

SAAS

Student Awards Agency Scotland

Are you
ready?

Funding Guide
2015-2016

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This booklet offers general guidance only and is not binding. We assess each person applying based on their circumstances in line with the information they provide in a filled-in application.

Eligibility

To be eligible for support you must meet our residence conditions and be on a course we support.

Generally, to qualify for support you must be:

- ordinarily resident (see note 1 below) in the UK Channel Islands and Isle of Man for three years immediately before the first day of the first academic year of the course;
- settled in the UK as described in the Immigration Act 1971;
- ordinarily resident in Scotland on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- studying full-time in higher education.

The first day of the first academic year of a course is known as the 'relevant date'. For those who start a course in the autumn term, the relevant date is 1 August.

If you don't meet the general residence conditions above, you may still be eligible to apply to us for support in certain circumstances.

The residence eligibility conditions can be complicated. If you are in any doubt about your residence status, you should contact us for advice or visit our website for more information.

'Ordinarily resident has been defined in the courts as 'habitual and normal residence in one place.' It basically means that you live in a country year after year by choice through a set period, apart from temporary or occasional absences such as holidays or business trips. Living here totally or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education does not count as being ordinarily resident.

Tuition fees

If you are studying full-time in Scotland, and you meet our eligibility conditions, we will pay your fees each year. The standard rate we will pay this year is as follows.

HNC, HND or equivalent	£1,285
Degree or equivalent	£1,820

We do not pay your fees automatically when you accept a place on a course. You must apply to us to have your fees paid in each year of your course. We will then pay your fees straight to your college or university.

If you are studying elsewhere in the UK, you will have to pay your own fees. The amount you will pay each year will be up to **£9,000**. You should contact the college or university you are studying at to find out the amount of tuition fee they will charge you. If you meet our eligibility conditions, you can choose to take out a student loan to pay all or some of your fees. The amount of loan you can get does not depend on your and your household's income.

Part-time fee grant

The part-time fee grant is available if you are studying with a Scottish college, university or approved training provider.

To qualify for this funding, you should have an individual income of £25,000 a year or less. The level of tuition fee we can pay will depend on the number of credits you do and the qualification you are studying.

Please check our website for more details.

Course information

The full-time courses we give funding for are shown below.

- Higher National Certificate (HNC)
- Higher National Diploma (HND)
- Degree
- Nursing and Midwifery Diploma and Degree
- PGDE - this is a course you do after your degree that qualifies you to teach

We will normally support you for the minimum number of years you need to complete your programme of study. We will allow you one extra year's funding to cover certain situations, such as a repeat year, year one of a degree if you hold HND or year one of HND if you hold HNC.

You should always contact us about your support if you are thinking about changing course.

Nursing and midwifery courses

Nursing and midwifery students who meet our residency conditions are eligible for a non-income-assessed bursary plus some extra income-assessed and non-income-assessed allowances.

Please check our website for more details.

Study abroad

There is a new initiative to extend student support in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 to eligible students who normally live in Scotland who want to study their full course elsewhere in the EU.

Please check our website for more details.

Young Students' Bursary (YSB) and student loan for living costs

You can apply for a bursary and loan for your general living costs while you study. Most school leavers will be classed as 'young'. Even if you haven't left school recently, you may still be eligible. We will use your gross household income (before tax) to work out how much you will get. See our website for more information on being a young student.

If you are eligible for a bursary, you will not have to repay it. If you decide to apply for a student loan, you **will** have to repay it. See page 7 for more information on student loans.

There is a loan available of up to £4,750 a year, no matter what your household income is. You can choose how much loan you want to take.

We normally pay your support in monthly instalments and the first instalment will be a double payment.

Young students			
Household Income	Bursary	Loan	Total
£0 to £16,999	£1,750	£5,750	£7,500
£17,000 to £23,999	£1,000	£5,750	£6,750
£24,000 to £33,999	£500	£5,750	£6,250
£34,000 and above	£0	£4,750	£4,750

Independent Students' Bursary (ISB) and student loan for living costs

You can apply for a bursary and loan for your general living costs while you study. If before the start of your course you are an 'independent' student, for example, you are 25, are married or living with a partner or you have a child who normally lives with you, you may be eligible for this bursary. We will use gross household income (before tax) to work out how much you will get. See our website for more information on being an independent student.

If you are eligible for a bursary, you will not have to repay it. If you decide to apply for a student loan, you **will** have to repay it. See page 7 for more information on student loans. To be eligible for a student loan, you must be under 50 on the first day of the first academic year of your course (the relevant date) or be aged 50 to 54 on the relevant and plan to return to employment after completing your course.

There is a loan available of up to £4,750 a year, no matter what your household income is. You can choose how much loan you want to take.

We normally pay your support in monthly instalments and the first instalment will be a double payment.

Independent students			
Household Income	Bursary	Loan	Total
£0 to £16,999	£750	£6,750	£7,500
£17,000 to £23,999	£0	£6,750	£6,750
£24,000 to £33,999	£0	£6,250	£6,250
£34,000 and above	£0	£4,750	£4,750

Household income

If your household income is £34,000 or more, you will not need to fill in the income section of the application.

The income we will take into account

- If your parents live together, we will use both their incomes.
- If your parents are separated, divorced or no longer live together, we will use the income of the parent you normally live with.
- If your parent lives with a partner or you have a step-parent, we will use their income as well as the parent you live with.
- If you are married or live with a partner, we will use their income.
- We do not take any earned income you have into account. However, if you have any unearned income, such as income from property, we will take this into account as part of the household income.

What income we take into account

For those who pay tax while they earn (PAYE), we take the total gross income. For those who are self-employed and those who have income from property, we take the taxable profit. For those who are unemployed, we only take replacement living-cost benefits into account, for example, Jobseeker's Allowance. Full details of the income we take into account are on the application.

Repaying your student loan

You do not have to take out a student loan. However, the student loan makes up the majority of most students' funding.

Student loans are cheaper than other types of finance such as bank loans, overdrafts, credit cards and so on. For example, when you are earning £20,000 a year, the repayments of your loan will be around £23 a month.

You will not have to start repaying your loan until the April after you graduate or leave your course. The Student Loans Company (SLC) will expect you to pay 9% of any income you earn over £17,335 a year. This threshold normally increases every year with inflation. You will not have to pay your loan over a fixed period.

The SLC will work with Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to collect repayments. Your employer will take your repayments from your salary and these will show on your pay statement each month. If you are self-employed, HMRC will collect repayments from you through the self-assessment system. If you want to pay your loan off quicker, you can make extra payments direct to the SLC.

Interest on the amount you owe will be linked to inflation, in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI). This means the amount you pay back will be about the same in real terms as the value of the amount you borrowed.

You can get more information about how you repay your student loan, and the current interest rate, from the SLC website at **www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk**.

EU students

You will be eligible to apply to us to pay your tuition fees if you meet all of the following conditions.

- You are an EU national, or the family member of an EU national, on the relevant date.
- You have been ordinarily resident in a member state of the EU or elsewhere in the EEA and Switzerland for the three years immediately before the first day of the first academic year of your course.
- You are taking a full-time course in Scotland and plan to graduate in Scotland.

If you are an EU national and you have lived in the UK and Islands (apart from temporary absences) for the three years before the first day of the first academic year of your course (1 August for a course starting in the autumn term), you may be eligible for a student loan, bursary and any other living-costs grants that may apply.

If you do not meet the conditions above, you may still be eligible to apply to us for support in certain circumstances.

The residence eligibility conditions can be complicated. If you are in any doubt about your residence status, you should contact us for advice or visit our website for more information.

Other living-costs grants

Depending on your personal circumstances, you may be able to apply for other living-costs grants that you do not have to pay back.

Dependants' Grant

You can claim this income-assessed grant for your husband, wife, civil partner, partner or other adult dependent you act as carer for. You cannot claim this grant for another student. If your husband, wife, civil partner, partner or other adult dependent you act as a carer for has any income, this may affect your entitlement. We will pay up to **£2,640** a year.

Lone Parents' Grant

You can claim this income-assessed grant if you are single, widowed, divorced, separated or your civil partnership has dissolved, and you are bringing up children on your own. We will pay up to **£1,305** a year.

Vacation Grant for Care Leavers

If you were previously in care, we can pay a grant of up to **£105** a week to help with accommodation costs in the long (summer) vacation.

Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

If you have a disability or learning difficulty, you may be eligible to claim for certain extra expenses that arise because you are on a course. The amount of support we can give you does not depend on your or your household income.

See our website for more information on these grants or contact us for advice.

How and when to apply

From April, you can apply for your fees, loan, bursary and grants. You should apply as soon as you know the course you want to do. Do not wait for exam results. If you don't get on the course you want, you can easily change or cancel your application through our online services.

The only way to apply for your support is to visit our website and apply online at **www.saas.gov.uk**.

Remember, if your household income is £34,000 or above, we will not ask you to fill in the income section of the application.

To make sure your funding is in place at the start of your course, you should send us a **correctly filled-in** application by **30 June**. Please remember to send us everything we ask for. If we have to write to you to ask for more information, your application will be delayed.

What you need to apply online

- A current email address
- Your SAAS reference number if you've applied before
- Your National Insurance number
- Your bank sort code and account number
- Your college or university and course details
- Details of your household income if this is less than £34,000 It is important that you keep your username and password safe. You will need these again to use our online services.

Evidence we may need

The 30 June date only applies to applications which have been **filled in correctly**. You may need to send documents to support your application. The quickest way to do this is through our document upload service.

	Evidence we need
Household income Household income <u>below</u> £34,000 Household income £34,000 and <u>above</u>	 When filling in your application, you can send proof of earnings such as P60s, and so on. You do not need to give us income details.
Proof of separation or divorce Are you or your parents separated or divorced?	Send us a solicitor's letter or divorce decree.
Lone Parent Grant (We need proof every year.)	Send proof you are a single parent. For example, your most recent tax credit letter or council tax bill. You will also need to send us one birth certificate (full version not short one) for a school-age (or younger) child.
Living with a partner Are you applying to be assessed on your partner's income instead of your parents?	We will need evidence that you are living with your partner before the start of your course. You can send us a joint mortgage or tenancy agreement or Jobcentre Plus documents.

Processing your application

You should send us a correctly filled-in application on or before **30 June 2015** to have your funding in place at the start of your course. You can track the progress of your application using your online account. We will work out your funding and send you an award notice that will tell you how much you will get and when.

We normally pay your support in monthly instalments and the first instalment will be a double payment.

Keeping in touch



Phone our helpline **0300 555 0505**



Visit our website **www.saas.gov.uk**



You can follow us on **facebook.com/saasfb**



You can follow us on **twitter.com/saastweet**



View our videos at **youtube.com/fundingawareness**

You can get to all of the above links through our website.

Other financial help

Discretionary fund

Every college or university has a fund that you can apply to if you are not able to enter higher education for financial reasons or have financial difficulties while you study. In Scotland this is called the discretionary fund. If you are studying elsewhere in the UK, these may be known as access to learning funds. To be eligible to apply for help, you must take out the maximum student loan available to you. The student support services team at your college or university is responsible for deciding who they make payments to and for how much.

Childcare fund

Every college or university has a childcare fund that you can apply to for help towards the cost of registered or formal childcare. To be eligible to apply for help, you must take out the maximum student loan available to you and be eligible to have your fees paid by your funding body.

University bursaries and scholarships

Most universities have their own bursaries and scholarships. Access to these can depend on your own academic and financial circumstances. You should visit your university website for more details and advice on how and when to apply.

Helpline: 0300 555 0505
www.saas.gov.uk

