


How to get financial help as a student

Get the facts on student finance
2010/2011





*Go to University
and be whatever
you want to be*

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Information in this booklet
applies only to students living
in England – but includes
students who live in England
and plan to attend
universities in Northern
Ireland, Scotland or Wales.

This booklet is about the types of financial help that the Government provides for students while they are at university or college on higher education courses. The information is for guidance only; exactly how much you can get will be determined when you apply to Student Finance England for support.

The amounts quoted are for those students taking a full-time or part-time undergraduate course for the first time from September 2010 and are illustrative only.

- September 2010 entrants can get more detailed information about their entitlement by reading 'A guide to financial support for higher education students 2010/2011 – new full-time students', which you can download from www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms10.
- Those going into higher education in September 2011 or later will be able to get more up to date information nearer the time. To check for updates visit: www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance.

This booklet also contains specific information for mature students and those with special circumstances. If you are the parent or guardian of a child who is planning to go on to higher education, you'll find the advice useful too.

Introduction

Higher education can be a life changing experience. You get the chance to meet new people and see new places – all while studying something you like! And further study opens doors, usually leading to a better-paid job and better promotion prospects. With so many types of higher-education courses on offer – full-time, part-time and distance learning – there's never been more options to choose from.

And there is financial help available to support you in your studies – probably more than you think. The financial help on offer is designed to let you make the most of your time at university or college, helping you to cover your costs whilst you're studying. Add to this the trouble-free repayment arrangements and university or college looks a much more attractive prospect.

To find out more about all the financial help that's available, read on...

Don't forget...

That you can study at over 500 different universities, colleges and other institutions. Between them, they offer a wide range of higher education courses, and they can charge a range of tuition fees, and offer their own bursaries and scholarships to help students.



studentfinance **england**

If you're starting university or college this September, or if you're considering it for the future, you'll need to think about how you'll pay for your course and your living costs while you're studying.

The good news is that the Government, through Student Finance England, offers a wide range of student financial support in the form of grants, loans and bursaries. This means you get financial help when you need it but don't have to pay back your loans until after you leave your course and start earning more than £15,000 a year.



Student Finance England is a one stop shop for anyone who wants to know more about what's on offer. The service is designed to make it as easy as possible for you to find out what financial help is available, based on your personal circumstances. To make sure you have all the information you need to work out what financial support you may be eligible for, how you get it and when you need to repay, Student Finance England offers a range of guidance booklets which can be downloaded from the website; www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms10. This includes information on Disabled Students' Allowances, Childcare Grant, travel expenses and the terms and conditions which apply to student finance. Copies of these are also available in braille, large print or audio.

An improved online service has been developed which can link your application for student finance to your UCAS application. This makes it a much quicker and simpler process.

We also suggest that you use the online Student Finance Calculator at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinancecalculator which will help you work out exactly how much you can get. You can also compare support for different courses and different universities, including what bursaries they offer, to ensure that you have all the information you need to make an informed choice.

For more information visit www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance or if you need to speak to an advisor call the Student Finance England Customer Support Office on **0845 300 5090**.

Student Finance England is there to help you every step of the way and there's a team of experts available on the telephone if you have any questions.

The quickest and easiest way to apply for student finance is online. You should apply as early as possible in order that Student Finance England can process your application in good time for you starting your course. Remember, you don't need to wait until you've been offered and accepted a place to make your application for student finance.

You must apply for student finance by the following deadlines if you are applying for 2010/11 and want to have your money at the beginning of your first term:

- by 23 April 2010 if you are applying for student finance which does not depend on your household income; and
- by 25 June 2010 if you are applying for student finance which does depend on your household income.

You may be asked to supply certain evidence, such as proof of identity and proof of your household income, and you must be sure to supply this when you apply. If you don't, Student Finance England won't be able to process it. After you've applied you will be able to manage your own student finance account online, putting you firmly in control.

Don't forget...

The rates quoted throughout this booklet are the rates for the new students for 10/11 entrants. These can change each year, so you should check on www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance for up to date figures and information when you are ready to apply.



Thinking of studying full-time?

There are lots of benefits to studying full-time. It allows you to immerse yourself in student life whilst studying something you really like. And there's financial help to make sure that you can make the most of your time at university or college, wherever you decide to study in the UK.

What costs will I have?

Essentially, you will have two main costs whilst at university or college – tuition fees (which help the university or college meet the costs of providing your course) and your own living expenses. The good news is that you can receive help with both.

There are non-repayable grants and repayable students loans along with bursaries from your university or college. Exactly how much help you get depends on how much your course costs (for tuition fees), where you live and study and on your household income (for help with living costs).

Get the facts on fees

The Government subsidises the cost of your course (through payments made direct to university or colleges for each student who enrolls with them). In addition to this, universities and colleges in the UK can charge students up to £3,290 a year for 2010/11 for full-time courses. The fees charged will vary between courses as well as between universities and colleges. It will be important for you to compare what's on offer, as well as what course suits you best, when you're choosing where to study. You can find out about tuition fee charges through university or college prospectuses or websites or through the Student Finance Calculator at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinancecalculator, and through the UCAS website at www.ucas.ac.uk.

You won't have to find the money to pay for your fees either before or whilst you're studying.

Instead, all eligible, full-time students can get a Tuition Fee Loan of up to £3,290 a year to meet their course costs. This is a non-commercial loan from the Government. The money is paid directly to your college or university on your behalf and you only have to start repaying it once you've left your course and are earning over £15,000 a year. There's a lot more information on these loans and the repayment terms in this booklet. But to give you an idea, someone earning £18,000 would repay £5.19 a week no matter how much they owed.

So you repay based on how much you earn, not how much you owe.

If you don't want to take out a Tuition Fee Loan then you can make arrangements with your university or college to pay the tuition fees directly to them.

Don't forget...

Tuition fees can change each year. To make sure you know how much to claim for each year of study, speak to your university or college before putting in your loan application to Student Finance England.

Remember – wherever you decide to study and whatever course you opt for, you don't need to find the money for fees either before or during your studies.

UK charges at a glance

England

Charges of up to £3,290 a year depending on which university or college you attend and what you study. You can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan up to this amount. The Tuition Fee Loan is paid directly to your university or college.

Northern Ireland

Charges of up to £3,290 a year depending on which university or college you attend and what you study.

Scotland

Scottish institutions charge English students studying in Scotland £1,775 a year for all degree courses except medicine where the proposed fee is £2,825 a year. This applies to all four years of standard Scottish degree courses (English degree courses tend to last only three years). The rates given for Scotland apply to 2009/10 and may change for 2010/11.

Wales

Fees of up to £3,290 may be charged depending on which university or college you attend and what you study.



Did you know...?

The student loans described here aren't like regular loans which aim to make a profit. They are provided and subsidised by the Government and the interest charged is low which means that in real terms what you repay is worth no more than the money you originally borrowed – it's likely to be the cheapest form of borrowing you'll ever get.

Get the facts on living costs

There are no hard and fast rules about how much money you'll need to cover your living costs whilst at university or college.

It will depend where you decide to study (London is likely to be more expensive than elsewhere) and where you live whilst you're studying. There's more later on about planning your finances. Read on to find out what financial help you could get to help with your day to day costs.

Non-repayable Maintenance Grants

These grants are to help with general living costs. From September 2010, new full-time students with a household income below £25,000 could get a full grant worth up to £2,906. Those with a household income of up to £50,020 could get a partial grant. Remember, Maintenance Grants **don't have to be paid back** but the rates offered may change each year.

Around 40% of all new full-time students are expected to be eligible for a full Maintenance Grant which should help towards meeting the cost of studying. A great many more will be eligible for a partial grant.

There are also other non-repayable grants to help with extra costs you might have due to disability or because of caring responsibilities. These are paid on top of any Maintenance Grant you could get. Find out more on Page 14.

You may be pleasantly surprised at the level of non-repayable support that's available to help meet the cost of studying. To find out more, visit:

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Repayable Maintenance Loans

As well as the loans available to cover your fees, there are Maintenance Loans available to help with living costs – this includes things like your accommodation, food and course materials. How much Maintenance Loan you get depends on where you decide to live and study, as well as your income and that of your household. It will also depend on how much Maintenance Grant you are entitled to.

Where you live and study...	Maximum Maintenance Loan you could get
If you live away from your parents' home and you study in London	£6,928 a year
If you live away from your parents' home and you study outside London	£4,950 a year
If you live at your parents' home while you study	£3,838 a year



Did you know...?

That you can apply online to Student Finance England for financial support and then manage your account online at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance even if you applied on paper?

Bursaries and other financial support from universities and colleges

Bursaries can also be a valuable source of non-repayable income to help you to meet the costs of studying and you should find out as much as you can about what's available.

All universities and colleges in England which charge the highest rate of fees (£3,290) for some or all of their full-time courses must provide bursaries to students who receive the full Maintenance Grant. But many universities and colleges provide bursaries for other students too, particularly those from low income families. Financial help could be provided in various ways – for instance, cash or discounted accommodation costs. As these bursaries are provided directly by the universities and colleges, make sure you check out what they are offering.

Remember that bursaries are in addition to the other financial help mentioned here, and just like the Maintenance Grant, don't have to be paid back.

You can find out more by visiting websites or reading prospectuses. You may also find the Student Finance Calculator useful to make comparisons. This can be accessed at:

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinancecalculator. But if you're still not sure what's on offer or how to go about getting a bursary, talk to the Student Support Office at your university or college or get in touch with the student union – both should be able to point you in the right direction for further advice.

Did you know...?

A student in receipt of the maximum Maintenance Grant of £2,906 on a course charging the full £3,290 must receive a bursary worth at least £329 a year for 2010/11. But many universities and colleges are offering much more with the typical bursary on offer being worth around £900 a year.

Where do I go for help?

If you are applying to go into higher education in 2010/11 you will make your application for student financial support to Student Finance England. This, primarily online, service has been designed to make sure that it is as easy as possible for you to find out about what help is available.

Student Finance England has a team of experts available to help through secure messaging, telephone and you can also communicate with an adviser using webchat.

If you need, or simply prefer to speak to someone, you can contact an adviser on: **0845 300 5090**.

How can I work out what I'll get?

If you want to work out your options and what financial help you might get, try out the Student Finance Calculator.

The online calculator is intended to ensure that you have all the information you need to make an informed choice about student finance and provide you with an indication of what you might be entitled to before you make your application. The more information you provide when using the calculator, the more accurate your quote will be. You will find the online calculator on the Directgov website at: www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinancecalculator.



How and when can I get the money?

If you opt for a Tuition Fee Loan then your university or college will be paid directly on your behalf. Money for living costs (loans and grants) will be paid in three instalments, one at the start of each term. This will be paid direct into your bank account. Make sure that you apply before the deadline. You will need to apply every year ahead of the September term to make sure you get the money on time. There's more about applying later on.



Thinking of studying part-time?

Part-time undergraduate study is a popular and flexible alternative to full-time study. And the range of higher-education courses on offer on a part-time basis is growing fast.

If you have children or adult dependants, don't want to give up your job, or simply want more flexibility around the time you spend studying, then this could be an excellent option for you.

Did you know...?

Around half a million part-time, English, undergraduate students are enrolled at English higher education institutions and further education colleges?

The good news is that there is financial help available if you study part-time at a university or college or via distance learning (for example, by doing an Open University course). To be eligible you must be studying on a course that is at least 50% of the equivalent full-time course (the course provider should be able to tell you if your choice of course qualifies for financial help).

What costs will I have?

The two main types of costs you will have are course fees and other costs of studying such as books, equipment and travel to and from your college or university. Exactly how much you get will depend on how intensive your course is and your household income.

Get the fact on fees

Unlike fees for full-time, course fees for part-time undergraduate courses are 'unregulated' meaning that universities and colleges set their own rates. So the fees charged will vary considerably between courses as well as between universities and colleges. The best place to find out about the part-time tuition fees charged is by contacting the university or college direct for a prospectus. Alternatively, the DirectGov website will help you locate all of the UK's higher education providers, provide you with their contact details and let you order their prospectuses. Go to www.direct.gov.uk/uni

There is a Fee Grant to help you meet your part-time tuition fees, which you don't have to repay. The figures shown below are the amounts payable each year. How much you'll get depends on **two** things:

- which study band you fall in – these are pre-set for courses of different intensity.
- Your personal circumstances – particularly your income – will decide how much of the appropriate band you are entitled to claim. So, for instance, someone on a course taking 50% of a full-time equivalent course who has a household income below £16,845 will be entitled to a Fee Grant of £820 a year (assuming your fee costs are £820 or more – you can't get a Fee Grant for more than the amount that you're paying for your course).

How much Fee Grant is available...	Based on intensity of course
Up to £1,230	At least 75% of a full-time course
Up to £985	At least 60% of a full-time course
Up to £820	At least 50% of a full-time course

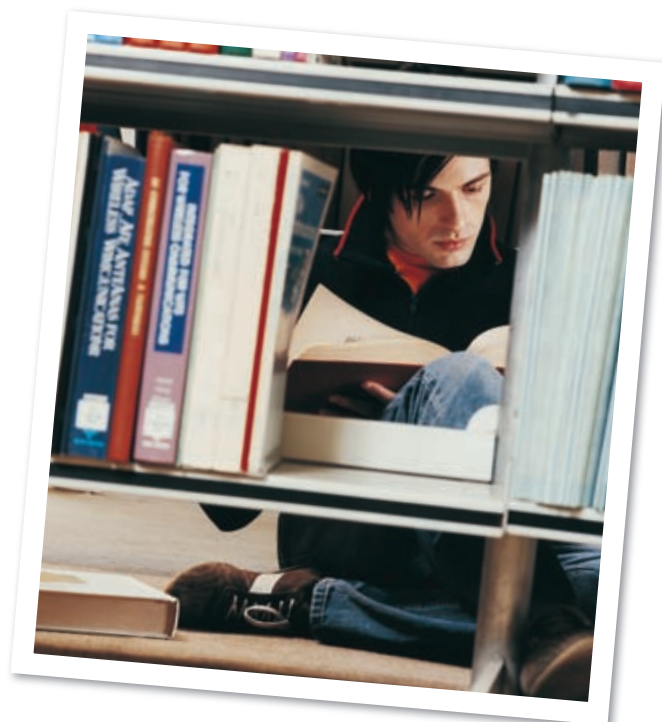


Get the facts on course related costs

You may have to pay for some course related costs, such as books and equipment as well as travel costs.

You could be entitled to a non-repayable Course Grant of up to £265 a year to help meet the cost of books, travel and course expenditure. **How much you get will depend on your individual circumstances.**

The table below illustrates how much you might get for both non-repayable grants.



Household income*	Part-time Fee Grant	Course Grant
Below £16,845	Full Fee Grant	£265
£16,845	Fee Grant reduced by £50	£265
£16,846 to £25,419	Partial Fee Grant	£265
£25,420	£50	£265
£25,421 to £26,029	Nil	£265
£26,030 to £28,064	Nil	Partial Course Grant
£28,065	Nil	£50
£28,066 and over	Nil	Nil

How can I work out what I'll get?

This will be worked out for you when you complete your application for financial help and receive your notification from Student Finance England on what they will be paying you. But you can get an indication of what you might be entitled to by checking out the table above, speaking to the university or college or by going to the Directgov website at: www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance where you will find more information on the financial help available to part-time undergraduates and you can also download a copy of '**A guide to financial support for part-time students in higher education 2010/2011**'. This is a comprehensive guide to the financial help arrangements and useful when you come to complete your application form.

How and when can I get the money?

As a new part-time student you'll have to complete a couple of weeks of the course before you'll be eligible to apply for any money. After that, any Fee Grant due will be sent direct to your university or college and the Course Grant will be paid direct into your bank account in one lump sum.

Other sources of financial help

If you are employed and think that a higher education course could benefit your organisation as well as you, then speak to them about any financial or other support they might be prepared to offer.

* These levels apply to single students with no dependants and / or partners

Parents

For both you and your child, deciding whether to go on to higher education is a big decision. However there is support available in the form of government loans and non-repayable grants, as well as bursaries from universities and colleges to help finance their studies.

Did you know?

- Up to 40% of new full-time students are expected to qualify for the full Maintenance Grant (worth up to £2,906 a year).
- Tuition Fee Loans are available to cover the full cost of tuition fees.
- Student loans are also available to help with living costs.
- Student loans don't have to be repaid until the April after the student leaves university and then only once they're earning over £15,000 a year (or £1,250 a month or £288 a week).
- Most universities and colleges offer extra help in the form of non-repayable bursaries.
- There is additional non-repayable financial help for students with disabilities, children or adult dependants.

It's well worth looking into the financial support that your son or daughter might qualify for, including that from the university or college of their choice as it could be more than you expected.

Don't forget...

That you can get an idea of how much support your child may be entitled to and how much it might cost them to go to university or college by using the student finance online calculator at:

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinancecalculator

To find out more about student finance for higher education visit
www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Did you know...?

For many young people, going to university or college may be the first time they become responsible for their own money and for budgeting. But there's a lot of support out there for students to help them deal with this and to manage their finances with confidence. Many universities and colleges have 'Money Doctors', a project developed with the Financial Services Authority (FSA). Delivered through Student Money Advisors, students have access to expert help and advice. University and college websites will have more information.



Mature students

Help is available for mature students too.

Higher education is not just for those leaving school. Many people don't feel ready for higher education at that stage or prefer to get their feet on the first rung of the career ladder rather than take time out. Although returning to education may seem like a big move, higher education can make a difference to your life and career. And along with the personal benefits, there are financial advantages to having a higher education qualification with greater earning potential.

Can I afford it?

Meeting the cost is a major concern for most people who are thinking about returning to education. But you will have the same entitlement to help as those who go into higher education straight from school – check the sections on full-time and part-time study for details. The only exception is that you must be under 60 at the start of your course in order to qualify for the Maintenance Loan.

As well as your fees and living costs, as a mature student you may have additional financial responsibilities. Read on to find out what **extra** help there might be for you...

I've got children

There's financial help, in the form of the Childcare Grant, if you use registered or approved childcare, as well as a Parents' Learning Allowance for those studying full-time. Check the section on 'Additional funding and help'.



I've got adult dependant(s) to care for

If you are studying full-time and have a partner, family member or other adult who relies on you financially then you could be eligible for an 'Adult Dependents Grant'. Check the section on 'Additional funding and help'.

I'm on income support or another means tested benefit (such as Housing Benefit)

If you are studying full-time you could be eligible for a Special Support Grant which will not be taken into account when assessing benefits. This will be payable instead of the Maintenance Grant. Check the section on '**Additional funding and help**'.

Did you know...?

More than half of undergraduate students are aged 21 or over?

Additional funding and help

Some students are able to get extra financial help over and above the grants and loans mentioned earlier. This help doesn't usually have to be repaid.

Help if you have a disability or a specific learning difficulty

If you have a disability you may be entitled to Disabled Students' Allowances, which is money to help with costs you incur in attending your course as a direct result of your disability. You won't have to pay this back. For more information check the Directgov website at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance. You can also download or order a copy of **'Bridging the gap: a guide to the Disabled Students' Allowances in higher education'**.

Help if you have children or other dependants

Extra financial help is available for people who want to study and who have dependants. For example, students with children may be able to get a Parents' Learning Allowance and help with the cost of registered or approved childcare. Students who have an adult who depends on them financially (other than their adult child) may be able to get an Adult Dependants' Grant. To find out more, check the Directgov website at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance. You can also download or order a copy of the guide **'Childcare Grant and other support for full-time student parents in higher education'**.

Extra help at a glance:

Grant	Maximum Payable
Students with children or other dependants	
Childcare Grant	
With one child	£148.75 per week
With two or more children	£255 per week
Parents' Learning Allowance	£1,508 a year
Adult Dependants' Grant	£2,642 a year
Students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties*	
Disabled Students' Allowances:-	
Specialist equipment allowance	£5,161 for the course
Non-medical helper's allowance	£20,520* a year
General disabled person's allowance	£1,724* a year
Extra travel costs	No upper limit

* Rates may differ depending on whether you study full-time or part-time

Extra help from your university or college

If you get into financial difficulties while studying, or you find yourself facing extra costs in completing your course, then you may be able to get help from your university or college's Access to Learning Fund. You should apply to the student support office, student services office or the student union of your university or college if you think you may need extra help to complete your course. You can do this either before or after starting your course. The money may not need to be repaid or may be given as a temporary loan to cover short term financial need.

Sponsorships and scholarships

There is a range of publications available that contain details of scholarships, grants and other sources of funding that are available to students. If you're at school or college your careers teacher may have access to these. Or you could ask your Connexions adviser, or ask in your local library for further information. Scholarship Search UK also provides information about other sources of funding for undergraduates – visit their website; www.scholarship-search.org.uk. Or you can also check out the student finance section of the Directgov website at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance for further information.

Want to train as a teacher?

You can get details of financial incentives for taking Initial Teacher Training courses in England by calling the Training and Development Agency for Schools' Teaching Information line on **0845 600 0991**. Or visit their website at www.tda.gov.uk.

Want to train in health care?

You can find more information about NHS Bursaries and other financial help available for health professional courses at www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk or by calling one of these numbers:

0845 358 6655

(for students who want to study in England)

0292 019 6167

www.nliah.wales.nhs.uk

(for students who want to study in Wales)

0131 476 8212

www.saas.gov.uk

(for students who want to study in Scotland)

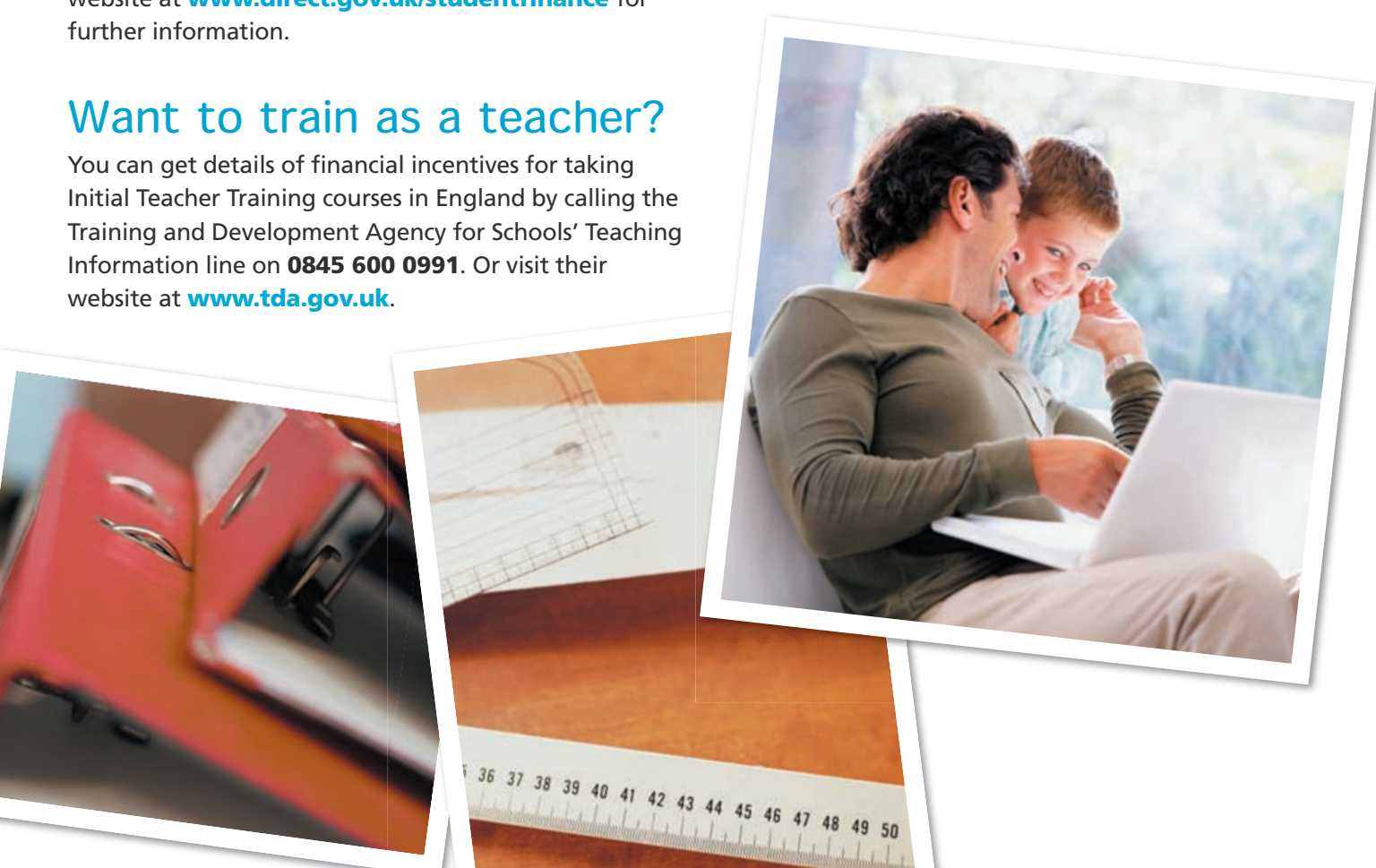
0282 565 3333

(for students who want to study in Northern Ireland)

You can also get information on NHS careers from the NHS Careers Helpline on **0845 606 0655**.

Do you have extra travel costs?

If you are on a medical placement or you go abroad as part of your course, then you should apply for help with your travel costs at the same time as you apply for help with tuition fees.



Planning for your studies

Looking after your money and planning your budget is really important whilst you're at university or college – and it's something that will give you valuable experience for the future too.

Before starting your course, it is worth working out roughly what income you will have coming in and when, and what you will have to spend your money on. The cost of living will vary depending on where you live and study. Check your chosen university or college's website to see if it has any information on average local costs for things like accommodation and travel.

You may also find it helpful to speak to a student adviser at your university or college who may be able to help you plan a budget. Similarly if you know someone who is currently at, or has been to the college or university that you are thinking of going to, ask them about things like local part-time jobs, more affordable accommodation or course equipment – student advisers, friends and family can be a great source of information during your planning and preparation for higher education.



Did you know...?

The Student Finance Calculator includes a budget calculator which will help you work out your likely income and expenditure while you're a student.
www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinancecalculator

STEP 1

Start by working out how much your course will cost you.

Use the Student Finance Calculator to compare the cost of studying at up to five different universities, colleges or courses. You will be able to compare the tuition fees charged and the bursaries offered at each (www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinancecalculator).

STEP 2

Next, work out how much it will cost you to live while you study.

The budget calculator on the Student Finance Calculator helps you prepare a list of all the things you will need to spend money on during your studies. Some of the costs to consider include:

Accommodation – the budget calculator can help you work out the typical costs for halls and other accommodation or you can contact your university or college beforehand to find out what these and local rental prices are likely to be. Again, check with people you know that are already there.

Bills – including gas, electricity, telephone, TV licence etc.

Books – you should be given a reading list before the course starts, so see which ones you will have to buy and which you can borrow from the library or buy second-hand.

Food – find out whether meals are provided in your halls or whether you will have to buy and prepare food yourself. If you do, ask your parents or guardian how much you should budget for food each week. You may find that once you are there and start making friends, pooling resources and sharing the cooking will save you money and be a lot more fun.

Travel – think about how far away from campus you might live and whether you need to budget for bus or train fares or petrol and expenses related to taking a car to university (including maintenance costs and parking) if you plan to drive.

Leisure and sports – consider club and society membership costs, and whether you will need to hire equipment or pay for extras.

Clothes – An obvious necessity, but they don't have to come with a designer price tag. Outlet villages, sales, supermarkets, charity shops and market stalls can all save you money without necessarily compromising your individual style.

Entertainment – costs can soon mount up if you start going out regularly. Make sure that you are realistic about how much you might need and how much you can afford to spend, then stick to your budget.

When preparing your budget, you should consider how much money you will receive from student loans and/or grants and any savings or earnings you can use, or whether your parents, partner or other family members, might be able to make a contribution.

STEP 3

Compare your income from step 1 with your outgoings in step 2 to see whether you are budgeting accurately. You can do this by adding together how much money you will receive from student loans and/or grants and any other income you might have and subtracting what you think your costs will be.

From this overall budget, work out how much you will have to spend on a weekly or monthly basis.

STEP 4

Once you start your course, keep a record of everything you spend and consider setting up standing orders or direct debits. These can help you to plan and ensure that you make regular payments to all the places you need to. You should also plan for extra expenditure so that you have money to cover special occasions such as family birthdays etc.

You might need to look at ways of saving money or increasing your disposable income by getting a part-time job during term time or working during vacations. If you are considering borrowing money then use interest free overdraft/credit facilities wherever possible. Talk to an adviser at your bank on how to get a student bank account if you do not already have one. Shop around for the best offer for you – not all banks/building societies offer the same.

You will find more information on how to organise and plan your student finances at websites like www.studentmoney.org.



How to get what you are entitled to

Full-time courses

Did you know...?

You don't have to wait until you receive an offer of a place from your university or college to apply for your student finance?

First of all you need to apply for your university or college place. It's advisable to complete and return your application as early as possible to make sure you have everything in place before you start your course.

Part-time courses

You'll have to wait until you've been on your course for a couple of weeks before your university or college will authorise your claim for financial help.

How to apply

Full-time students will find it easy to apply by going online at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance. The online application process is fast and easy. If you need to update your contact details, view your payment information, or change your bank details you can do it all online by logging in to your account. The site also allows both full-time and part-time students to download an application form.

Don't forget...

If you're going to study full-time, it's quicker and easier to apply online. You'll have your own account and can access it at any time. Full-time and part-time students can get help and advice with their application online at: www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance or by calling Student Finance England on **0845 300 5090**. Make sure you contact them if you need to ask any questions before completing your student finance application.

Applying for bursaries

Universities and colleges will make their own arrangements regarding the bursaries and other

financial support that they are offering, but in a number of cases this is also administered by the Student Loans Company on behalf of the university or college. When you fill in your application for student finance make sure you answer any questions on bursaries. If you are unsure how to apply for your university or college bursary contact them and ask what you need to do to make sure you get the bursary you're entitled to.

Don't forget...

Whether you are applying online or on paper you still have to supply supporting evidence of identity – like passport details (if you are a UK National you only need to give us your passport details – you do not have to send the passport). If you don't have a passport, you will need to send your birth certificate or adoption certificate – and, if you're applying for means tested support you will need to supply evidence of your household income. Your application will not be processed without this information.

Information that you will need to provide

You need to provide details like your National Insurance Number, your birth certificate and/or your passport number, so that we can check who you are and what you are entitled to. Your National Insurance Number is also needed to make sure that your first student loan payment is not delayed and further payments are not withheld. If you do not have your National Insurance Number, or you have forgotten it, contact HM Revenue and Customs National Insurance registration helpline on **0845 915 7006** for advice.

When is your money paid?

You must register on your course to release your money. The loan, grant and extra help you are entitled to will be paid directly into your bank or building society at the start of term. But don't worry if you do not have an account at the moment, you can set one up nearer the time you apply. If you opt to take out a Tuition Fee Loan, this will be paid direct to your university or college to cover the cost of your fees.

Repaying your loans

Repaying your loans

Any Tuition Fee Loans and/or Maintenance Loans you take while you study will be combined and added to your loan account. But you don't have to start paying anything back until the April after you have left your course.

Even then, you only start repaying the loans when you earn more than £15,000 a year, £1,250 a month or £288 a week (this is known as the repayment 'threshold') and then you pay 9% of your income above this amount. That means the more you earn, the more you pay back; the less you earn, the less you pay back. And if your income drops below the threshold, repayments will stop too and will only start again once your income rises back up. Student loans are not the same as commercial loans. The interest rate charged is set so that what you repay will be worth broadly the same, in real terms, as what you borrowed. Interest rates are set on 1 September each year. You begin to have interest added to your student loan account from when you take out the loan.

Repayments will usually be made automatically through the UK tax system which normally means you don't have to do anything. On a salary of £18,000 a year you would repay £5.19 a week, or if you were earning £25,000 a year, you would pay around £17.00 a week.

For first time borrowers, the Government will write off any of your student loan balances (except arrears) which are left unpaid 25 years after you leave your course.

Did you know...?

A repayment website, www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk has been set up to help your repayments run smoothly. You can monitor and manage your account, make extra payments and find out about any changes, including interest rates, on this website.

You can read or download a copy of the 'Terms and Conditions' guide at the website: www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance. Take some time to read these so that you understand your responsibilities and obligations for repayment. Student Finance England will send you a copy of the 'Terms and Conditions' with your paper form if you select this method of application.



Who else could help?

Student Money

Websites to help students manage money:

www.scholarship-search.org.uk,

www.whataboutmoney.info

and **www.uniaid.org.uk**

Connexions

Information and advice on a wide range of topics for students who normally live in England.

www.connexions-direct.com

You can get a copy of this guide, including braille, large print and audio versions, by calling the freephone Student Finance England publications line on **0800 731 9133**, quoting reference SFE/HTGFH/V10.

There is also a free textphone service available on **0800 328 8988**.

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