



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Student Finance Wales Information Notice

SFWIN 01/2022

Amendments to be included in the Student Support Regulations
for Academic Year 2022/23

January 2022

Amendments to be included in the Student Support and associated Regulations for Academic Year 2022/23

The Education (Student Finance) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2022 (“the 2022 Regulations”) are currently being drafted and, once made, will provide support for students ordinarily resident in Wales taking a designated course of higher education.

The 2022 Regulations which are due to come into force on 23 February 2022, apply to academic years beginning on or after 1 August 2022 and make the changes as set out below:

1. Financial package

1.1 Regulations are being amended to change the amount of undergraduate support in line with established policy, as follows:

- to **increase** the overall amount of Disabled Student’s Grant (DSG) available to new and continuing students by the projected rate of inflation of 2.2 per cent to reflect cost of living increases;
- to **increase** the amount of Grants for Dependants available to new and continuing students by the projected rate of inflation (2.2 per cent);
- to **increase** the amount of maintenance loan available to those students who began their courses on or after 1 August 2018, to ensure that the overall maintenance package reflects the National Living Wage projection for 2022 (National Living Wage hourly rate £9.52);
- to **increase** the amount of maintenance loan available to those students who began their courses on or after 1 September 2012 but before 1 August 2018 by the projected rate of inflation (2.2 per cent) to reflect cost of living increases; and
- to **decrease** the amount of tuition fee grant and **increase** the amount of tuition fee loan for those students who began their courses on or after 1 September 2012 but before 1 August 2018 by the projected rate of inflation so that overall tuition fee support is unchanged.

1.2 Further detail on this is included in SFWIN 10/2021, in relation to publication of the Financial Memorandum.

2. Removal of provisions relating to the EUSS “grace period”

- 2.1 The ‘application deadline’ and ‘grace period’ associated with the EU Settlement Scheme ended on 30 June 2021. These are provided for in the Citizens’ Rights (Application Deadline and Temporary Protection) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020. A person was able to apply for leave under the EU Settlement Scheme until the application deadline of 30 June 2021. Certain rights conferred by the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016 are also maintained, despite the revocation of those regulations, until that date – the ‘grace period’. Further, where the grace period has ended and a person has made a valid application which has not been decided, the period is extended until a decision is made – the ‘relevant period’.
- 2.2 Provision was made in the Education (Student Finance) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) (EU Exit) Regulations 2021 to ensure that those applying for student support who had applied for leave to remain under the EUSS during the grace period were not inadvertently made ineligible for student support. A necessary amendment has been made to undergraduate student support regulations to remove references to the grace period (only).

3. Afghan Nationals

- 3.1 On 29 December 2020, the Defence Secretary and Home Secretary announced the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). This is a new scheme that will offer relocation or other assistance to current and former Locally Employed Staff in Afghanistan to reflect the changing situation in Afghanistan. The ARAP scheme launched on 01 April 2021 and will continue to remain open and operate indefinitely.
- 3.2 In addition, due to recent events in Afghanistan, the UK Government announced details of a new scheme in August 2021 known as the ‘Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)’. The ACRS has been established to provide protection for Afghan citizens who have contributed to civil society or who face a particular risk, for example, because of their role in standing up for democracy and human rights, or because of their gender, sexuality or religion.
- 3.3 An amendment will be made to regulations to make provision for Afghan citizens who are granted leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom under ARAP or ACRS to be eligible for student support in line with other protection-based categories and to be eligible for home fee status and tuition fee cap. This will be extended to the spouse, civil partner or any dependent children who have been granted leave in line under the ARAP or ACRS.

4. Students from the Crown Dependencies who come to Wales to study

- 4.1 Students from the Crown Dependencies who come to Wales to study will be eligible for the tuition fee cap and home fee status for courses beginning on or after 1 August 2022. Regulations will be amended to remove the provisions which currently prevent a person who is ordinarily resident in the UK as a result of having moved from the Islands to undertake a course from being treated as ordinarily resident in the UK. The removal of these provisions will enable those persons to benefit from home fee status and, in the case of higher education courses, tuition fee caps, provided they also satisfy all other relevant eligibility criteria. However such persons will remain ineligible for student funding.

5. International Learning and Exchange (ILE) programme

- 5.1 The Welsh Government is developing the ILE programme, which will ensure that the opportunities Erasmus+ provided for learners and providers in Wales continue to be available. An amendment to regulations is made to include reference to the ILE, to ensure the correct provision of support to those participating in the 2022/23 academic year.

6. Postgraduate Masters Social Work students – Disabled Student's Grant

- 6.1 An amendment is made to the undergraduate student support regulations to make certain postgraduate Masters students eligible for the Disabled Student's Grant, where applicable. These are students who are in receipt of a bursary under section 116(2)(a) of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 – usually a bursary from Social Care Wales.