students starting a pre-registration course in nursing, midwifery or AHP who are not eligible to apply for a means-tested NHS bursary are eligible to apply for the full package of fee loan, and for FT courses living costs support for each year of their course as a second degree. ELQ rules will not apply to these courses subject to the criteria below being met. For ELQ rules to be discounted, the current course must lead to professional registration and the student must not be registered in the profession the course leads to, e.g. the student is not a registered midwife studying midwifery as a second degree. This exemption extends to all students studying these courses including students on employer release (NHS Secondees).

From AY 18/19, the ELQ exception was extended to include new students starting pre-registration dental therapy and dental hygiene courses and FT postgraduate pre-registration courses in nursing, midwifery or AHP on or after 1 August 2018.

For students starting FT pre-registration healthcare courses set out above, years of previous study are disregarded when calculating entitlement to support.

Please see the AY 26/27 'NHS' guidance for more information on the NHS funding arrangements.

### **7.17 ELQ and part-time study in STEM subjects as a second degree**

ELQ restrictions were removed for graduates wishing to start a second honours degree in engineering, technology and computer science on a PT basis on or after 1 August 2015.

This was extended to graduates wishing to start an honours degree in any STEM subject on a part-time basis on or after 1 August 2017.

### **7.18 Postgraduate qualifications**

Years of study at postgraduate level are not counted as years of previous study. However, if a student has a postgraduate qualification, as these courses are higher than degree level, ELQ rules will apply. These students will not qualify for further support unless studying on a course which falls within one of the specified exceptions.

**Postgraduate loans (master's courses)**

From AY 16/17 onwards, the government provides loan support for postgraduate master's courses. For more information please see the AY 26/27 'Postgraduate Loans for Master's Courses' guidance.

**Postgraduate loans (doctoral courses)**

From AY 18/19 onwards, the government provides loan support for postgraduate doctoral courses. For more information please see the AY 26/27 'Postgraduate Loans for Doctoral Courses' guidance.

**7.19 Students who attend a full-time course on a part-time basis**

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Where a student attends part of a FT course on a PT basis as a result of personal circumstances, it does not render the course itself PT. As long as the course is ordinarily completed through FT study the student should remain eligible for FT support.

A possible scenario might be a student who is unable to continue to attend FT due to pregnancy or because of some unforeseen circumstance such as ill health. The student might request to undertake a particular year of the course on a PT basis over two years and their entitlement to fee support will be determined in accordance with regulation 13(5).

Where a student agrees with their HE provider to split the content of one academic year over two or more academic years, the last of these years is considered to be a standard academic year and each preceding year is considered to be a repeat year (other than for CPR). Fee support can only be allocated to repeat years other than for CPR if the conditions in regulation 19(11) are satisfied. These conditions are that the year is a qualifying year of study, is not a bursary year and that the student has not exhausted their standard entitlement. For example:

- Jeremy is undertaking a three-year course which began in AY 25/26. Having successfully completed year 1, for which they received support, Jeremy is unable to attend year 2 on a FT basis. Jeremy agrees with the HE provider that they may complete year 2 of the course over the next two years. The second half of year 2, which is due to be completed in AY 27/28, is treated as a standard academic year. Fee support is therefore allocated from the standard entitlement first to year 3. Jeremy has no previous study and therefore has an additional year of support available which is allocated to the first half of year 2, which is being undertaken in AY 26/27 and is treated, under regulation 13(5), as a year of repeat study for reasons other than CPR.

Whilst the above provisions provide entitlement to fee support in years being studied on a PT basis, a student must still be in attendance in each term to automatically qualify for living cost support. A student can fail the first year of their FT course and repeat only a term of

their first year for the first time. As the student is not in attendance for the full year, they will only be entitled to living cost support when they are in attendance, for example, where they only attend term 2 of the repeated year and are absent for terms 1 and 3. Living costs support is automatically payable for term 2. There is no automatic entitlement to living costs support for terms 1 and 3 although SFE, where it considers it appropriate to do so, may exercise its discretion in the student's favour (regulation 116(12)).

The amount of tuition fee support to be taken into account in the financial assessment is the amount actually charged by the institution up to the maximum FT fee for the applicable cohort.

## **8 Eligibility for support for living costs**

### **8.1 General**

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The loan for living costs is available to eligible students who do not already hold an equivalent or higher-level qualification from an institution in the UK or elsewhere. Where a student has already achieved an equivalent or higher-level qualification, they will not qualify for the loan for living costs unless one of the exceptions listed in regulation 69(2) (current system students) applies.

All students will continue to have access to supplementary grants (e.g. Disabled Students' Allowance and Childcare Grant) provided that they meet the other eligibility criteria applicable. Please see the applicable AY 26/27 guidance for these products: the AY 26/27 'Disabled Students' Allowance' guidance and the AY 26/27 'Grants for Dependants' guidance.

Eligibility requirements are set out separately for grants for living and other costs under Part 5 of the Regulations, and for loans for living costs under Part 6. Provided that students meet those eligibility requirements and the general eligibility requirements in Part 2 of the Regulations, they will be eligible for grants and loans for living costs in respect of attendance on the course.

Support for living costs covers both loans and supplementary grants for living costs. Details of the general additional eligibility criteria for these are set out below.

### **8.2 Students who are not eligible for support for living costs**

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The following current system students will not be entitled to grants for living and other costs (regulation 38):

- students who are eligible to apply for an income assessed 'healthcare bursary' regardless of whether they receive any payment of the healthcare bursary (see definition of 'healthcare bursary' in regulation 2),

- students who are studying an AHP course who are eligible to apply for payment of their tuition fees and either an income assessed Scottish Young or Independent Student Bursary from SAAS (as defined in regulation 2),
- students on PT courses of ITT of any length (these students should apply for the PT support package – see the AY 26/27 ‘Support for Part-Time Students’ guidance chapter),
- students on sandwich years where the periods of FT study are in aggregate less than 10 weeks, and the periods of work experience are not:
  - unpaid service in a hospital or in a public health service laboratory or with a Clinical Commissioning group in the UK,
  - unpaid service with a local authority in the UK acting in the exercise of its functions relating to the care of children and young persons, health or welfare or with a voluntary organisation providing facilities or carrying out activities of a like nature in the UK or a Local Authority acting in the exercise of public health functions,
  - unpaid service in prison or probation and aftercare service in the UK,
  - unpaid research in an institution in the UK or, in the case of a student attending an overseas institution as part of his course, in an overseas institution. (note that students undertaking unpaid placement years in Parliament as part of a higher education sandwich course are, for student support purposes, been treated as if they are undertaking unpaid research at an institution in the UK), or
  - unpaid service with a Special Health Authority, the National Health Service Commissioning Board, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, the Health and Social Care Information Centre, Local Health Board, Health Board, Special Health Board or Health and Social Services Board in England or Wales, or their Scottish or Northern Irish equivalents.

These groups of students will be eligible for modified amounts of loans for living costs (with the exception of part-time ITT students). Detailed guidance on these matters is provided in the AY 26/27 ‘Assessing Financial Entitlement’ guidance.

Students who fall within paragraphs 2A, 9A, 9BA, 9BB, 9C, 9D or 10ZA, or within paragraphs 3, 6A, 7A, 11A or 12A (with part of their ordinary residence spent in an overseas territory other than Gibraltar) of Schedule 1 (Part 2) of the Regulations and in no other paragraph of Part 2 will not be eligible for any support towards living costs (regulations 38(2), 69(3) and 70(4)).

### 8.3 Students aged 60 and over

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#### 2012 cohort students

In order to qualify for a loan for living costs, eligible students will need to be (or have been) below the age of 60 on the relevant date. 'Relevant date' is defined under regulation 68. In most cases it will be the first day of the first academic year of the current course. Please refer to the AY 26/27 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance for further details.

The age criterion does not apply to fee loans, dependants' grants, travel grants and DSA.

#### 2016 cohort students

A fully means-tested maintenance loan for living costs for students aged 60 on the first day of the first academic year of the course is payable up to the amount indicated in the AY 26/27 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance. This is available to these students rather than the Special Support Grant that was payable under the '2012 cohort' package. No household contribution is calculated on or applied to maintenance loans payable to those aged 60 and over.

## 9 Annexes

### 9.1 Annex A – Events

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The events are—

- the student's course becomes a designated course\*
  - (i) as it is specifically designated by the Secretary of State,
  - (ii) or because the course is provided by or on behalf of an English HE provider which becomes a registered provider,
  - (iii) or because the course becomes a Welsh designated FT course, a Scottish designated FT course or a Northern Irish designated FT course,
- the student acquires settled status in the UK,
- the student or the student's spouse, civil partner or parent is recognised as a refugee, a person granted stateless leave or becomes a person granted humanitarian protection,
- the student becomes a family member (as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 1) of an EU national where both the EU national and the family member have protected rights under the Withdrawal Agreement,
- the student becomes the family member of a person settled in the UK,
- the student becomes a family member of a UK national living in the EEA/Switzerland before the end of the transition period,
- the student becomes a family member of a United Kingdom national where that family member has resident status in Gibraltar granted by the Government of Gibraltar,
- the student becomes a family member of an EU national, where that family member has a right of residence in Gibraltar arising under the EU withdrawal agreement,

- the student acquires settled status under the EUSS or can demonstrate a right of permanent residence under the Withdrawal Agreement and the EEA-EFTA Separation Agreement,
- the student becomes a person with protected rights, or a frontier worker within the meaning of regulation 3 of the Citizens' Rights (Frontier Workers) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, who is an EEA migrant worker or an EEA self-employed person, a Swiss employed person or a Swiss self-employed person, an EEA frontier worker or an EEA frontier self-employed person, a Swiss frontier employed person or a Swiss frontier self-employed person, or the family member of any of these,
- the student is studying on a designated course beginning before 1 August 2021 and becomes a person who is an EEA migrant worker or an EEA self-employed person, a Swiss employed person or a Swiss self-employed person, an EEA frontier worker or an EEA frontier self-employed person, a Swiss frontier employed person or a Swiss frontier self-employed person, or the family member of any of these.
- the student is studying on a designated course beginning before 1 August 2021 and becomes the child of a Swiss national,
- the student becomes the child of a Swiss national who is covered by the Swiss Agreement,
- the student is studying on a designated course beginning before 1 August 2021 and becomes the child of Turkish worker,
- the student becomes a person granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence or domestic abuse,
- the student becomes the child of a person granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence or domestic abuse,
- the student becomes a person granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a bereaved partner,
- the student becomes the child of a person granted indefinite leave to enter or remain as a bereaved partner,
- the student becomes a person granted Calais leave,
- the student or the student's parent is awarded Section 67 leave,
- the student or the student's family member is awarded leave under the ARAP, ACRS, or the ARR, or
- the student or the student's family member is granted leave under one of the Ukraine Schemes.

\*Note, a course for an approved Higher Technical Qualification cannot become designated for student support during the course of an academic year.

## **9.2 Annex B – Extract from Lord Scarman's judgement**

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The following are extracts from the judgement given in the House of Lords on 16 December 1982, as reported in [1983] 2 WLR 16. At page 31 H:

"It is my view that LAs, when considering an application for a mandatory award, must ask themselves the question: has the applicant shown that he has habitually and normally resided in the United Kingdom from choice and for a settled purpose throughout the prescribed period, apart from temporary or occasional absences? If an LA asks this, the

correct, question, it is then for it, and it alone, to determine whether as a matter of fact the applicant has shown such residence. An authority is not required to determine his 'real home', whatever that means: or need any attempt be made to discover what his long-term future intention or expectations are.

The relevant period is not the future but one which has largely (or wholly) elapsed, namely that between the date of the commencement of his proposed course and the date of his arrival in the United Kingdom. The terms of an immigrant student's leave to enter and remain here may or may not throw light on the question: it will, however, be of little weight when put into the balance against the fact of continued residence over the prescribed period - unless the residence is in itself a breach of the terms of his leave, in which event his residence, being unlawful, could not be ordinary."

At page 27 B-G:

"There are two and no more than two, respects in which the mind of the 'propositus' (the student applicant) is important in determining ordinary residence. The residence must be voluntarily adopted. Enforced presence by reason of kidnapping or imprisonment, or a Robinson Crusoe existence on a desert island with no opportunity of escape, may be so overwhelming a factor as to negative the will to be where one is. And there must be a degree of settled purpose. The purpose may be one; or there may be several. It may be specific or general. All the law requires is that there is a settled purpose. This is not to say that the 'propositus' intends to stay where he is indefinitely; indeed his purpose, while settled, may be for a limited period. Education, business or profession, employment, health, family, or merely love of the place spring to mind as common reasons for a choice of regular abode. And there may well be many others. All that is necessary is that the purpose of living where one does has a sufficient degree of continuity to be properly described as settled.

The legal advantage of adopting the natural and ordinary meaning, as accepted by the House of Lords in 1982 and recognised by Lord Denning in this case, is that it results in the proof of ordinary residence, which is ultimately a question of fact, depending more upon the evidence of matters susceptible of objective proof than upon evidence as to the state of mind. Templeman L J emphasised in the Court of Appeal the need for a simple test for LAs to apply: and I agree with him. The ordinary and natural meaning of the words supplies one. For if there is to be proved a regular, habitual mode of life in a particular place, the continuity of which has persisted despite temporary absences, ordinary residence is established provided only if it is adopted voluntarily and for a settled purpose.

An attempt has been made in this case to suggest that education cannot be a settled purpose. I have no doubt it can be. A man's settled purpose will be different at different ages. Education in adolescence or early adulthood can be as settled a purpose as a profession or business in later years. There will seldom be any difficulty in determining whether residence is voluntary or for a settled purpose: nor will enquiry into such questions call for any deep examination of the mind of the 'propositus'."

### 9.3 Annex C – EU/EEA member states and overseas territories

Country	Date of Accession	EU	EEA	Related Territory	EU	EEA
Austria	01/01/1995	Yes	Yes			
Belgium	01/01/1958	Yes	Yes			
Bulgaria	01/01/2007	Yes	Yes			
Croatia	01/07/2013	Yes	Yes			
Cyprus	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Czech Republic	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Denmark	01/01/1973	Yes	Yes	Greenland	No	No
				Faroe Island	No	No
Estonia	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Finland	01/01/1995	Yes	Yes	Åland Islands	Yes	Yes
France	01/01/1958	Yes	Yes	French Overseas Departments (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana, Réunion, Mayotte and Saint-Martin)	Yes	Yes
				French Overseas Territories (New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, St Pierre et Miquelon, St Barthelemy and French Southern and Antarctic Territories)	No	No
Germany	01/01/1958	Yes	Yes	Heligoland	Yes	Yes
Greece	01/01/1981	Yes	Yes			
Hungary	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Ireland	01/01/1973	Yes	Yes			
Italy	01/01/1958	Yes	Yes			
Latvia	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Lithuania	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Luxembourg	01/01/1958	Yes	Yes			
Malta	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Netherlands	01/01/1958	Yes	Yes	The Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten)	No	No
Poland	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Portugal	01/01/1986	Yes	Yes	Madeira	Ye	Yes
				Azores	Yes	Yes
				Macau	No	No
Romania	01/01/2007	Yes	Yes			

Slovakia	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Slovenia	01/05/2004	Yes	Yes			
Spain	01/01/1986	Yes	Yes	Balearic Islands	Yes	Yes
				Canary Islands	Yes	Yes
				Ceuta	Yes	Yes
				Melilla	Yes	Yes
Sweden	01/01/1995	Yes	Yes			
United Kingdom (Left EU on 31/1/2020 and transition period ended 31/12/2020.)	01/01/1973	No	No	Channel Islands	No	No
				Isle of Mann	No	No
				Gibraltar	Yes	Yes
				UK Sovereign Bases (inc. Cyprus)	No	No
				British Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Antarctic Territory, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands, Montserrat, St. Helena and Dependencies, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands or The Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia)	No	No
Iceland	N/A	No	Yes			
Liechtenstein	N/A	No	Yes			
Norway	N/A	No	Yes	Svalbard	No	Yes
Switzerland	N/A	No	No			
Turkey	N/A	No	No			

#### 9.4 Annex D – Exit award examples

##### Examples where regulation 21 is applied

**Muriel** starts a two-year FT HND in AY 11/12 and withdraws after year 1. In AY 13/14 Muriel started a FT three-year Honours degree and successfully completed year 1, however withdraws in year 2 (AY 14/15).

Muriel's HE provider awarded a Cert HE for the course content which they successfully completed.

In AY 26/27 Muriel starts a FT four-year undergraduate degree starting from year 1.

As Muriel has undertaken a degree in part before the current course (even though awarded an HNC), regulation 22 does not apply and therefore Muriel's remaining entitlement to tuition loan is calculated in accordance with regulation 21.

$(OD + 1) - PC$

$(4 + 1) - 3 = 2$  years of tuition loan (and any Maintenance Grant/Special Support Grant entitlement) remaining

As the remaining entitlement applies to the final year of the course first and then every preceding year until it is exhausted Muriel will have to self-fund their tuition costs in years 1 and 2 of the new course. As Muriel does not qualify for a tuition fee loan in year one and two, no maintenance grant is available in line with regulation 56(3).

**Tony** starts and successfully achieves a Cert HE after one year of FT study in AY 10/11. Student B then started an Honours Degree in AY 12/13 and their tuition loan entitlement is calculated in accordance with regulation 22(5). Tony successfully completed year one but withdraws in year 2 (AY 13/14) of the degree for compelling personal reasons. Tony's HE provider awarded an HNC for the course content which they successfully completed.

In AY 26/27 Tony starts a two-year Foundation degree starting from year 1.

As Tony has undertaken a degree in part before the current course (even though awarded an HNC), regulation 22 does not apply and therefore their remaining entitlement to tuition loan is calculated in accordance with regulation 21.

$(OD + 1) - PC$

$(2 + 1) - 3 = 0$  years of tuition loan (and any Maintenance Grant/Special Support Grant entitlement) remaining

Tony is able to apply for a further year of tuition support as they can demonstrate that they left their previous course for compelling personal reasons. Tony is awarded a tuition loan in year one of their course but is required to self-fund their tuition costs in year two of their course. As they do not qualify for a tuition fee loan in year two no maintenance grant is available in line with regulation 56(3).

### **Examples where regulation 22 is applied**

**Fiona** started a two-year part-time HNC in AY 10/11. Fiona achieves the qualification and then started a two-year FT Foundation degree in AY 12/13 starting from year one. Fiona then starts year two of the Foundation degree in AY 13/14, however they have to withdraw partway through the year. Fiona's HE provider award them a Cert HE for the course content which they successfully completed.

In AY 26/27 Fiona starts a three-year Honours degree. Because Fiona has a Cert HE, the criteria in regulation 22(2) applies, therefore Fiona's remaining entitlement to tuition fee loan is calculated in accordance with regulation 22(5) as follows:

$$(D + X) - \text{PrC}$$

Where D is the greater of 3 and the number of academic years that make up the ordinary duration of the course, in this scenario  $D = 3$

X is — 1 where the ordinary duration of the preliminary course (or preliminary courses in total) was less than three years,

- the ordinary duration of the preliminary course (or preliminary courses in total) minus 1 if it was three years or more.

The ordinary duration of the two previous courses undertaken is P/T HNC = 2 plus Cert HE = 1

$2 + 1 = 3$  therefore in this scenario, X is 2

$$(3 + 2) - 4 = 1 \text{ years of tuition fee loan remaining}$$

**Stephanie** started a two-year HND in AY 09/10 and withdraws before the end of the 1st year for academic reasons. No qualification is awarded.

In AY 10/11 Stephanie started a Foundation Degree and due to personal reasons had to withdraw at the beginning of the 2nd academic year (AY 11/12) after successfully completing the year. Stephanie's provider award them an exit qualification of a Cert HE for the part of the course they successfully completed.

In AY 26/27 Stephanie starts an Honours degree that is four years in length.

Stephanie's entitlement to tuition loan is calculated in accordance with regulation 22 as follows:

$$(D + X) - \text{PrC}$$

Where D is the greater of 3 and the number of academic years that make up the ordinary duration of the course - in this scenario  $D = 4$ ,

X is — 1 where the ordinary duration of the preliminary course (or preliminary courses in total) was less than three years,

- the ordinary duration of the preliminary course (or preliminary courses in total) minus 1 if it was three years or more.

The ordinary duration combined of the two previous courses undertaken is  $2 + 1 = 3$  therefore in this scenario, X is 2

PrC is the number of academic years that the student spent on preliminary courses.  
 In this case the PrC is 3 (1 + 2)

Stephanie’s remaining entitlement is calculated as follows:

$(4 + 2) - 3 = 3$  years of tuition loan remaining

**9.5 Annex E – Approved HTQ Designation Criteria**

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HTQ approval extends to certain qualification types that would previously have been considered as “FE” rather than standard “HE” qualifications. For HTQ courses to be designated for HE student finance under the Regulations, they must receive HTQ approval from IfATE and satisfy the relevant designation criteria:

**Approved HTQ Designation Criteria**

<b>Level</b>	FHEQ Levels 4 and 5.
<b>Definition</b>	Level 4 or 5 higher technical education course which has received IfATE approval as an HTQ.
<b>Minimum Duration</b>	Minimum one academic year
<b>Certificating Body</b>	<p>HE provider must be OfS registered provider (or delivering a course in conjunction with an OfS registered provider).</p> <p>Awarding body will require to have degree awarding powers (or foundation degree awarding powers, where applicable).</p> <p>If a HE provider does not have degree awarding powers/foundation degree awarding powers and wishes to run a HTQ course, their students will require to be registered with an Ofqual registered awarding body e.g., Pearson / NCC.</p>

**9.6 Annex F – Organisation contact details**

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<b>Welsh Government</b>	Cardiff Bay Cardiff CF99 1NA	English: 0300 0603300  Welsh: 0300 0604400	<a href="https://www.gov.wales/">https://www.gov.wales/</a>
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<b>The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)</b>	Saughton House Broomhouse Drive Edinburgh EH11 3UT	0300 5550505	<a href="https://www.saas.gov.uk/">https://www.saas.gov.uk/</a>
<b>Department for Economy (Northern Ireland)</b>	Higher Education, Policy, Research and Finance Room 407 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Adelaide House 39-49 Adelaide St Belfast BT2 8FD	028 9025 7777	<a href="https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/">https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/</a>
<b>SLC – EU Team</b>	Memphis Building Lingfield Point McMullen Road Darlington County Durham	0141 243 3570	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/student-finance">https://www.gov.uk/student-finance</a>
<b>SLC</b>	Student Loans Company Ltd 10 Clyde Place Glasgow G5 8DF	0300 100 0618	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/student-finance">https://www.gov.uk/student-finance</a>

## 9.7 Annex G – List of applicable regulations

This guidance applies to FT students and those who are treated as FT students for the purposes of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011, as amended by:

- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2012
- The National Treatment Agency (Abolition) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Consequential, Transitional and Saving Provisions) Order 2013
- The Universal Credit (Consequential, Supplementary, Incidental and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Student Support and European University Institute) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Fees and Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Further and Higher Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Consequential Amendments to Subordinate Legislation) Order 2014
- The Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

- The Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (Consequential Amendments) (Secondary Legislation) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (Consequential Amendments to Secondary Legislation) Regulations 2017
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
- The Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit (Miscellaneous Amendments and Transitional and Savings Provisions) Regulations 2017
- The Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- The Education (Student Support) (Revocation, Amendment and Saving Provision) Regulations 2018
- The Education (Student Support) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2018
- The Education (Student Support) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2018
- The Education (Postgraduate Doctoral Degree Loans and the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) (Amendment) (No. 2) etc.) Regulations 2018
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2019
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support etc.)(Amendment) Regulations 2020
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support etc.)(Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2020
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support etc) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2021
- The Education (Student Support) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2021
- the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2021
- the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2022
- the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2023
- the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2025
- The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2026

Other sets of legislation/regulations cited in this document (in the order they appear):

- The Immigration Act 1971 (as amended)
- The British Nationality Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 (as amended)

- The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 (as amended)
- The Student Fees (Qualifying Courses and Persons) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended)
- The Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended)
- Treaty establishing the European Community (Nice consolidated version) (as amended)
- Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union
- The Higher Education Act 2004 (as amended)

### 9.8 Annex H – Updates log

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Date	Version	Updates
03/02/2026	Version 0.1	<p>Rollover changes and AY 26/27 policy changes updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARR – Afghan Response Route</li> </ul> <p>Updated references to paragraph 39E of the Immigration Rules. These provisions have been relocated to paragraphs SUI 13.1 and 13.2 of Part Suitability of the Immigration Rules</p>
24/02/2026	Version 0.2	<p>Updates following initial stakeholder review.</p> <p>Updated link to AY 26/27 approved ITT qualifications for FE teaching</p> <p>Update to list of DaDa HE/FE providers</p> <p>Updated nomenclature for Chagos Islands</p>
17/03/2026	Version 0.3	<p>Updates to text following stakeholder review.</p> <p>Updated EUSS continuous residence period information.</p>
19/03/2026	Version 1.0	Signed off by stakeholder and sent for publishing.