

EQIA Summary: Placements

June 2022

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

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| Title of Policy | Placements policy - changes to the eligibility to the living cost support package |
| Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy | <p>Relevant National Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination • We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society <p>At present, only those on unpaid placements can access the Young Student Bursary (YSB) and Independent Student Bursary (ISB) aspect of the living-cost support package. The desired outcome is to extend eligibility to students on both paid and unpaid placements.</p> |
| Directorate: Division: team | <p>Advanced Learning and Science Directorate.</p> <p>Higher Education and Science: Student Financial Support Team.</p> |

Executive summary

A review of extending the bursary element of the living-cost support package to students on paid placements was carried out, of which this EQIA forms a part.

The EQIA identified that in general, positive impacts as a result of extending the eligibility of the bursary element of the living-cost support package to students on paid placements, would have a positive impact for all students on paid placements. It will increase the support available to

students on paid placements and keeps it consistent with the support available to those on unpaid placements.

Background

A project team was formed in late March 2021, comprising of officials from the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS), Higher Education and Science Division (HES) and SGLD, with the aim of consolidating and updating the student support regulations to ensure greater clarity and consistency.

As well as consolidating the existing regulations, the project team will also consider current support policies which are not supported by regulations and those in which we would be potentially vulnerable to challenge – one such area is the placements policy.

Currently, only those students on unpaid placements are able to access the Young Student Bursary (YSB) and the Independent Student Bursary (ISB) element of the living-cost support package.

Those on paid placements can only access the loan element of the living-cost support package, unless they are care-experienced and are entitled to the Care Experienced Bursary (CEB), which is accessible for students on paid and unpaid placements.

These changes contribute to the following national outcomes:

- We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination
- We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society

The Scope of the EQIA

As the change to extend the eligibility of the bursary element of the student support package to those students on paid placements is intended as a positive change for all prospective students, it is considered a concise and focused EQIA is proportionate in these circumstances.

At present, referring to statistics provided by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS), there are 515 students on paid placements, who would be affected by this policy change.

The EQIA considered key data regarding the age and gender of students on paid placements in the academic year 2019/20, from SAAS.

However, extending the eligibility to the bursary element of the living cost support package will apply to all students on paid placements, regardless of age and gender and is therefore seen as a positive change for all.

Key Findings

The EQIA identified that there are gaps in the information available relating to the characteristics of students on paid placements and therefore the impact that extending the eligibility to the bursary element of the living-cost support package will have on the protected characteristics.

However, opening up student support to students on paid placements is seen as a positive change as it allows those in higher education to access full living-cost support and achieves consistency in the support offered to those on unpaid placements.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In conclusion, positive impacts as a result of extending the bursary element of the living-cost support package to those on paid placements, have been identified for students in all equality groups.

As SAAS gather statistical data on student applications, we will be able to monitor the impact of this policy change on relevant groups going forward.



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The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80435-578-7 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, June 2022

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1099642 (06/22)

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