



To:

Higher education institutions in Wales providing designated higher education courses
Further education institutions in Wales providing designated higher education courses
Other providers providing designated higher education courses
The Student Loans Company
UCAS
The Open University in Wales
Student Finance Wales Stakeholder Group
NUS Wales
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
Universities Wales
Colleges Wales
and other interested parties

December 2018

Dear Colleague

CHANGES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE WELSH STUDENT SUPPORT REGULATIONS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20

The Education (Student Finance) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2019 (“the 2019 Regulations”) are currently being drafted and, if made, will provide support for students ordinarily resident in Wales taking a designated course of higher education. The 2019 Regulations will apply to the provision of support to new undergraduate students in relation to an academic year which begins on or after 1 August 2019 and will also apply to students who are continuing on courses which began on or after 1 August 2018. The Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 will be amended and will apply to the provision of support to students who are continuing on courses that began before 1 August 2018.

ENQUIRIES

If you have any queries about the 2019 Regulations or wish to comment on this Information Notice, please contact the Higher Education Division in writing at the address below or by email (HEConsultationMailbox@gov.wales).



Summary of changes to student support regulations for AY 2019/20

The next set of student support regulations are expected to be referred to as the Education (Student Finance) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2019.

Financial Package

1. Increase in the amount of disabled students grant

The amount of disabled student’s grant available to all eligible students ordinarily resident in Wales will increase by 6.1 per cent. Table 1 below sets out the existing and increased amounts of support. The increased amounts will apply to both new and continuing students (i.e. all cohorts) in 2019/20.

The maximum amounts of support available to disabled students ordinarily resident in Wales has not changed since 2012. The maximum amounts available to students ordinarily resident in England were increased by the UK Government in 2018/19. The increase will ensure that Welsh students are not disadvantaged when compared to their English counterparts.

The UK Government has advised that it intends to increase the amount of disabled student’s grant available to postgraduate students to £20,000 in 2019/20. Providing for the same increase in the 2019 Regulations will ensure that students ordinarily resident in Wales are able to access support of the same magnitude to that available to their English counterparts.

Table 1

Case	Current amount in 2018/19	Increased amount in 2019/20
Expenditure required on a non-medical personal helper	£21,181 (full-time) £15,885 (part-time)	£22,472 (full-time) £16,853 (part-time)
Expenditure required on major items of specialist equipment	£5,332	£5,657
Regulation 63 Other expenditure	£1,785 (full-time) £1,338 (part-time)	£1,894 (full-time) £1,420 (part-time)
Amount of disabled postgraduate student’s grant	£10,590	£20,000

2. Increase the amount of maintenance support made available to 2018 cohort students in accordance with established policy

The amount of maintenance loan available to those students who are ordinarily resident in Wales and began their courses on or after 1 August 2018 will be increased. The Diamond Review introduced the principle that maintenance support should be based upon the National Living Wage and the increase reflects the National Living Wage projection for 2019. The amount of base grant and maintenance grant and the associated income thresholds for means-testing are unchanged. Increasing loan rather than grant ensures continued affordability as the reforms phase in with the new cohort. This approach was established when the Welsh Government response to the Diamond Review.

The relevant tables in the Education (Student Support) (Wales) 2018 Regulations (as amended) that require updating are illustrated in Table 2 below, which sets out the existing rates and the proposed increased amounts.

Table 2

Table reference	Loan amount in 2018/19	Loan amount in 2019/20
Table 7, Category 1, Living at home	£6,650	£6,840
Table 7, Category 1, London rate	£10,250	£10,530
Table 7, Category 1, Elsewhere rate	£8,000	£8,225
Table 7, Category 2, Elsewhere rate	£3,325	£3,420
Table 7, Category 3, London rate	£5,125	£5,265
Table 7, Category 3, London rate	£4,000	£4,110
Table 8, Living at home	£7,650	£7,840
Table 8, London rate	£11,250	£11,530
Table 8, Elsewhere rate	£9,000	£9,225
Table 8A, Living at home	£3,325	£3,420
Table 8A, London rate	£5,125	£5,265
Table 8A, Elsewhere rate	£4,000	£4,110
Table 9, Living at home	£80	£84
Table 9, London rate	£153	£162
Table 9, Elsewhere rate	£120	£127

Student Finance Wales Information Notice (SFWIN05 /2018)

Table reference	Loan amount in 2018/19	Loan amount in 2019/20
Table 10	£5,650	£5,815
Table 10 A	£6,650	£6,815

3. Increase the amount of maintenance support made available to 2012 cohort students in accordance with established policy

The amount of maintenance support made available to those students who are ordinarily resident in Wales and began their courses on or after 1 September 2012 but before 1 August 2018 is increased each year in order to reflect cost of living increases. For 2019/20, maintenance support is being increased in the way established for previous cohorts, via an uplift to the maintenance loan (to ensure affordability) equivalent to the projected increase in RPIX of 2.8% for the 2019-20 financial year (OBR projection). The amount of maintenance grant and the associated income thresholds for means-testing are unchanged.

The relevant regulations in the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended) that require updating are as illustrated in Table 3 below, which sets out the existing rates and the proposed increased amounts.

Table 3

Regulation reference	Loan amount in 2018/19	Loan amount in 2019/20
Regulation 43, paragraph 2(i)	£5,529	£5,684
Regulation 43, paragraph 2(ii)	£10,007	£10,288
Regulation 43, paragraph 2(iii)	£8,517	£8,756
Regulation 43, paragraph 2(iv)	£8,517	£8,756
Regulation 43, paragraph 2(v)	£7,143	£7,344
Regulation 43, paragraph 3(i)	£5,006	£5,147
Regulation 43, paragraph 3(ii)	£9,112	£9,368
Regulation 43, paragraph 3(iii)	£7,408	£7,616
Regulation 43, paragraph 3(iv)	£7,408	£7,616
Regulation 43, paragraph 3(v)	£6,617	£6,803
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (a) (i)	£2,625	£2,699
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (a) (ii)	£4,920	£5,058
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (a) (iii)	£3,500	£3,598
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (a) (iv)	£3,500	£3,598

Student Finance Wales Information Notice (SFWIN05 /2018)

Regulation reference	Loan amount in 2018/19	Loan amount in 2019/20
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (a) (v)	£3,500	£3,598
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (b) (i)	£2,625	£2,699
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (b) (ii)	£4,920	£5,058
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (b) (iii)	£4,186	£4,304
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (b) (iv)	£4,186	£4,304
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (b) (v)	£3,500	£3,598
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (c) (i)	£4,147	£4,263
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (c) (ii)	£7,505	£7,716
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (c) (iii)	£6,388	£6,567
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (c) (iv)	£6,388	£6,567
Regulation 45, paragraph (1) (c) (v)	£5,357	£5,508
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (a) (i)	£1,996	£2,052
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (a) (ii)	£3,763	£3,869
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (a) (iii)	£2,727	£2,804
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (a) (iv)	£2,727	£2,804
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (a) (v)	£2,727	£2,804
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (b) (i)	£1,996	£2,052
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (b) (ii)	£3,763	£3,869
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (b) (iii)	£3,060	£3,146
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (b) (iv)	£3,060	£3,146
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (b) (v)	£2,727	£2,804
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (c) (i)	£3,755	£3,860
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (c) (ii)	£6,834	£7,026
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (c) (iii)	£5,556	£5,712
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (c) (iv)	£5,556	£5,712
Regulation 45, paragraph (2) (c) (v)	£4,963	£5,102
Regulation 50 paragraph 1 (a)	£80	£84

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Regulation reference	Loan amount in 2018/19	Loan amount in 2019/20
Regulation 50 paragraph 1 (b)	£153	£162
Regulation 50 paragraph 1 (c)	£166	£177
Regulation 50 paragraph 1 (d)	£166	£177
Regulation 50 paragraph 1 (e)	£120	£127

4. Adjust the balance between tuition fee grant and tuition fee loan for 2012 cohort students in accordance with established policy

In line with longstanding policy introduced in the 2012/13 academic year, the amount of tuition fee grant is being decreased and tuition fee loan increased for 2012 cohort students by the projected rate of inflation (RPIX OBR projection, as above).

The relevant provisions in the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 as amended that require amending are illustrated in Table 4 below, which sets out the existing rates and the proposed amended amounts.

Table 4

Regulation reference	Amount in 2018/19	Amount in 2019/20
<i>Fee grant</i>		
Regulation 16, paragraph 3, sub-paragraph (a)	£4,800	£4,665
Regulation 16, paragraph 3, sub-paragraph (b)	£4,200	£4,335
Regulation 16, paragraph 4, sub-paragraph (a)	£2,480	£2,410
Regulation 16, paragraph 4, sub-paragraph (b)	£2,020	£2,090
<i>Fee loan</i>		
Regulation 19, paragraph 3, sub-paragraph (a)	£4,200	£4,335
Regulation 19, paragraph 4, sub-paragraph (a)	£2,020	£2,090

5. Accelerated degrees

The UK Government laid regulations on 29 November 2018 to implement a higher fee cap – £11,100 – for accelerated degree courses, degrees which last two years rather than the usual three. This change will apply to new students starting courses in 2019/20 onwards. The UK Government also proposes to increase the maximum amount of fee support available to English students to £11,100 to match the fee cap.

There has been a great deal of uncertainty as to whether a change in UK Government policy would be possible given the demands on Parliamentary time. The UK Government indicated an intention to press ahead with legislation in November 2018. This is not conducive to making regulations for the launch of the student support cycle for the 2019/20 academic year.

Separately, the consultation ‘Public Good and a Prosperous Wales’ (WG33639), which closed on 17 July 2018, set out the current situation with respect to the provision of accelerated degrees by institutions in Wales, and sought views from stakeholders on the potential need for legislative reform. Analysis of the responses showed general agreement regarding the future availability of accelerated degrees in Wales. However, many stakeholders felt that this would benefit from being the subject of a distinct consultation which could consider all the issues, a position with which the Welsh Government agrees.

Taken together, these factors mean it is neither possible nor desirable to develop and engage on a complete new policy for the provision of support for accelerated degrees in time for the start of the Student Finance Wales application cycle for the 2019/20 academic year. No additional support will be made available to students ordinarily resident in Wales who undertake an accelerated a degree course in England in 2019/20.

A consultation is planned ahead of the 2020/21 academic year.