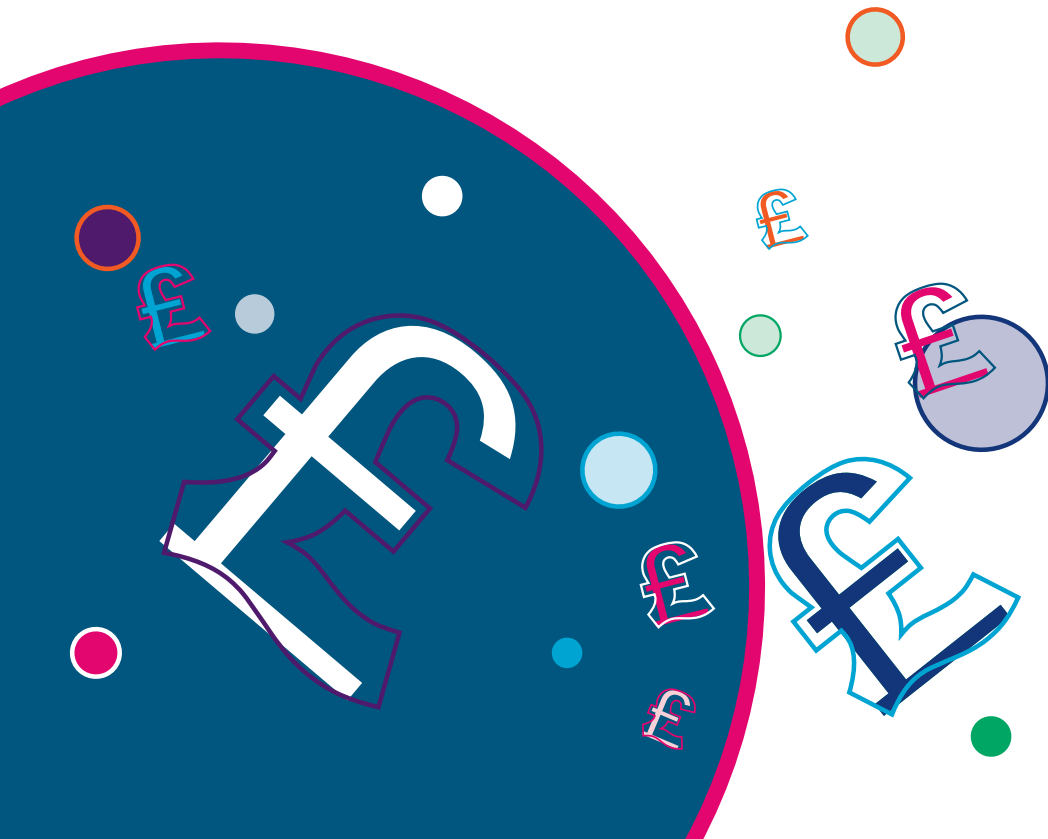


A GUIDE TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2011/2012



Contents

Introduction	1
Student Finance Wheel	2
1 Are you eligible for student finance?	3
2 What student finance can you get?	4
3 How and when to apply	7
4 Evidence you may need to provide	8
5 Receive notification of what you will get	9
6 Next steps	9
Other sources of funding	10
Useful contacts	10
Checklist	11



Introduction

Student Finance England is a partnership between the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Student Loans Company. We provide financial support on behalf of the UK Government to English students entering higher education in the UK.

We are here to help and can offer you financial support when you need it most – during your studies.

This guide is for you if you normally live in England and are **starting** or **continuing** a part-time higher-education course, anywhere in the UK, in 2011/12.

You can also get more information from **www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance** or you can follow us on Facebook and Twitter to get regular updates.



[facebook.com/SFEngland](https://www.facebook.com/SFEngland)



twitter.com/sf_england

This book is for guidance only and is not a statement of law.



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Student Finance Wheel

The student finance wheel is your step-by-step guide to finding out what financial help you can get and how you go about getting it. If you're starting or continuing on a part-time course this year, our guide will help you find out everything you need to know about student finance.



1 Are you eligible for student finance?

There are some conditions you have to meet to be eligible for student finance.

These include:

- where you live;
- your university or college;
- your course; and
- whether you've studied before.

For more information about how we use the information in your application to decide how much student finance you may receive please read '**How you are assessed and paid**', which is available at www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms2011

In 2004 loans for part-time study were replaced by the **Fee Grant** and the **Course Grant**. If you took out a loan earlier in your course and you want information on how you will repay visit www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk



2 What student finance can you get?

Summary

There are two types of grant available for part-time students - the **Fee Grant** and the **Course Grant**. You don't have to pay either of these back. The following tables show how much you might get, and how this is worked out.

Fee Grant

What is it for?	The Fee Grant covers the cost of the fees charged by your university or college.
How much can I get?	You could get up to £1,230 depending on how intensive your course is (see below) and the cost of your course fees. How much you get will also depend on your household income.

How intensive your course is

Maximum Fee Grant you can receive

50% to 59% of the equivalent full-time course.	Up to £820 or the cost of the fees charged by your college, whichever is lower.
60% to 74% of the equivalent full-time course.	Up to £985 or the cost of the fees charged by your college, whichever is lower.
75% or more of the equivalent full-time course.	Up to £1,230 or the cost of the fees charged by your college, whichever is lower.

How is it paid?	We pay the Fee Grant direct to your university or college.
Do I have to pay it back?	No.
Anything else?	<p>You can't get a Fee Grant if you already have a qualification at the same level as, or a higher level than, the one you are going to study for.</p> <p>If you live in England but your university or college is in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland the amount of student finance you get may be different. You should contact your university or college for more information.</p>



How the intensity of your course is worked out

Course intensity is how long it takes to complete your part-time course compared to the equivalent full-time course. So, if your course takes six years to complete and the full-time equivalent takes three, the intensity of your course will be 50%.

The intensity of your course is worked out by taking the number of part-time units (such as credits, credit points or modules) that you will be studying in the academic year and dividing it by the number of units that you would complete in one academic year if you were studying your course full-time. The result is then multiplied by 100 to give the intensity of your course as a percentage.

So, the formula to work this out is as follows.
Part-time units ÷ full-time units x 100 = the intensity of your course as a percentage (%)

The level of intensity of your course can be different from one year to another. You can study at a level of below 50% and receive a Fee Grant at the 50% rate as long as you can still complete your course in no longer than twice the time it would take to get the same qualification if you studied full-time. For example, if the full time course is four years, you must complete your part-time course in no more than eight years.

If you are not sure about the number of credits, credit points or modules you will be studying in each academic year you should speak to your university or college.

Course Grant

What is it for?	The Course Grant can help with the cost of books, travel and other course-related expenses.
How much can I get?	You could get up to £265 depending on your household income.

Your household income

Maximum Course Grant you can get

Up to £26,029	Full Course Grant of £265.
£26,030 to £28,064	Course Grant of £265 less £1 for every £9.47 of your income over £26,030.
£28,065	£50 Course Grant.
£28,066 and over	No Course Grant.

How is it paid?	We pay the Course Grant into your bank account in one lump sum.
Do I have to pay it back?	No.
Anything else?	You can't get a Course Grant if you already have a qualification at the same level as, or a higher level than, the one you are going to study for.

Students with a disability

If you have a disability, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty and are studying at a rate equal to at least 50% of the equivalent full-time course, you may be able to get Disabled Students' Allowances.

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)

What is it for?	DSAs can help pay the extra costs you may have in relation to your course as a direct result of your disability, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty.
How much can I get?	How much you can get does not depend on your household income but will depend on an individual needs assessment. The table below shows the help you may be able to get.

Specialist equipment allowance	Up to £5,161 for the whole course .
Non-medical helper allowance	Up to £15,390 a year .
General allowance	Up to £1,293 a year .
Travel allowance	Reasonable spending on extra travel costs you may have to pay to get to your university or college course because of your disability.

How is it paid?	We will pay the money direct to the supplier of the service(s) - for example, your university, college or equipment supplier - or into your bank account.
Do I have to pay it back?	No.
Anything else?	<p>If you want to apply for DSAs you should fill in a Disabled Students' Allowances application as well as the main application form. You can download this from www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms2011 and return it to us with the main application form.</p> <p>For more detailed information, you can download the guide 'Bridging The Gap: A guide to the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) in higher education' from our website. The guide is also available on audio, braille, and large print.</p> <p>You can order forms and guides in braille, large print or audio by emailing with your name and address, 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.</p>

3 How and when to apply

So now you know what financial support is available, how do you go about getting it?

Step 1

Part-time application forms (PTG1 form 2011/12) will be available from August 2011. Make sure you fill in all the sections of the application form that apply to you.

If you are a **new student** you can download the form and its notes from www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms2011 or you can get an application pack (form, notes and this guide) from your university or college.

If you are a **continuing student** we will email you an application pack. If you don't receive one you can download the PTG1 form 2011/12 and it's notes from www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms2011 or get one from your university or college.

Step 2

Once you have filled in your application form, take it to your university or college so that they can:

- confirm that you are a student;
- work out the intensity of your course (see page 5); and
- confirm the fees they charge for your course.

If you are a **new student**, your university or college will fill in their part of the form once you have completed the first two weeks of your course.

If you are a **continuing student**, your university or college will fill in their part of the form once you have enrolled for this academic year.

Step 3

Once your university or college has filled in their part, they will return the form to you. You should then send it back to us, with any evidence we have asked for, to the address on the application form.

Remember to return the form within six months of the first day of your course.

Step 4

Once we have received your application, we will assess it to make sure you are eligible for student finance and you have sent us all the information and evidence we asked for.

You can continue to apply for financial support for up to eight years. This is because some full-time degrees can take four years to complete, so you can receive financial support for up to twice the length of the full-time course.

We will pay any Fee Grant direct to your university or college. We will pay any Course Grant into your bank account.



4 Evidence you may need to provide

Proof of your identity

The first time you apply for student finance, you'll need to prove your identity – this is to help us check that you are eligible for student finance.

The easiest way to prove your identity is to give us your UK passport number. You can do this easily by filling in your details on the application. We can then check and confirm your identity without you having to send us your passport.

If you don't have a passport you will need to send us your birth or adoption certificate. You will also need to fill-in a 'Birth/Adoption Certificate Declaration Form 2011/12' available from www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms2011 and send this with your certificate.

If you are a non-UK passport holder, you will need to send your valid non-UK passport to us at the address on the application form.

These must be original documents, not photocopies. We will return them to you once we have confirmed your identity and checked that you are eligible for student finance.

Proof of your household income

To apply for part-time grants you will need to provide us with financial information and send in evidence of your household income. This is to make sure that you get all the student finance you're entitled to.

You should provide evidence (for example a P60 or payslips) of any financial information you have told us about on your application form.

Important - Please don't send original financial documents. We are happy to accept photocopies. We will not return copies of anything you send us as proof of your household income - once we have finished with them we will destroy them securely.



5 Receive notification of what you will get



Once we have assessed your application, we will send you a 'Financial Notification Letter' showing what student finance you are entitled to. Keep this safe as you may have to show it to your university or college.



6 What happens next?

Remember, you need to re-apply for student finance for each year of your course. You should fill in the part-time application form (PTG1) each year. You will only need to provide proof of your identity the first time you apply. If you are applying for Disabled Students' Allowances you will have to re-apply for these each year too.

Please remember that the amount of student finance that is available may change each year.



Other sources of funding

If you are studying with the Open University (OU)

If you are studying with the OU you should apply to them direct. The OU has its own application form which you should fill in and return to them. You should contact the OU Financial Support team either by emailing them at general-enquiries@open.ac.uk or by phoning them on **01908 653 411**.

Higher Education Bursary

If you are leaving local authority care and you're going into higher education, you may be able to get a one-off bursary of £2,000 from your local authority. For more information, speak to the student support office at your university or college or your personal advisor at your local authority.

Benefits

As a part-time student you can usually still claim benefits that depend on your household income (means-tested benefits), such as income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance and Council Tax Benefit if you are unemployed.

Jobcentre Plus and your local authority's benefit department will not treat the Fee Grant or Course Grant as income when assessing any means-tested benefit.

Please remember that the information given in this guide is general. If you think you may be eligible for any of the benefits mentioned, please contact your local Jobcentre Plus office or your local authority's benefit department or student services department.

Useful contacts

Student Finance England

You can go to www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance or phone us on **0845 300 5090** (textphone **0845 604 4434**) between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 5.30pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Educational Grants Advisory Service (EGAS)

EGAS is an independent advice service for people who want to get funding for further or higher education. It mainly helps students who are not eligible for funding from the Government. You can phone the EGAS information line on **0207 254 6251** or visit www.family-action.org.uk

Scholarship Search UK

This provides information about other sources of funding for undergraduates. www.scholarship-search.org.uk

National Union of Students (NUS)

You can get more information from the NUS website at www.nus.org.uk



Checklist



If you don't already have an application form (PTG1 2011/12) you can download one now from **www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms2011** or you can get one from your university or college.

Step complete

Fill in the application form. Please make sure you fill in all the sections that apply to you.

Step complete

Take the form to your university or college so that they can fill in their part of the form.

Step complete

If you are a **new** student, you can do this once you have completed the first two weeks of your course.

If you are a **continuing** student, you can do this once you have enrolled for this academic year.

Step complete

Send the form to us, along with any evidence we have asked for, within six months of your course starting.

Step complete

If you need more information go to **www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance** or follow us on Facebook and Twitter to get regular updates.



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