



**Childcare Grant and
other support for student
parents in full-time
higher education
in 2012/13**



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Introduction

What is Student Finance Wales?

Student Finance Wales is a partnership between the Welsh Government, Local Authorities (LAs) and the Student Loans Company (SLC). SLC and the LAs in Wales work together to deliver financial support to students on behalf of the Welsh Government.

What is Student Finance?

If you're thinking about going into higher education, you're also probably thinking about how you are going to pay for it. Student Finance Wales offers all kind of financial help so that you can make the most of your time at University or college without having to worry about money.

Student finance can be money or services to help you with your tuition fees and living costs while you're studying in higher education. It can include grants, loans, and bursaries. But different student finance packages are available depending on whether you are studying full time, part time or a post-graduate course. There's also extra help for those with a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty in the form of Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs).

What is this guide about?

If you have any children or adult dependants and you want to go into higher education, there is financial help available to you, including a Childcare Grant, Parents' Learning Allowance and Adult Dependants' Grant. This guide explains what you can get and how you get it.

Who is this guide for?

This guide provides information for current and prospective full-time students in higher education whose homes are in Wales. Similar arrangements apply if you live in Scotland, England, or Northern Ireland. Part-time students with adult or child dependants should read 'A guide to financial support for part-time students in higher education'. Available at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk.

If you do not live in Wales, you can find out more information relevant to where you live at one of these websites.

England – www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Northern Ireland – www.studentfinancenl.co.uk

Scotland – www.saas.gov.uk

EU nationals – www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance-EU

The information in this booklet is for guidance only and does not cover all circumstances.

If you need more help you can contact the Student Finance Wales contact centre on 0845 602 8845 or your local authority. You can get a list of local authority contact details from the website at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk.

If you are an Open University (OU) student you should contact the OU on 01908 653 411 (textphone 01908 659 955).

You can order forms and guides in braille, large print or audio by emailing with your name, address, customer reference number along with what form and format you require to: brailleandlargefonts@slc.co.uk or you can telephone us on 0141 243 3686.

Please note: the above email address and telephone number can only deal with requests for alternative formats of forms and guides.

1 Do I qualify?

Summary – what this section is about

This section gives some brief information about the rules we use to establish if you are eligible to receive Childcare Grant.

You can apply for Childcare Grant if you:

- have dependent children under 15 – and they're in registered or approved childcare (childcare that qualifies for the grant);
- have dependent children under 17 with special needs – and they're in registered or approved childcare (childcare that qualifies for the grant).

If you, or your husband, wife or partner, get the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, you won't be able to get the Childcare Grant as well.

You may also be able to get the Childcare Grant if you:

- normally live in Wales and are studying abroad as part of your UK course; and
- are able to use childcare provided under a Ministry of Defence accreditation scheme while you're abroad.

Types of childcare that qualify

Not all types of childcare qualify for the Childcare Grant. The conditions your childcare provider needs to meet vary depending on where in the UK you study.

To receive the Childcare Grant, the childcare must be registered or approved by one of the schemes below.

Childcare in Wales

If your home is normally in Wales and you are studying in Wales you can apply for the Childcare Grant if you use any of the following types of childcare:

- childcare provided by a childminder, nursery or play scheme registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales;
- childcare provided by out-of-school-hours clubs, located on school grounds and run by a school or local authority;
- childcare provided in the child's own home by a care worker or nurse from an agency registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales;
- childcare provided by an approved foster carer (the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer);
- childcare provided in the child's own home by a carer approved under the Approval of Child Care Providers Scheme.

Childcare in England

If your home is in Wales but you are studying in England you can apply for the Childcare Grant if you use the following types of childcare:

- childcare providers registered with Ofsted;
- childcare provided by a school out of hours – on school premises or on premises that are covered by the Ofsted inspection of the school;
- childcare provided by a care worker or nurse from an agency registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (this type of childcare can be provided in the child's own home);
- childcare provided by an approved foster carer (the care must be for the child who is not being fostered by the foster carer).

Childcare in Scotland

If your home is normally in Wales but you are studying in Scotland, you may be able to receive the Childcare Grant if you use any of the following types of childcare.

- childcare provided by a childminder, nursery or play schemes registered by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care;
- childcare provided by out-of-school-hours clubs registered with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care, located on school grounds and run by a school or local authority;
- childcare provided by an approved foster carer (the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer);
- childcare provided in the child's own home by (or introduced through) a childcare agency, sitter service or nanny agency that is registered with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care.

Childcare in Northern Ireland

If your home is normally in Wales but you are studying in Northern Ireland, you may be able to receive the Childcare Grant if you use any of the following types of childcare.

- childcare provided by a childminder, nursery or play scheme registered by a Health and Social Services Trust;
- childcare provided by an out-of-school-hours club, located on school grounds and run by a school, or by an Education and Library Board or registered by a Health and Social Services Trust;
- childcare provided by an approved foster carer (the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer);
- childcare provided in the child's own home by a carer approved under the Approval of Home Child Care Providers Scheme.

What if the registered or approved childcare provider I use is my partner or a relative of my child?

You will not be able to receive the Childcare Grant if the childcare is provided by a registered or approved childcare provider who:

- is your partner;
- is a relative of your child and providing care in your child's home;
- is a relative of your child and is:
 - approved under the Approval of Child Care Providers Scheme in Wales, or the Approval of Home Child Care Providers Scheme in Northern Ireland;
 - providing care away from your child's home; and
 - only caring for children he or she is related to.

A relative of the child means a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister related by blood or marriage, or a person with a strong relationship to the child (for example, someone acting as a parent to their partner's children). If you have any questions about the meaning of 'relative', ask us or your local authority.

2 What help can I get?

Summary – what this section is about

This section tells you about the different types of help available to full-time students with children. For details about other student finance you should refer to our other publications – details of these are in section 5.

Childcare Grant	
What is it for?	The grant can help with childcare costs if you have dependent children aged under 15 at the beginning of the academic year – or under 17 if they have special educational needs – and they are in registered or approved childcare.
How much can I get?	Depending on your household income you can apply for 85% of your actual childcare costs during term times and holidays. You can get up to £161.50 a week for one child or up to £274.55 a week for more than one child.
How is it paid?	Usually in three instalments, one at the start of each term, into your bank account.
Do I have to pay it back?	No, unless you have been overpaid.
Anything else?	<p>If, as a full time student, you can claim income related benefits, Jobcentre Plus and your local authority's Housing Benefits section should not take account of any Childcare Grant you receive when they are working out the benefit you are entitled to.</p> <p>You cannot get this grant if you or your husband, wife or partner receives the childcare part of the Working Tax Credit from HM Revenue & Customs.</p> <p>All 3 and 4-year-olds are entitled to a free, part-time early-learning place (for 12 ½ hours a week, 38 weeks a year) in a preschool setting such as a nursery. You do not have to pay any fee for your child's free early-learning place and so a Childcare Grant cannot be paid for a period during which your child is at nursery. You can find out more information about free early-learning places from the Childcare Link on 0800 096 0296 (freephone). Or, you can visit the website at www.childcarelink.gov.uk.</p>

Parents' Learning Allowance

What is it for?	The allowance can help with course-related costs if you have dependent children.
How much can I get?	The amount you receive depends on your income, the income of your husband, wife or partner (if you have one) and that of your dependants. You can get up to £1,508.00 a year.
How is it paid?	Usually in three instalments, one at the start of each term, into your bank account.
Do I have to pay it back?	No, unless you have been overpaid.
Anything else?	Jobcentre Plus and your local authority's Housing Benefits section do not count Parents' Learning Allowance when working out your other benefits, so you do not have to choose between Parents' Learning Allowance and those other benefits. You can apply for Parents' Learning Allowance even if you do not get the Childcare Grant.

Adult Dependants' Grant

What is it for?	The grant should help if you have an adult who depends on you financially. (The adult cannot be any of your children.)
How much can I get?	The amount of Adult Dependants' Grant you can receive depends on your income and the income of your dependants (including your husband, wife or partner). You can get up to £2,647.00 a year.
How is it paid?	Usually in three instalments, one at the start of each term, into your bank account.
Do I have to pay it back?	No, unless you have been overpaid.
Anything else?	Any Adult Dependants' Grant you get will be counted as income when working out your entitlement to benefits.

Child Tax Credit from HM Revenue & Customs

If you are a student with dependent children, you may be entitled to claim Child Tax Credit. Student loans and grants to meet the costs of tuition fees, childcare and other course-related costs are not treated as income for tax credits purposes. However, the Adult Dependants' Grant will be taken into account as income. If you are receiving the maximum amount of Child Tax Credit (and no Working Tax Credit) you are also entitled to free school meals for your children. You can get more information from the HM Revenue & Customs helpline on 0845 300 3900 (textphone: 0845 300 3909) or by visiting the website at: **www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits**.

Benefits

Most full-time students are not entitled to income-related benefits. However certain groups (including single parents, student couples with dependent children and some disabled students) may be eligible for income-related benefits including Housing Benefit. If you want to take a full-time course of education, you should ask your local Jobcentre Plus office and your local authority's Housing Benefit section how this may affect your benefits.

If you are eligible for benefits, Jobcentre Plus and your local authority's Housing Benefit section will take account of most of any Maintenance Loan (and some student grants) that you are entitled to. If you receive the Special Support Grant this will not be taken into account.

3 How do I apply?

Summary – what this section is about

So now you know what financial support is available, how do you get it? This section contains information on how to apply for any financial support that you may be eligible for.

Step 1

Complete your application for student finance making sure you complete the relevant sections.

If you have indicated you would like to apply for Childcare Grant you should complete the Childcare Grant application form.

Step 2

We (or your local authority) will assess your application and send you a letter to let you know what student finance you can get.

Step 3

If you have applied for the Childcare Grant we will ask you to fill-in a Childcare Costs Confirmation form at the end of each childcare period.

Step 1

To apply for the Childcare Grant, Parents' Learning Allowance or Adult Dependants' Grant you should complete the relevant section of the main application form for student finance. If you have applied for Childcare Grant, your local authority will then send you a separate **Childcare Grant Application Form** for you to provide information about your childcare needs and details of your childcare provider. Alternatively you can download the form from: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk or phone us to have a copy sent to you.

Step 2

Your local authority will then assess your application based on the estimates you provide and send you a Financial Notification Letter detailing how much Childcare Grant you are entitled to. This letter also details any other student finance you may be entitled to.

Step 3

At the end of each childcare period your local authority will send you a **Childcare Costs Confirmation Form** to complete. This asks for evidence of payments you have made to your childcare provider and lets you confirm what your actual costs were for the first childcare period. If you have been overpaid or underpaid we will reduce or increase your next instalment of Childcare Grant.

You can also download the Childcare Grant Application Form and Childcare Costs Confirmation Form from: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk.

4 Appeals and complaints

Appeals

Your local authority will have a formal appeals procedure which will be available upon request.

This will usually involve the Head of Service at the local authority investigating the reasons why you have been refused support.

Complaints

All organisations involved in the student support process have clearly defined complaints procedures. You will need to first establish who the complaint is to be made against or contact the department you last dealt with and ask for a complaint to be logged.

- Your local authority will be responsible for assessing your claim for support;
- The Student Loans Company will be responsible for operational services and the processing of your student award payment;
- The Welsh Government will be responsible for providing policy guidance.

You should contact your local authority for details of their complaints procedure.

Complaints Unit
Welsh Government
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ
Telephone: 029 2080 1378
Fax: 029 2082 6869
Email: complaints@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Customer Assistance
Student Loans Company Limited
100 Bothwell Street
Glasgow G2 7JD
Email: Customer_complaints@slc.co.uk

The public service ombudsman can also offer advice regarding a complaint against the service you have received.

Public Service Ombudsman For Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Cae,
Pencoed CF35 5LJ
Telephone: 01656 641 150
Fax: 01656 641 199
Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.co.uk

5 How to find out more

You can get extra copies of this guide and the following student finance guides by visiting the Student Finance Wales website at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk and downloading a copy.

- 1 Information about help for new full-time students** – Get the guide ‘A guide to financial support for full-time higher education students (new students).
- 2 Information about help for part-time students** – Get the guide ‘A guide to financial support for part-time students in higher education’.
- 3 Information about student loans** – Get the guide ‘Student Loans – a guide to terms and conditions’.
- 4 Help for students with disability** – Get the guide ‘Bridging the gap: A guide to the Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs) in higher education’.

Contacting Student Finance Wales

You can phone Student Finance Wales Contact Centre on 0845 602 8845 between 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 1pm on Saturday.

Other useful contacts

Support from other organisations

Undergraduate and post-graduate NHS students

If you receive an NHS bursary, or plan to apply for one, you should contact your university or college for details of any additional support that is available.

NHS Wales Student Awards Unit
3rd Floor
14 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF11 9LJ
Phone: 029 2019 6167 (Bursary Enquiries)

You can download more copies of this guide online at: **www.studentfinancewales.co.uk**.

You can also order this guide in braille, large print or audio by emailing with your name, address, customer reference number quoting reference SFW/CCGB/V12 to:

brailleandlargefonts@slc.co.uk or you can telephone us on 0141 243 3686.

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