

Postgraduate Loans for Master's Degrees - Wales

Higher Education Student Finance in Wales Academic Year 2024/25 – Version 1.0 – 13/06/2024

Summary

Attached is the “Postgraduate Loans for Master's Degrees - Wales” Guidance for the academic year (AY) 24/25.

Regulation References

As of AY 19/20 there are two sets of Regulations governing postgraduate funding in Wales. References to “the Regulations” in this document mean the Education (Student Support) (Postgraduate Master's Degrees) (Wales) Regulations 2019¹ (as amended). These regulations contain the regulatory rules governing Postgraduate Support for Master's Degree's for Wales domiciled students starting PGM courses from AY 19/20. These regulations are separate from the Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2017² (as amended), which govern postgraduate loans for students starting PGM courses in AY 17/18 and AY 18/19. These Regulations are also separate to the Education (Postgraduate Doctoral Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2018³ (as amended), which govern postgraduate loans for doctoral study, and the consolidated Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018⁴ (as amended), which govern undergraduate student support.

The repayment terms for postgraduate loans are contained within the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) Regulations 2009 (as amended)⁵. Repayment terms for postgraduate loans for PGM degrees are described in the separate document “Repayment Guidance”.

Please note this guidance is for Student Finance Wales (SFW) students only.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2019/895/contents/made>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/523/contents/made>

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2018/656/contents/made>

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2018/191/contents/made>

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2009/470/contents/made>

Any queries on the content of this guidance should be addressed to the SLC using the following contacts:

Team	Telephone	Email
Student Support Team	0300 100 0618	SSIN_queries@slc.co.uk

Disclaimer

This guidance is designed to assist with the interpretation of the Regulations as they stand at the time of publication. It does not cover every aspect of student support, nor does it constitute legal advice or a definitive statement of the law. Whilst every endeavour has been made to ensure the information contained is correct at the time of publication, no liability is accepted regarding the contents and the Regulations, as detailed above, remain the legal basis of the postgraduate support for PGM courses for AY 24/25. In the event of anomalies between this guidance and the Regulations, the Regulations prevail. Please note that the Regulations are subject to amendment.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full
AY	Academic Year
CMS	Courses Management Service
CPR	Compelling Personal Reasons
DAP	Degree Awarding Power
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DSA	Disabled Students' Allowance
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
FT	Full Time
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HE	Higher Education
HECOS	Higher Education Classification of Subjects
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEP	Higher Education Provider
HHI	Household Income
HMPO	His Majesty's Passport Office
HO	Home Office
ICR	Income Contingent Repayment
ITT	Initial Teacher Training

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KESS 2	Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships 2
MAY	Multi Academic Year
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NHS	National Health Service
NHS BSA	National Health Service Business Services Authority
NI	Northern Ireland
NINO	National Insurance Number
OD	Ordinary Duration
PC	Previous Course
PG	Postgraduate
PGD	Postgraduate Doctoral
PGLD	Postgraduate Loans for Doctoral Degrees
PGLM	Postgraduate Loans for Master's Degrees
PGM	Postgraduate Master's
PGM Funding	Postgraduate Master's Loan and Grant
PT	Part Time
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
rUK	Rest of the UK
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
SAAS	Student Awards Agency Scotland
SFE	Student Finance England
SFNI	Student Finance Northern Ireland
SFW	Student Finance Wales
SLC	Student Loans Company
SRDD	Statutory Repayment Due Date
UC	Universal Credit
UK	United Kingdom
UG	Undergraduate
WG	Welsh Government

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1 Introduction

The Welsh Government (WG) provide a non-income assessed PGLM of up to £18,950 to eligible students commencing study on designated PGM courses in AY 24/25. The PGLM is a contribution towards course costs, rather than a loan specifically required to be used for fees or maintenance, and applies to the duration of the designated course. The funding is paid directly to the student (or the HE provider in the case of eligible prisoners), and how the funds are used is at the student's discretion.

This guidance describes the regulatory policy rules for PGLM, including:

- Personal eligibility requirements
- Course designation requirements
- Loan entitlement
- Changes of student's circumstances

References to separate guidance documents for undergraduate students are made within this document, where that guidance contains more detailed information on existing policy rules that apply to both UG student funding and PGLM.

1.1 Students starting courses in previous academic years

For those eligible students who began a designated PGM course in previous academic year between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2024, the PG Master's Funding package was a combination of grant and loan. For related guidance on the funding package available to these students, please refer to the guidance chapter for the relevant academic year that the student's study began.

Note this guidance chapter offers guidance in relation to the non-income assessed PGLM support package available to eligible students starting courses in AY 24/25.

2 Personal eligibility

The personal eligibility criteria for PGLM are set out in regulations 9 and 10 and Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

PGLM is available to eligible students who satisfy the personal eligibility criteria and who:

- begin a designated PGM course on or after 1 August 2024; and
- have not transferred to the current PGM course from a PGM course beginning before 1 August 2024.

For related guidance on the funding package available to students who began a designated PGM course between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2024, please refer to the guidance chapter for the relevant academic year that the student's study began.

2.1 Discretion in the application of eligibility rules

PGLM is only available to eligible students in respect of courses that satisfy regulatory personal eligibility and course designation criteria. The Student Loans Company (SLC) should not therefore apply discretion in the application of PGLM policy rules, other than the limited discretion outlined in this document, including SLC discretion as to when to award extra support for compelling personal reasons (CPR).

2.2 Eligibility exclusions - general

Students are ineligible for PGLM under regulation 10 if they:

- Are aged 60 or over on the first day of the first academic year of the course;
- Are in breach of any obligation to repay any student loan;
- Have reached the age of 18 and have not ratified any agreement for a loan made when they were under 18;
- Have shown themselves by their conduct to be unfitted to receive support;
- Are a prisoner; (unless they are an eligible prisoner – for more information on eligible prisoners, see section [Prisoner students \(eligibility\)](#));
- Are already enrolled on and in receipt of support for another eligible PGM course **or** are enrolled on a course which is a designated course under;
 - regulation 5 (Designated Courses), regulation 66 (Designated Distance Learning Courses) or regulation 83 (Designated Part-Time Courses) of the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017; or
 - regulation 5 (Designated Courses) of the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018; or
 - regulation 4 (Designated Courses) of the Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2017; or
 - regulation 4 (Designated Courses) of the Education (Postgraduate Doctoral Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2018

and are receiving student support for their course under the applicable Regulations;

- Have already received an equivalent or higher level qualification;
- Have previously received PGLM or PGM Funding (including any loan support received in respect of a PG course under the Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2017) but excluding any Disabled Students' Allowance the student has received). Note that exceptions for CPR apply, as detailed in the [Compelling Personal Reasons](#) section of this guidance;

- Are in receipt of the following in respect of their designated PGM course:
 - a healthcare bursary;
 - any allowance under the Nursing and Midwifery Student Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007;
 - any allowance, bursary or award of similar description made under section 67(4)(a) of the Care Standards Act 2000, or under section 46 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, save to the extent that the student is eligible for such a payment in respect of travel expenses; or
 - any allowance, bursary or award made under the KESS 2 Scheme (please note, this scheme has now finished. For new students beginning a course from 24/25 this won't apply. It is not possible to still be in receipt of funding or access it from a previous year).
- Are undertaking a distance learning course and are not undertaking the course in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course unless they are outside of Wales as a result of being in the Armed Forces (or are an eligible close relative living with a member of the Armed Forces serving outside of Wales) or as a result of the coronavirus pandemic;
- Have previously received PG loan support for undertaking a PGM course from another UK government authority. Note that exceptions for CPR apply, as detailed in the [Compelling Personal Reasons \(CPR\)](#) section of this guidance.

Further detail on each of the student ineligibility reasons are detailed within the sections below.

2.3 Age 60 limitation

To qualify for PGLM, eligible students must be aged under 60 on the first day of the first academic year of the course (regulation 10, *Exception 11*). The academic year is defined in Schedule 1 (Paragraph 1) and is the period of twelve months starting on:

- 1 September, where the course begins on or after 1 August and before 1 January;
- 1 January, where the course begins on or after 1 January and before 1 April;
- 1 April, where the course begins on or after 1 April and before 1 July;
- 1 July, where the course begins on or after 1 July and before 1 August.

For example:

Maureen's course start date is 17 October 2024 and their 60th birthday falls on 9 September 2024. As Maureen is under 60 on the first day of the first academic year of the course (1 September 2024), they are eligible to apply for PGLM.

James' course start date is 10 January 2025 and their 60th birthday falls on 23 December 2024. As James' 60th birthday falls before the first day of the first academic year of the course (1 January 2025), they will be ineligible to apply for PGLM.

Where a student transfers to a designated course, they remain eligible even where their 60th birthday falls before the start date of the first academic year of the designated course that they are transferring onto. (The student must transfer and be continuing in the same continuous period of study, rather than withdraw from the first course and apply as a new student.) Note the student should not submit a new PGLM application and will receive the balance of their PGLM for the course they transferred to.

For example:

Laura's course start date is 2 October 2024 and their 60th birthday falls on 17 December 2024. As Laura's is under 60 on the first day of the first academic year of the course (1 September 2024), Laura is eligible for PGLM. Laura transfers in January 2025 to a course which starts in that month. As Laura is deemed a continuing student and was eligible for support on the first day of the first academic year of the first course, they remain eligible for PGLM.

Note that there is no lower age limit for PGLM eligibility.

2.4 Applicants who breach any obligation to repay any previous student loan (arrears)

The Regulations provide that a person shall not be eligible for support if they are in breach of any obligation to repay any loan (regulation 10, *Exception 1*). SFW does not have any discretion in determining an applicant's eligibility in these circumstances.

Once an applicant is no longer in breach, i.e., has paid their arrears in full, SFW should reassess their eligibility for the PGM course in question. Any such reassessment is for the whole course, not from the date on which the student ceased to be in breach of any such obligation. Note the student must be in study on their course at the point of reassessment.

If an applicant has received a notification that they are eligible for PGLM but subsequently breaches any obligation to repay any previous student loan, the student remains eligible for support for that application until the course is completed or their period of eligibility ends for any other reason (e.g., withdrawal).

'Arrears' are considered to include any breach in the student's obligation to repay the following:

- Any repayments of student loan due for an overseas period of residence;
- Any repayments of ICR student loan due to be repaid by Direct Debit (e.g. where the student is considered to be less than two years from paying the loan balance in full);
- Any 'mortgage-style' loan (generally payable to students who started their course prior to 1998).

Note that the following do not make the student ineligible for PGLM:

- The student owes a loan or grant overpayment amount (however, existing loan overpayments may be deducted from the maximum PGLM entitlement amount where an overpayment is identified).
- The student has a loan balance which is in repayment, has a repayment status of 'found' or 'unmatched' and has failed to respond to SLC's request for information to determine whether repayments are due to be made.

2.5 Applicants who have reached the age of 18 and have not ratified a previous student loan for which they were assessed under the age of 18

Regulation 10, *Exception 2*, provides that a student is not eligible for PGLM if they have reached the age of 18 and have not ratified any agreement for a loan taken when under the age of 18. A separate ratification form is not required; by signing a new student loan declaration the student acknowledges and agrees that they are automatically ratifying all student loans that they borrowed before reaching the age of 18.

2.6 Ineligibility as a result of being deemed unfit for support

A student is not eligible for PGLM if, in SFW's opinion, the student has shown themselves by their conduct to be unfit to receive student support (regulation 10, *Exception 3*). The power to deem a student as unfit for student support may be used at any stage in the process of assessing a student's eligibility, but once a student has been notified that they are eligible this power may not be used. However, SFW may terminate eligibility for similar reasons under regulation 13(1), which allows for the termination of eligibility where SFW is satisfied that the student's conduct is such that they are no longer fit to receive support.

Examples of where SFW might decide that a student is unfit to receive support may be where it comes to light that the student has committed fraud in applying for support, or where the student has been found to have committed fraud against other government departments such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). However, each case is considered on an individual basis, and there is not a definitive list of reasons that can be deemed to make a student unfit to receive support under the Regulations.

Discretion may be applied by SLC in some circumstances related to a student's conduct and being unfit for student support. See the SFW "Assessing Eligibility" guidance chapter for more details about a student's conduct and being unfit for student support.

2.7 Prisoner students (eligibility)

Students who are imprisoned may be eligible for PGLM only if they meet the definition of an 'eligible prisoner' in Schedule 1 (Paragraph 3), i.e., they are a prisoner:

- who is serving a sentence of imprisonment in the UK (including in a young offender institution or psychiatric unit);
- who has been authorised by the prison Governor or Director or other appropriate authority to study the designated course; and
- whose earliest release date is within 4 years of the first day of the first AY of the designated course.

Student prisoners who do not satisfy the definition of an 'eligible prisoner' are ineligible for PGLM (regulation 10, *Exception 4*).

Note that:

- A prisoner's place of ordinary residence is their place of ordinary residence before they were imprisoned, only if this can't be determined should the prisoner be supported by their place of imprisonment.
- Where a prisoner is ordinarily resident in Wales, but due to their imprisonment at a prison outside of Wales they are not living in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of a distance learning course, the student is not eligible for support for that course under regulation 10(1) (exception 10).
- Where a prisoner has been given an indeterminate sentence, the Ministry of Justice considers the minimum period of imprisonment set at trial (the sentence tariff) as the earliest release date, rather than waiting for a direction from the parole board. This is subject to the governors determining whether a prisoner is on track to meet their sentence requirements.
- A prisoner who is on remand cannot be an 'eligible prisoner' as they are not serving a custodial sentence and do not have an earliest release date. Prisoners on remand are therefore not eligible for PGLM.
- A person who has been paroled is not considered a prisoner for the purposes of PGLM. Therefore, they do not have to satisfy the 'eligible prisoner' definition and are assessed in the same way as any other non-prisoner student.

Eligible prisoners' total entitlement is capped at the fee amount charged by their HE provider and is paid to their HE provider directly (regulation 31ZA(3)(a) and regulation 33(4)). For further information on the PGLM entitlement for prisoner students, please see section [Prisoner's Entitlement](#).

2.7.1 Eligible prisoner application process

Eligible prisoners should apply via a paper application rather than an online application, accompanied by a form from the Governor of the prison, that grants approval for the student to undertake the course and confirms the student's earliest release date. Payments are then made directly to the student's HE provider. Payments of PGLM made to HE providers follow

the same payment profile and dates (33/33/34% per AY) used for payments made directly to the student, see section [Payment and overpayment](#).

2.8 Students who are undertaking more than one HE/FE course

Under regulation 10, *Exceptions 5* and *7*, a student can only be eligible for support for one designated PGM course at a time. This provision does not prevent the student from moving between courses during an academic year but prevents the student from being eligible for PGLM for more than one eligible course at a time.

This includes any students enrolled on a course designated by the Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended) – students cannot receive PGLM for a course designated by the Regulations at the same time as they are receiving a PGM Loan under the 2017 PGM Loan Regulations mentioned above.

Students are not eligible to receive HE UG support or PGLD at the same time as PGLM Funding where they are enrolled on a course designated by the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 (as amended), or the Education (Postgraduate Doctoral Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2018 (as amended) and are receiving support under those regulations for that course.

A student can only receive PGLM for one designated PGM course, even where they are undertaking more than one PGM course simultaneously (regulation 10, *Exception 7*).

Note, however, that students may be eligible for PGLM and FE funding concurrently.

Students in receipt of funding for another course may become eligible for PGLM (payable at the maximum rate) once they are no longer enrolled on/receiving funding under the regulations mentioned above for the other course in question, whether this is within the same or a different academic year as the start of their designated PGM course.

2.9 Students who have an equivalent or higher level qualification

Students who already have a qualification which is equivalent to or higher in level than a PGM qualification are ineligible for PGLM (regulation 10, *Exception 6*). Please refer to the section on [Previous Study](#) for further information.

2.10 Students who are entitled to a healthcare bursary

Under regulation 10, *Exception 9*, students are not eligible for PGLM if they are in receipt of, in respect of their designated course:

- a healthcare bursary;
- any allowance under the Nursing and Midwifery Student Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007; or

- any allowance, bursary or award of similar description made under section 67(4)(a) of the Care Standard Act 2000 save to the extent that the student is eligible for such a payment in respect of travel expenses;

2.11 Students in receipt of a Social Work Bursary

The Social Work Bursary available from Social Care Wales is only available to students that are ordinarily resident in Wales and studying approved social work PGM degree courses at HE provider's in Wales.

There are only a limited number of Social Work Bursaries available under the regulation noted above, and eligibility to apply for a Social Work Bursary does not equate to an automatic award. Therefore, if the student has not been awarded a Social Work Bursary after applying for one, they may apply for full PGLM. Students are required to provide evidence of a notification from Social Care Wales that they have not been awarded a Social Work Bursary. SLC may perform a sample check of students undertaking qualifying social work PGM degree courses. This is to ensure that students are not double funded.

SLC are obliged to recover support where students provide inaccurate information about their circumstances and any bursary they receive.

Please note: These students are eligible to apply for PG Disabled Students' Allowance even though they do not qualify for PGLM. Please see section [Postgraduate DSA](#) for more information on this product.

2.12 Students in receipt of Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS 2) funding

Under regulation 10, *Exception 9*, students are not eligible for PGLM if they are in receipt of, in respect of their designated course any allowance, bursary or award made under the KESS 2 Scheme.

Please note: KESS 2 funding is no longer available to PGM students, as the scheme closed at the end of 2023. For more information on the eligibility exclusions that apply to these students, please refer to the relevant guidance chapter that pertains to the academic year in which the student started their PGM course.

2.13 Previous PGM support

Under regulation 10, *Exception 8*, students are ineligible for PGLM from SFW where they have received student support for undertaking a previous standalone PGM course. This restriction is only relevant if the student has not already successfully completed a PGM course and received a PGM qualification; students are ineligible under the Regulations if they already hold a PGM qualification irrespective of their previous funding. For more information regarding previous funding/study where no qualification has been achieved, see the [No qualification achieved and no previous funding](#) subsection in the [Previous study](#) section of this guidance.

Where a student has previously received support for undertaking a standalone PGM course and can demonstrate that they did not complete the previous course due to CPR, they are eligible to receive further PGLM from SFW (see the [Compelling Personal Reasons \(CPR\)](#) section of this guidance for further information).

2.14 Time limit for applying for student support

Applicants submit a single application for PGLM for the duration of their PGM course. Under regulation 19(1), the application must be submitted within nine months of first day of the final academic of the course.

For example:

Kaye starts a four-year PGM course on 10 October 2024. However, Kaye does not apply for PGLM until 1 July 2028 (during the fourth academic year of their course). The first day of the fourth academic year of the course is 1 September 2027; as Kaye has **not** submitted their application within nine months of that date, Kaye has missed the deadline to apply and is therefore ineligible for support.

Students can apply for PGLM in any year of the course and are eligible to apply for the full funding amount regardless of when they apply, providing they comply with this deadline.

Note that under regulation 19(2) there is discretion to extend the window of application beyond the ninth month of the final academic year, for example where the student becomes eligible, or their course becomes designated after the start of the course.

Laurence starts a two-year PGM course on 7 September 2024, but does not apply for PGM funding until 20 July 2026, during the second academic year of their course. As the first day of the final academic year is 1 September 2025, and Laurence has not submitted their application within nine months of that date, Laurence is outside of the deadline for submitting his PGM application and would therefore will not normally qualify for support. However, as Laurence can demonstrate that the reason for submitting their application late was beyond their control, and SFW exercise their discretion, Laurence is eligible to apply for support.

2.15 Students who become eligible after an event

Under regulations 15 and 16, students may become eligible for PGLM after the start of the first academic year of the course if they become eligible before the last day of the course (in line with the application time limits set out above).

Where the student becomes eligible after an event which occurs after the first day of the first academic year and within the application time limits above, the student becomes eligible for the full funding amount available (applicable to the academic year their course began) and

not a lesser prorated loan amount. Please see [Annex A](#) for a list of the events under the Regulations.

For example:

Tony starts a one-year PGM course on 15 September 2024 and was at that point ineligible for PGLM as they did not satisfy the residency requirements within the Regulations. Tony is recognised as a refugee on 15 October 2024. As this date is within the time limits set out above, and Tony now satisfies regulatory residency requirements, they are eligible to apply for PGLM.

Where the student becomes eligible or the student's course becomes designated after the course start date, discretion under regulation 19(2) can be used to extend the nine-month application period to start from the date that eligibility commences. For example, if a student becomes a refugee on 15 October and the final year of their course started on 15 September, the application window may be extended to nine months from 15 October rather than nine months from the academic year start date of 1 September at SFW's discretion.

2.16 Documentation requirements

Regulation 18 states that the applicant should provide such documentation as the Welsh Ministers may require to assess the application. SFW verify an applicant's British passport details with HMPO via the Government Secure Intranet where possible. Where this is not possible, SFW verify alternative evidence of identify, such as a student's valid national ID card, passport, or birth certificate (regulation 22(2)).

All PGLM applicants are required to provide their valid UK National Insurance Number (NINO) (regulation 41) prior to SFW making payment of their PGLM, unless one of the exceptions detailed below applies.

As of AY 24/25, students who are eligible under the regulatory eligible student categories listed below can receive the first PGLM instalment payment without providing a valid NINO. SLC will block the second and any subsequent PGLM instalment payments until the student's NINO has been provided and verified. This applies to the following eligible student categories:

- Settled when in the UK, and living in the Common Travel Area of the UK, Islands and Republic of Ireland for the last three years, with at least part of that residence in the Republic of Ireland.
- Settled in the UK, with protected rights under the Withdrawal Agreements, living in the UK/Islands for the last three years wholly or mainly for the purposes of receiving full-time education, and resident in an overseas territory immediately before that three-year period.
- EEA and Swiss migrant workers/self-employed and their family members with protected rights, and frontier workers and their family members, living in the UK/EEA/Switzerland/overseas territories for the last three years, with at least part of that residence in an overseas territory.

- EU nationals and family members (plus family members of people of Northern Ireland) with protected rights under the EU Withdrawal Agreement living in the UK/EEA/Switzerland/overseas territories for the last three years.
- Irish citizens either:
 - living in the EEA or Switzerland on 31 Dec 2020, or
 - living in the UK on 31 Dec 2020, having moved to the UK from the EEA or Switzerland after 31 December 2017, and
 - living in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA and Switzerland for the last three years.
- Settled when in the UK, and living in the UK, Islands and the specified British Overseas Territories (BOTs) for the last three years, with at least part of that residence in the BOTs.
- Family members of settled persons living in the UK and Islands for the last three years.
- Persons with resident status in Gibraltar and living in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories for the last three years (EU nationals and their family members).
- EU nationals with protected rights under the EU Withdrawal Agreement, living in the UK and Islands for the last three years wholly or mainly for the purposes of receiving full-time education, and resident in an overseas territory immediately before that three-year period.
- Child of a Swiss national with protected rights under the Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement and living in the UK/EEA/Switzerland/overseas territories for the last three years, where at least part of that residence was in an overseas territory other than Gibraltar.
- Children of former EEA workers living in the UK/EEA/Switzerland/overseas territories for the last three years where at least part of that ordinary residence was in the overseas territories.
- Child of a Turkish worker where the child and worker are living in the UK before 1 January 2021, the child was living in the UK/EEA/Switzerland/Turkey/overseas territories for the last three years, with at least part of that residence in an overseas territory.

Note that there may be rare occurrences when DWP decline to allocate a NINO to an applicant, who relies on a Certificate of Application to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) as the basis for their lawful residence in the UK. SLC will review such cases on an individual basis.

2.17 Contact details

In line with regulation 22(1)(c), for any purpose relating to the repayment of a loan, students are requested to provide details of two contacts residing at different addresses from each other as part of the loan application. Only one contact may reside at the same address as the student. A minimum of one contact is mandatory and required prior to loan approval. Contacts who reside at non-UK addresses can be accepted.

2.18 Postgraduate DSA

SLC provides DSA to eligible PG students under the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 (as amended). Eligible students need to apply for PG DSA on a separate application from their PGLM application.

See the separate SFW “Disabled Students’ Allowance” guidance chapter for more information on this support.

Note that students undertaking a PGM course are not eligible to apply for the Adult Dependants’ Grant, Parents’ Learning Allowance and Childcare Grant available under the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 (as amended).

2.19 Benefits Entitlement

As PGLM is a **contribution towards course costs**, rather than funding exclusively for tuition costs or maintenance costs, the DWP apportion elements of the PGLM, when assessing a student’s entitlement to means-tested social security benefits.

When assessing an individual’s entitlement to social security benefits, DWP treat 30% of the maximum PGLM available as student income. Further statutory disregards also apply. Note, however, that this calculation may be subject to change, and students are advised to consult DWP as early as possible for clarification on how their benefit entitlement may be impacted by receiving PGLM. Further advice regarding Universal Credit for students is available on the [Gov website](#) and further information for students is also available via the Universal Credit helpline: 0800 328 5644 / 0800 328 1744 (for Welsh language calls).

3 Residency

Regulatory residency requirements for PGLM are broadly the same as those that apply to undergraduate HE student support. See the SFW “Assessing Eligibility” guidance for further details of regulatory residency categories for student funding.

PGLM is available to the categories of students described in Schedule 2 of the Regulations, which generally include the following:

- Welsh domiciled students, i.e. settled persons and their family members* who have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the three years prior to the first day of the first and most recently in Wales (unless they have moved to Wales from elsewhere in the UK and Islands solely for the purposes of attending the course – see section [Students who move to Wales from elsewhere in the UK and Islands in order to attend a course](#) below for further details on students in this position).

- Certain EU nationals (including Republic of Ireland (ROI) citizens) and their family members who are protected under the withdrawal agreement following the UK's exit from the EU, and who fall under a paragraph of Schedule 1 of the Regulations and meet the relevant eligibility criteria.**
- Other groups of applicants who satisfy the regulatory residency requirements in the Regulations, including certain forms of qualifying Home Office leave to enter or remain statuses (e.g. Refugee or Humanitarian Protection status).

This is not an exhaustive list. Please refer to the SFW "Assessing Eligibility" guidance chapter for more information where needed.

*The family members of settled persons category was introduced in AY 23/24, extending the family members of UK Nationals category that had been introduced in AY 21/22. In both situations it applied to new students from those academic years onwards.

**Following the UK's exit from the EU, the rules surrounding eligible residency criteria changed. Please refer to the SFW "Assessing Eligibility" guidance chapter for more information on these changes. Please note that where the SFW 'Assessing Eligibility' guidance chapter denotes that a student is eligible for fee support only under the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 (as amended), these students are eligible for full support under the Regulations, as there is no distinction between fee only and full support in PGLM.

3.1 Three-year address history

Generally, all applicants must provide details of their home addresses covering the three-year period prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course. The home address of the parents of the applicant, where this differs from the applicant's address, will not be taken as the place of ordinary residence of the applicant.

However, students applying under one of the following residency categories are subject to specific residency history requirements:

- Refugee status
- Humanitarian protection
- Leave to remain as a victim of domestic abuse or violence
- Leave to remain as bereaved partner
- Section 67 leave
- Calais leave
- Stateless person
- Leave to enter or remain as a relevant Afghan citizen
- Leave to enter or remain under one of the three Ukraine Schemes

Where a student holds one of the residency statuses listed above, they are required to provide details of their addresses for the period covering the date they were granted their most recent

status with the Home Office up to the first day of the first academic year. This is then capped at a maximum of a three-year period.

Evidence of address history may be required from applicants as part of a sample check during the academic year. The overall size of the sample, and the sample size used for specific applicant groups, may be varied at any time. For example, where applicants are required to be ordinarily resident in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course, but state that they have been living in Wales for three months or less prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, all such applicants may be asked to provide evidence of their address history. This is so that SFW can ascertain if the student moved to Wales solely for the purposes of attending the course. If that is the case, the student is ineligible for PGLM from SFW (unless, for example, the student was deemed to be temporarily absent from Wales). See the section [Residency Examples](#) below for further details.

3.2 Students who move to Wales from elsewhere in the UK and Islands in order to attend a course

Paragraph 11(1) of Schedule 2 of the Regulations provides that where a student is ordinarily resident in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, or the Islands and moves to Wales specifically for the purpose of undertaking the current course, or a course, disregarding any intervening vacation, that the student was undertaking immediately* before the current course, the student should be regarded as being ordinarily resident in the place from which they have moved. This rule applies where a student was ordinarily resident in Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, or the Islands, and moves to Wales specifically for the purposes of studying an undergraduate course. In practice, if the student was to immediately progress to a PGM course following the completion of their previous course, they would remain ordinarily resident in the territory from which they moved (rather than becoming ordinarily resident in Wales).

*“immediately” generally means when a student starts a PGM course in the semester/term that follows the end of their previous course.

For example:

Terry starts an UG degree in Wales in September 2021. and receives funding from SFE. Terry is deemed ordinarily resident in England at the start of the first academic year of the course. Terry completes the UG degree in May 2024. In September 2024 Terry starts a PGM degree course in Wales. Terry is not eligible for PGLM from SFW as they are still considered to be ordinarily resident in England, having only moved to Wales for the purpose of undertaking the UG course and then progressed immediately to their PGM course. (Note that Terry is ineligible for PGLM from SFW whether they returned to England or remained in Wales during the intervening vacation period.) Terry may be eligible to apply for a PGLM from SFE.

Suzanne starts an UG degree in England in September 2020 and receives funding from SFW. Suzanne is deemed to be ordinarily resident in Wales at the start of the first academic year of the course. Suzanne completes the UG degree in June 2024 and in

October 2024 starts a PGM degree in Scotland. Suzanne is eligible to apply for PGLM from SFW as they are still considered to be ordinarily resident in Wales, having only moved to England and then Scotland for the purposes of undertaking a course and progressed immediately from their UG degree to their PGM course.

Where a student doesn't immediately progress to their PGM course, the student's place of ordinary residence may have changed during the intervening period and is reassessed.

For example:

Karen starts an UG degree in Wales in October 2021 and receives funding from Student Finance NI as they are deemed to be ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland at the start of the first academic year of the course. Karen completes the UG degree in June 2024 and stays in Wales after the end of the course and is employed full-time in Wales. Karen's home address in Wales is now deemed to be their permanent place of residence. Karen applies for a PGM course in Wales starting in March 2025. As Karen's ordinary residence during the intervening period has changed to Wales, they may be eligible to apply for PGLM from SFW.

Jonathan starts an UG degree in Wales in September 2021 and receives funding from SFE as they are deemed to be ordinarily resident in England at the start of the first academic year of the course. Jonathan completes the UG degree in May 2024 and returns to their permanent home address in England after the course end date. In January 2025 Jonathan starts a PGM course in Wales, however they are considered to still be ordinarily resident in England at the start of the new course, and therefore, is ineligible for PGLM from SFW. Jonathan may be eligible to apply for a PGLM from SFE.

For further guidance on establishing ordinary residency, please see the SFW "Assessing Eligibility" guidance chapter.

3.3 Temporary or occasional absences

When considering whether an applicant has been ordinarily resident in a territory during a prescribed period, temporary or occasional absences do not normally affect ordinary residence. SFW should make decisions on whether an absence affects a person's ordinary residence on a case-by-case basis.

Temporary absences may include (but are not restricted to) temporary employment, employment with the Armed Forces, periods of study and extended holidays/travelling.

See the SFW "Assessing Eligibility" guidance chapter for further details on temporary absences.

3.4 Provision where a student's leave status is lost during an academic year

Students who start PGM courses from AY 24/25 onwards are not supported for future academic years of their course where the limited leave/temporary protection rights of the main leave holder of the eligibility category under which they are applying expires during an academic year of the course, and they do not become a British Citizen or have a new valid leave status that allows their eligibility to continue.

SFW will capture expiry dates for limited leave statuses/temporary protection rights at the point of application.

This provision applies where:

- limited leave under one of the protected categories or leave via the EUSS* is lost during the PGM course, or
- temporary protection under the Withdrawal Agreement is lost during the PGM course*, i.e. the student is no longer a “person with protected rights”. This applies to those who are treated as if they hold pre-settled or settled status under the EUSS while the Home Office makes a final determination on their status. If the determination concludes that the student is not eligible for pre-settled or settled status, they will lose their protected rights.

*This provision applies to those who are eligible under the following categories where leave to remain is lost:

- Refugees,
- Stateless leave,
- Humanitarian Protection,
- Section 67 leave to remain,
- Calais Leave,
- Leave to remain under residence scheme immigration rules,
- Leave to remain as a relevant Afghan citizen,
- Leave to remain as a protected Ukrainian national,
- Categories where protected rights (evidenced by pre-settled status under the EUSS, or ongoing protected rights where an EUSS status has not yet been awarded) are required.

The termination provisions also apply to the relevant family members applicable to each category.

Where the termination of eligibility provision applies, PGLM funding will continue until the end of the academic year in which the main leave holder's leave expires or is revoked.

Funding for future academic years will only be paid if the student can evidence the following in respect of those academic years: that the main leave holder has been awarded any new valid leave status or becomes a British citizen. This applies in respect of eligible students in the protected categories.

For example:

James is a South African national who has leave to remain as a bereaved partner. James begins a three-year PT PGM course in Wales in October 2024. James applies for and is awarded £18,950 PGLM for the full course from SFW.

In November 2025 (during the second year of James' course, AY 25/26), James' leave to remain as a bereaved partner expires. Funding remains in place for the remainder of AY 25/26. In order to establish James' eligibility for funding for AY 26/27, SFW write out for evidence of a further valid status. James is granted settled status in March 2026, which is prior to the start of AY 26/27. Therefore, James remains eligible for PGLM for the remainder of the course. James' entitlement is as follows:

AY 24/25 – £6,316

AY 25/26 – £6,316

AY 26/27 – £6,318

For categories where protected rights (evidenced by pre-settled status under the EUSS, or ongoing protected rights where an EUSS status has not yet been awarded) are required, in order for funding to be available for future funding years, the student/parent/spouse (as applicable) must receive a further grant of leave under the residence scheme immigration rules or become a British citizen in order for their eligibility to continue. This is unlike students in other limited leave categories where the main leave holder can be awarded any new valid status.

For example:

Amy is a Belgian national who has pre-settled status and so is a person with protected rights. Amy begins a four-year PT PGM degree course in Wales in September 2024. The student applies for and is awarded £18,950 PGLM for the full course from SFW.

In November 2025 (during the second year of Amy's course, AY 25/26), Amy's pre-settled status expires, they are not granted settled status at that point, and they do not enter any appeal. Amy is also not granted British citizenship. Amy does however receive a student visa which allows them to stay in the UK to complete the course. This means that Amy is no longer a person with protected rights. Amy's funding will continue to the end of AY 25/26 (the current academic year) but no further PGLM will be available for AY 26/27 (or future academic years, should the student transfer to a longer course) as Amy is not eligible for funding under any regulatory categories. Amy's entitlement is as follows:

AY 24/25 – £4,737

AY 25/26 – £4,737 (leave expires during AY 25/26 in November 25)

AY 26/27 – £0.00 (would have been £4,737 if a new eligible status was granted)

AY 27/28 – £0.00 (would have been £4,739 if a new eligible status was granted)

3.5 Armed forces personnel and their family members

Where a serving member of the Armed Forces or their qualifying family member* is undertaking a distance learning course outside of Wales (either within another UK domicile or overseas), they are eligible for the full amount of PGLM (regulation 10, *Exception 10*). Armed Forces personnel serving outside their home domicile on the first day of the first academic year of the course are considered to satisfy the condition of the Regulations that students must be undertaking their course in their home domicile on the first day of the first academic year of that course.

*Note that close relative of a serving member of the Armed Forces, is defined in the Regulations (Schedule 1, paragraph 3) as:

- a spouse or civil partner living with a member of the Armed Forces serving outside of Wales; or
- a person ordinarily living with a member of the Armed Forces serving outside of Wales as if they were their spouse or civil partner; or
- a child, step-child or adoptive child under the age of 25 living with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces serving outside of Wales; or
- a dependent parent living with either;
 - a child who is a member of the UK Armed Forces serving outside of Wales; or
 - the child's spouse or civil partner who is a member of the UK Armed Forces serving outside of Wales.

For example:

Arnold is ordinarily resident in Wales and is a serving member of the Armed Forces who is serving overseas when starting a PGM course on a PT distance learning basis on 15 September 2024. Arnold is eligible for full PGLM.

Anna is a serving member of the Armed Forces domiciled in Wales but has been posted to England. Anna wishes to study a PGM course on a distance learning basis at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Anna would still be eligible to apply to SFW for PGLM.

Once a student, studying a distance learning course overseas or within another country in the UK, is eligible for student support by way of their/their family member's posting with the Armed Forces, they remain eligible to the end of their period of eligibility, even if they, or their family member, leaves the Armed Forces.

3.6 Residency Examples

This section outlines some examples of when a student is considered eligible or ineligible depending on their residency circumstances and history. Please note that these examples are for illustration only and do not cover all scenarios. For the full list of residency categories, refer to Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

3.6.1 UK Nationals who have lived in another UK domicile during the preceding three years

John is a UK national who confirms that they have been living in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of their PGM course in Wales. John provides the following address history (most recent address first):

Wales: 2 months

Scotland: 2 years and 10 months

John's residence in Scotland is not deemed to be temporary (as they were ordinarily resident in Scotland and not living there for a temporary purpose such as education). SFW concludes that John moved to Wales for the purposes of starting the course, and therefore, John is **ineligible** for PGLM from SFW.

Simon is a UK national who confirms that they have been living in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of their PGM course. Simon provides the following address history (most recent address first):

Wales: 2 years

England: 1 year

As Simon is a UK national who is ordinarily resident in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course and who has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, Simon is **eligible** for PGLM from SFW.

3.6.2 UK Nationals who have lived outside of the UK during the preceding three years

Grace is a UK national who confirms that they have not been living in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of their PGM course. Grace provides the following address history (most recent address first):

Wales: 1 month

France: 2 years and 11 months

Grace returned from France to Wales to start the course. However, Grace was resident in Wales prior to living in France; therefore, is **eligible** for PGLM from SFW as they left Wales to exercise their 'right to roam' in the EEA/Switzerland and did so prior to the end of the EU Exit transition period (i.e., Grace left on or before 31 December 2020). (Note that if Grace was ordinarily resident in a different UK territory prior to leaving the UK, they should apply to that territory for support rather than SFW.)

Gemma is a UK national who confirms that they have not been living in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of their PGM course. Gemma provides the following address history (most recent address first):

USA: 1 year

Wales: 2 years

Gemma returns to Wales to start the course. However, Gemma's residence in the USA is not deemed to be a temporary absence, therefore Gemma is considered **ineligible** to apply for PGLM from SFW.

Liam is a UK national who confirms that they have not been living in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of their PGM course. Liam provides the following address history (most recent address first):

Wales: 1 month

Australia: 6 months

Wales: 2 years 5 months

The residence in Australia is for a temporary work contract and so Liam can demonstrate that there was no intention to stay in Australia indefinitely, it is deemed to be a temporary absence and so Liam is still considered to be ordinarily resident in Wales. Liam is therefore **eligible** to apply for PGLM from SFW.

3.6.3 EU Nationals

Jose is a Spanish national who has settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme and confirms that they have been living in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of their PGM course. Jose provides the following address history (most recent address first):

Wales: 1 year

Scotland: 2 years

Jose is treated as a Wales domiciled student due to being ordinarily resident there. As Jose has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course, has settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme and is ordinarily resident in Wales, they are **eligible** to apply for PGLM from SFW.

Anna is an Estonian national who confirms that they have not been living in the UK and Islands for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of their PGM course. Anna provides the following address history (most recent address first):

Germany: 2 years

Estonia: 1 year

Anna comes to Wales to start the course, however, does not have citizens' rights under the Withdrawal Agreement as they had moved to the UK after 31 December 2020, and therefore does not have a status under the EU Settlement Scheme. Anna is **ineligible** to apply for PGLM from SFW.

Please refer to the SFW 'Assessing Eligibility' guidance chapter for more information on (and examples of) eligible residency criteria.

4 Previous Study

4.1 Qualification achieved

Students who already hold a qualification which is equivalent to or higher in level than a PGM level qualification are not eligible for PGLM (regulation 10(1), *Exception 6*). This applies whether the qualification held is taught or research based, gained in the UK or overseas, and publicly or privately funded.

Any lower-level qualifications that the student holds do not affect eligibility for PGLM. If the applicant holds a PG Initial Teacher Training (ITT) qualification (e.g., a PGCE), a PG certificate or a PG diploma (PG Dip) at Level 7 (or an overseas equivalent), this does not make them ineligible for PGLM.

PGLM is only available where the student is undertaking a full standalone PGM course, not a partial PGM course requiring a lesser number of credits, either because of the student's previous study or previous experience.

Students self-declare previously gained PG qualifications from the UK and overseas on the PGLM application. Checks may be carried out by SFW on the equivalency of overseas qualifications declared by applicants. Where SFW cannot ascertain whether an overseas qualification declared by an applicant is equivalent to or higher than a UK master's qualification, the applicant must provide proof of the qualification level. For the purposes of eligibility for PGLM, the following PG qualification levels framework should be used:

HE qualification held*	FHEQ** level	Student eligible for PGLM?
Doctoral degrees (e.g., PhD/DPhil, EdD, DBA, DClInPsy)	8	No
Master's degrees (inc. MPhil, MLitt, MRes, MA, MBA, MSc)	7	No
Integrated Master's degrees (e.g., MEng, MChem, MPhys, MPharm)		
Postgraduate Diplomas		
Postgraduate Certificates (inc. Postgraduate Certificates in Education (PGCE))	7	Yes

(*Including overseas equivalent qualifications)

(**Framework for Higher Education Qualifications)

Note that:

- where an applicant holds a MA* awarded by a Scottish HE provider, they may be eligible for PGLM as Scottish MAs are undergraduate degree qualifications (the title of 'Master of Arts' is conferred on some undergraduate Scottish degrees for historical reasons);
- where an applicant holds an MA* awarded by Oxford, Cambridge or Trinity College, Dublin, they may be eligible for PGLM as this qualification does not require any PG study; students who have completed an UG honours degree at one of these institutions may have their degree 'upgraded' to an MA after a period with no requirement for any PG study.

*MAs that require PG level study are not awarded by Scottish HE provider's. Where a PGM qualification awarded by these providers requires PG level study, it is given a different qualification title such as MLitt or MPhil; holding such a qualification makes the student ineligible for PGLM, in the same way as any other PGM level academic qualification.

4.2 Previous PGM support (No qualification achieved)

Under regulation 10(1), *Exception 8*, if a student undertook a previous PGM course and received PG support from SFW under the Regulations for that course, but did not achieve the qualification, they are ineligible for PGLM (even where they did not receive full payment of PGLM support). This includes instances where a student has previously received any grant support under the Regulations towards a previous PGM course they started before AY 24/25.

The provision also extends to student support in the form of a loan provided out of funds provided by another government authority within the United Kingdom for undertaking a previous standalone PGM course. PG loan support includes tuition and/or contribution to costs support as applicable.

Other than previous support under the Regulations, the previous types of PG support considered under regulation 10(1) *Exception 8* to make students ineligible for future PGLM from SFW also includes a:

- PG Master's loan from SFW under The Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- PG Master's loan from SFE under The Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) Regulations 2016 (as amended);
- PG Tuition Fee Loan from SFNI* under part 13 of The Education (Student Support) (No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (as amended); or

- PG loan from SAAS* for a course designated under regulation 4(1)(b)(i) of The Education (Student Loans) (Scotland) Regulations 2007 (as amended), or for a course mentioned in paragraph 10 or 11 of Schedule 4 of The Student Support (Scotland) Regulations 2022 (as amended);

**PG Tuition Fee Loans from SFNI can also be paid towards PG Certificate's and PG Diploma's, and PG Loans from SAAS can also be paid towards PG Diploma's, however previous loans via these schemes are only taken into account for the purposes of this eligibility criterion when the loan was received for study towards a PG Master's degree.*

The restriction in regulation 10(1), *Exception 8*, does not apply where the applicant has received:

- support towards an integrated master's degree, which was funded under the UG student support system from any domicile (however the student is ineligible to apply for PGLM under the existing ELQ rules if they hold an integrated master's); or
- support for undertaking a PG diploma (PG Dip) or certificate (PG Cert). Funding is available to students for these courses from the funding authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as for PG Certificates in Education (PGCE) from all four UK domiciles.

The below table offers a summary of students' PGLM eligibility where they have previous study/funding:

Previous support received for a PGM course that the student did not receive a qualification towards	Funding Body	Student eligible for PGLM from SFW for a new course?
Any PGM Funding	SFW	No*
PG Master's loan	SFE	No*
PG Tuition Fee loan	SFNI	No*
UG tuition fee support, and/or support for living costs	SFW / SFNI / SFE / SAAS	Yes
PG Tuition Fee and/or PG living costs loan/s	SAAS	No*

*In all cases, students who have undertaken a previous PGM course, and received PG support from any UK administration, but failed to complete that course due to CPR, can qualify for the full PGLM. However, CPR can be awarded only once. See section [Compelling Personal Reasons \(CPR\)](#) for further information.

Where a student cannot demonstrate CPR for failure to complete a previous PGM course for which they received PG funding, then they are ineligible for future funding. For example:

Vicky starts a one-year PGM course in September 2023 and withdraws from the course in December 2023, having received the first instalment of PGM Funding from SFW. Vicky starts another PGM course in September 2024; however, they are not eligible for PGLM from SFW, as they are not able demonstrate a CPR for not completing the first course.

Note, if a student is currently in receipt of PGM support, and then transfers to another PGM course they retain their eligibility for the same PGM support package, as when they began their study. See section [Transfers](#) for further information.

If the student did not attend or undertake a PGM course, but received PGM support in error, they are eligible to receive PGLM from SFW as long as they pay back their original overpaid support amount in full. For example, a student may be registered on a PGM course but then inform the HE provider that they do not intend to undertake the course, however the HE provider does not inform SLC of this change until after a PGM support payment has already been released. Providing the student repays the overpayment in full, they are eligible for PGLM.

4.3 No qualification achieved and no previous funding

Eligibility for PGLM is not affected by previous PGM study (any level and qualification, taught and non-taught) where the student did not achieve the qualification **and** did not receive PGM support.

If a student had previously intended to study PGM, applied for and was made eligible for support, but then withdrew from the PGM course before the start date of the course, so received no payment, they remain eligible for PGLM.

4.4 Requirement to undertake a full PGM course

An eligible student is only able to access PGLM where they are undertaking a full, standalone PGM course (a minimum of 180 credits) and not 'topping up' from a lower-level course. Students are not eligible where they are undertaking a partial PGM course where previous study and/or work experience has been accepted, allowing the student to bypass certain aspects/modules of the full master's course.

PGLM is designed as a contribution to the costs associated with a full PGM course and there is no prorated support available where less than a full standalone PGM course is undertaken. The student must be enrolled on the full stand-alone PGM course.

For example:

Oliver holds a PG certificate (PGCert) which is worth 60 credits. In September 2024, Oliver begins to undertake a PGM course, using the previous study from the PGCert towards the award, allowing them to bypass certain elements of the PGM course. As

Oliver is not undertaking the full 180 credits of the PGM course, Oliver is not eligible for PGLM from SFW.

If a student transfers from one eligible PGM course to another and is allowed to bypass certain elements on the second course because of the transfer, but still undertakes 180 credits in total across both courses, they remain eligible for PGLM on the second course.

For example:

Serena commences a one-year PGM course beginning in September 2024 and applies for PGLM. In December, after completing 60 credits, Serena transfers to a different one-year PGM course starting in March 2025. Serena's provider allows them to bypass 60 credits on the new course due to work completed on the first course, meaning Serena is only required to undertake 120 credits on the new course. Serena remains eligible to continue receiving PGLM as she is undertaking an aggregated 180 credits across both PGM courses.

4.5 Compelling Personal Reasons (CPR)

Under regulation 10(1), *Exception 8*, students are ineligible for PGLM from SFW where they have received PGM support for undertaking a previous standalone PGM course. However, access to further PG support in the form of PGLM may be available where the student did not complete the previous PGM course due to CPR. If the student is awarded additional funding due to CPR, they receive a full new entitlement for the new PGM course.

PGLM awarded due to CPR may only be awarded once per student (regulation 10(3)).

Academic performance alone does not constitute a CPR, although SFW considers each case individually. Note that there is not a definitive list of reasons that can be deemed as a 'CPR'. The student must provide evidence to support a claim that a failure to complete a previous PGM course was for a CPR, such as medical evidence or evidence of a personal or family crisis. PGLM is not available for a repeat year, or part year, of a PGM course that the student is currently undertaking.

Refer to the SFW "Assessing Eligibility" guidance chapter for further information on the assessment of CPR.

Please note, policy rules surrounding CPR exist to allow students that have already utilised their one-time access to PGM support another full round of funding. This may be required following any instance where a student's first period of eligibility for support has ended and the student has not achieved a PGM qualification, including, for example, where a student withdraws from their course. If a student returns to their course following a withdrawal and can demonstrate CPR, as the student is starting a new period of eligibility, the student must be undertaking the full standalone PGM course to be eligible for PGLM.

For example:

Lee starts a PGM course in September 2022 and withdraws from the course in December 2023 because of a CPR. Lee starts another full, standalone PGM course in September 2024 and is able to demonstrate a CPR for not completing the first course. Lee is therefore eligible for full PGLM for the new course.

Michael starts a PGM course in September 2023 and withdraws from the course in January 2024. Michael can demonstrate a CPR for not completing his first course. Michael returns to study a partial PGM course in September 2024, using previous study to bypass certain elements of his new PGM course. As the new PGM course is not a full, standalone PGM course, Michael is therefore not eligible for PGLM for the new course, despite demonstrating CPR.

Please also note that where a student is looking to step off their PGM course for a prolonged period and has an intention to return to the same course at the point in which they left off (possibly within a different intake), and the student has an agreement with their HE provider to do so, students in these circumstances should be treated as suspending from their studies rather than withdrawing. For more information on suspensions see the [Suspension/resumption](#) section.

When determining whether CPR applies to a previous instance of failing to complete a PGM course, there is no requirement for a withdrawal notification to have been received by SFW to indicate a student's previous non-completion. There can be situations where a student's conduct could indicate failure to complete a previous course in the absence of a formal withdrawal notification, and so a formal notification to SFW is not always necessary when determining whether a student has failed to complete their previous course.

Please note, if a student has been awarded an overall result at the end of their course (even if that result is a failing grade), they would be considered to have completed the course. Therefore, they would not qualify to have a CPR considered under regulation 3(9). However, this would not include a scenario whereby a student completed all their PG studies but did not achieve a high enough mark on part of their course, was scheduled to undertake re-sit exams, but then chose to withdraw without completing their re-sit exams and without being awarded an overall result.

5 Course eligibility

5.1 Designated courses

Only designated PGM courses attract support. Regulations 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the Regulations set out provisions in relation to the designation of courses for PGLM.

Courses that are designated for PGLM are entered on the Courses Management Service (CMS) (the SLC course database). The courses entered on this system by HE provider's should meet the designation criteria; however, SFW must ensure that it is satisfied that all courses meet the designation criteria detailed within the Regulations.

A course may be designated for PGLM if it is a standalone PGM course (taught or research-based). There are many different types of PGM degree, but all such degrees are expected to meet the outcomes identified in the qualification descriptors required by the QAA and set out in “The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ), 2008” or “The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland, 2001”. This framework is a Qualification Characteristics Statement about the characteristics of PGM degrees. It describes the distinctive features of master's degrees in the UK. It became a reference point for the purposes of reviews coordinated by QAA from August 2016. Qualification Characteristics Statements are a component of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

An illustrative list of available PGM qualifications is provided below:

- MSc (Master of Science)
- MA (Master of Arts)
- MPhil (Master of Philosophy)
- MRes (Master of Research)
- LLM (Master of Law)
- MLitt (Master of Letters)
- MFA (Master of Fine Arts)
- MED (Master of Education)
- MBA (Master of Business Administration)

Note also that the designated course must be a full, standalone PGM course and not a ‘top up’ from a lower-level course, or a partial PGM course undertaken where previous study and/or work experience has been accounted for. PGLM is designed as a contribution to the costs associated with a full PGM course and there is no prorated support available where less than a full standalone PGM course is undertaken; the student must be enrolled on the full PGM course.

5.1.1 Master's Courses incorporating a lower-level qualification

Where the PGM course incorporates a lower-level PG qualification, the PGM course is designated for PGM Funding. For example, a Master of Law (LLM) is a designated course whether it incorporates a Legal Practice Course (LPC) (*the LPC being a PG Diploma qualification*) or not.

5.1.2 Master's Course duration

Under regulation 6 (condition 2), the course must be at least one academic year in duration and must be either:

- a full-time course lasting one or two academic years; or
- a part-time course lasting two, three or four academic years.

Note that one-year courses are always undertaken on a full-time basis, but two-year courses may be full-time or part-time.

5.1.3 Master's Subject

There are **no subject restrictions** on PGM courses designated for PGLM subject to them meeting all other designation criteria.

The PGM course may be provided wholly in the UK or in conjunction with an institution outside the UK. Therefore, students may undertake periods of attendance abroad during the PGM course. The qualification must be awarded by the UK HEP and at least 50% of the teaching and supervision completed within the UK (regulation 6 (condition 4)).

5.1.4 Intercalated Master's degree courses

Students may intercalate a PGM degree (i.e., take a year out during an UG degree to undertake a PGM degree as a separate qualification). No UG support is provided for the intercalated year; however, the student can apply for PGLM for the intercalated PGM degree as per students who are studying PGM degree courses that are not intercalated (if the student meets all the standard eligibility criteria).

5.1.5 PG Healthcare courses – Wales domiciled students studying in England

Wales domiciled students studying a PG Healthcare course in England are not eligible to apply for a healthcare bursary* for pre-registration Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Healthcare Profession Subjects. As such, Wales domiciled students, studying a PG Healthcare course in England, may be eligible to apply for PGLM from SFW, subject to standard eligibility rules.

*Students on these courses may qualify for support available under the NHS Learning Support fund from NHS England (via the NHSBSA), however, receipt of this funding does not impact eligibility for PGLM.

5.2 Postgraduate Courses that are not designated for PGLM

PGLM is not available for:

- PGD degrees;
- Master's degrees that are undertaken as an integral part of a PGD degree;
- Other PG level courses (taught or non-taught) including PG Certificates (PGCert) and PG Diplomas (PGDip)*;
- Courses with a PG element where students on these courses are currently eligible for UG support (e.g. Initial Teacher Training (ITT), Integrated Master's, Master's of Architecture (MArch)**, Scottish MAs).
- Top-up courses to convert lower-level PG courses (such as PGCerts and PG Dips) to master's degrees with the addition of extra credits.

*Note that students may be awarded PGLM to undertake a PGM course but may fail to attain that qualification. If they do not achieve any qualification or are awarded a lower-level qualification instead of a master's (e.g., a PGDip), PGLM that is already paid is not clawed back. However, future PGLM is not available unless the student can demonstrate CPR for failing to complete their previous PGM course.

**Students may be eligible for PGLM for a Master of Architecture course where they are ineligible for undergraduate support for this course, for example because the gap between part 1 and 2 of their architecture study is deemed to be too long. Please see the SFW "Assessing Eligibility" guidance chapter for further information on student support rules that govern architecture courses.

Where a student starts a PG course which is not a PGM course (e.g., a PGDip) and transfers to a PGM course, they may become eligible for PGLM from the point of transfer (however, the student must be undertaking the full standalone PGM course and not a partial course, topping up from previous study or experience). Conversely, where a student transfers from a PGM course to a different qualification, they cease to be eligible for PGLM from the point of transfer. See section on [Transfers](#) below for more details.

5.3 Higher Education providers

For courses beginning in AY 24/25, the Regulations define the types of eligible provider in reference to the designation of courses. The type of provider determines the route by which a course may be designated, either;

- automatically under regulation 6; or
- specifically under regulation 8.

Publicly funded providers in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland or Approved (fee cap) providers with an Access and Participation Plan in England, including those operating under a franchise/validation arrangement with another publicly funded/registered provider in the UK or operating in conjunction with an overseas provider, have their courses automatically designated. Providers in England that are registered with the OfS, who hold a validation agreement with an Approved (fee cap) provider with an Access and Participation Plan also have their courses automatically designated. Publicly funded in this context is defined as "maintained or assisted by recurrent grants out of public funds".

Regulation 8 provides the Welsh Ministers with the regulatory power to specifically designate courses not automatically designated by regulations 5, 6 and 7. Private/alternative providers, including those operating under a franchise/validation arrangement with a publicly funded provider in the UK or operating in conjunction with an overseas provider, can apply to have their course(s) specifically designated. Providers must apply to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) for specific designation. If students commence a course which has not been specifically designated, they may be ineligible for funding for that course. The WG/HEFCW inform SLC of specifically designated courses. See the [List of specifically designated courses](#) published and is updated frequently.

5.4 Courses Management Service (CMS)

Courses that meet the criteria to be considered **automatically** designated under the Regulations can be uploaded to CMS by providers. The WG may approve the **specifically** designated courses that can be entered on the CMS and may review the course lists uploaded by HE providers.

On the course database:

- designated FT PG courses are identified as 1 or 2 years in duration;
- designated PT courses are identified as:
 - o 2 years in duration
 - o 3 years in duration
 - o 4 years in duration

Both PT and FT courses are listed with the qualification type of:

- 'taught master's degree'; or
- 'research master's degree'

Note that 'professional master's degree' courses are not captured as a separate qualification type as these can be categorised as either 'taught' or 'research' master's degrees. Where a course contains both 'taught' and 'research' elements, it is at the HE providers discretion as to how to list the qualification.

The subject details and Higher Education Classification of Subjects code of each eligible course should also be provided by the HE provider.

5.5 Distance learning

Students may be eligible for PGLM if they are undertaking the course:

- in attendance; or
- via distance learning.

The HE provider at which the student is studying their distance learning course can be in Wales, England, Scotland, or Northern Ireland. To qualify to apply for support from SFW the student must:

- be undertaking* the course in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course (i.e. they are living in Wales on that date);
- continue to remain in the United Kingdom whilst undertaking the course;
- meet the requirements for one of the residency categories in the Regulations to be eligible for support from SFW;
- be ordinarily resident in Wales (students must provide a Welsh address before the application is approved).

If the student subsequently moves to an address which is:

- elsewhere in the UK, they continue to be eligible for student finance until the end of their course;
- outside the UK, they cease to be eligible for support from the first date on which they undertake their course outside the UK (regulation 12(2)).*

** This rule applies to all eligible residency categories except for UK Armed Forces personnel and their eligible family members, who do not have to meet this requirement. Please see section [Armed Forces personnel and their family members](#) for more information.*

6 Financial Entitlement

6.1 PGLM Entitlement

New students starting designated PGM courses in AY 24/25 are entitled to a maximum of £18,950 non-income assessed loan ([regulation 31ZA\(2\)](#)). All students (excluding eligible prisoners*) are entitled to the full amount of loan of £18,950.

**Please see section [Prisoners Entitlement](#) below for more information on loan amounts available for eligible prisoners.*

6.2 Prisoners Entitlement

6.2.1 Students who are eligible prisoners for the whole course

Eligible prisoners' total entitlement is capped at the fee amount charged to the student and is paid directly to the student's HE provider.

In AY 24/25, students who are eligible prisoners at the start of the first academic year of the course can apply for an amount of PGLM capped at the lower of:

- **£18,950** (regulations 24, 25 and 31ZA(3)(b)); or
- The **tuition fee charged** (regulations 24, 25 and 31ZA(3)(a)),

And which is paid directly to the student's HE provider (regulation 33(4)).

For example:

Sam is an eligible prisoner and applies for PGLM towards a PGM course Sam is starting in AY 24/25. Sam's PGM course lasts two academic years, and the HE provider charges a full course fee of £18,950. Sam is therefore entitled to the full PGLM amount of £18,950, to be paid directly to the HE provider.

Deborah is an eligible prisoner and applies for PGLM towards a PGM course Deborah is starting in AY 24/25. Deborah's course lasts two academic years, and the HE provider charges a full course fee of £12,000. Deborah's PGLM entitlement is therefore £12,000, to be paid directly to the HE provider.

6.2.2 Students who become an eligible prisoner during the AY

Where the student becomes an eligible prisoner during an academic year of their course, regulation 31ZA(3) applies, whereby the revised total maximum PGLM amount will be the lesser of £18,950 or:

- The total course fee; **minus**
- The amount of PGLM already paid to the student.

Where the course fee is equal to, or less than, the amount of PGLM already paid, no further payments will be made.

Any payments already made to the student will be collected through the ICR system and not considered as overpayments, even if the payments made exceed the total course fee at the point the student enters prison.

If the total course fee is more than the amount of PGLM already paid to the student, any further payments from their remaining PGLM entitlement must be paid directly to the student's HE provider (regulation 33(4)).

The total support paid to the student **cannot exceed £18,950**.

6.2.3 Students who cease to be an eligible prisoner during their course

Where an eligible prisoner in receipt of support is released from prison during the academic year, the student should notify SLC. Evidence that the student is no longer an eligible prisoner is required before entitlement is recalculated.

Students who began study in AY 24/25 and who are eligible prisoners who are released from prison during the academic year can apply for an increased amount of support in respect of the remainder of their course. The maximum PGLM available to students who cease to be an eligible prisoner during the course is calculated as follows:

- The amount of fee charged; **plus**
- An increased amount of loan proportionate to the time the student is not an eligible prisoner, as calculated by the formula in regulation 36A(7), as follows:

$$\text{Calculation of Loan Increase: } (Q - F) \times (R/T)$$

Where:

Q equals the maximum amount of loan available for a PGM course (£18,950)

F is the amount of PGLM which the student qualified for as an eligible prisoner (*i.e. the full fee charged*).

T is the total number of days of the duration of the course (*i.e. the total number of days from course start to course end date*).

R is the number of days of the course which remain when the student ceases to be an eligible prisoner, beginning with the day after the day on which the student ceases to be an eligible prisoner (*i.e. the number of days remaining until the last day of the course*).

Note that:

- the total support available to an eligible prisoner who becomes an eligible student **must never exceed £18,950** for their entire period of eligibility;
- further payment amounts due to be paid to the student will be split evenly over the remaining payment periods of the course.

7 Payment and overpayment

7.1 Payment proportions

Payments of PGLM are made directly to the eligible student (except in the case of eligible prisoners whose payments are paid directly to their HE provider) and are made in three instalments per academic year, split 33%/33%/34% of the total loan amounts requested for the year.

For example, a student on a one-year PGM course, with a loan request of £18,950 is paid as follows:

Course Year	Loan (Total £18,950)
Year 1 Loan: £18,950	Payment 1. £6,253.50 Payment 2. £6,253.50 Payment 3. £6,443.00

A student on a two-year PGM course, with a loan request of £18,950 is paid as follows:

Course Year	Loan (Total £18,950)
Year 1 Loan: £9,475	Payment 1. £3,126.75 Payment 2. £3,126.75 Payment 3. £3,221.50
Year 2 Loan: £9,475	Payment 1. £3,126.75 Payment 2. £3,126.75 Payment 3. £3,221.50

No payments are released until a valid NINO has been received and verified (regulation 41). Note that certain categories of student may receive the first instalment of PGLM without providing a valid NINO - see section [Documentation requirements](#) for more information. Where a student has already had their NINO verified as part of an earlier application, the NINO does not require to be verified again.

SLC generally require that the student must supply details of a UK bank or building society account which is in their own name before payments can be released.

Where a student is requesting loan funding, the minimum loan amount that can be requested is £1.

The amount of loan requested can be amended up to nine months after the first day of the final academic year of the PGM course (regulation 19(1)). However, the amount requested cannot be reduced to less than the amount already paid to the student. If the student wishes to reduce their loan to an amount which is less than has already been paid, they can make a voluntary repayment directly to SLC. The voluntary repayment cannot be refunded later, should the student change their mind. Note that although a voluntary repayment of PGLM cannot be refunded, where the student has not yet requested the maximum loan amount available to them, they may still increase the loan request amount if they are within the time limit for doing so.

Note that there is discretion to extend the deadline of amendments to the student's loan request amount beyond the ninth month of the final academic year (regulation 19(2)), for example where the student or their course becomes eligible/designated after the start of the course. Please see section [Loan request amendments](#).

7.1.1 Maximum Loan payments per academic year

PGLM is capped in each academic year, dependent on the student's PGM course length/number of funded years. Where the student is studying the PGM course over one year, they are entitled to up to £18,950 PGLM, scheduled over the course of the year.

Where a student is studying a PGM course over two to four academic years, their loan entitlement is split equally across course years, regardless of the amount of loan requested (where non-whole numbers are returned when splitting entitlements equally across course years, entitlement amounts are rounded down to the nearest whole £1 in non-final course years, with the remainder paid in the final academic year).

For example, a student with a maximum loan entitlement would have their entitlement split as follows:

Course Length	Loan Amount per AY (Total - £18,950)
One AY	£18,950
Two AYs	Year 1 – £9,475 Year 2 – £9,475

Three AYs	Year 1 – £6,316 Year 2 – £6,316 Year 3 – £6,318
Four AYs	Year 1 – £4,737 Year 2 – £4,737 Year 3 – £4,737 Year 4 – £4,739

7.2 Confirmation of study

Payments are released following receipt of confirmation from the student's HE provider that the student is in study, on track to complete the PGM course within the standard course duration (i.e. not undergoing periods of repeat study) and is not (to the best of the HE provider's knowledge) in receipt of any source of funding that would impact the student's eligibility for PGLM (e.g. NHS/Social Work Bursary Support).

One confirmation of study is required from the HE provider for each academic year (up to four years) before payment of PGLM is released for that academic year.

Manual confirmation of attendance is not acceptable. Where applicable, transfer notifications must be completed so that the student is confirmed as undertaking the course at the correct HE provider. Where the student transfers to a course at a different HE provider, the receiving HE provider must confirm the transfer.

7.3 Payment dates

The HE provider must provide the start date of each academic year of an eligible PGM course and this date is then used as the first scheduled payment date of the academic year. Three term start dates are also supplied by the student's HE provider. The second and third payments are released at the start of terms two and three respectively. The course end date is also supplied by the HE provider to ensure that payments due in the final academic year of the course are scheduled over the period that the student is in study in that year.

1st instalment: SLC furnish the HE provider with an electronic list of all students who have applied for support for a PGM course with them up to 30 days prior to the course start date in each academic year. This allows the HE provider to confirm that students are in study in time to make the first PGLM payment at or near the course start date in each academic year.

2nd instalment: SLC release the 2nd instalment of PGLM at the start of the second term date supplied by the HE provider.

3rd instalment: SLC release the 3rd instalment of PGLM at the start of the third term date supplied by the HE provider.

Note that the release of payments for each academic year of the course relies on the HE provider confirming that the student is in study in that academic year. The HE provider should notify SLC if the student is no longer continuing in study prior to the 2nd or 3rd instalment date to ensure that loan overpayments are not made.

SLC may bring forward payment dates on a case-by-case basis, for example if the student is in financial hardship. Note that the first instalment of the academic year cannot be brought forward to a date that is prior to the course start date (and is not in any case released until a confirmation of study has been received).

7.4 Late entrants

Where a student starts a PGM course after the course start date but is undertaking a full standalone PGM course and isn't "topping up" (i.e., utilising previous study to bypass certain required elements of the PGM course), the student is still entitled to the full PGLM entitlement amount for that course (£18,950 for a course commencing in AY 24/25).

Where the HE provider accepts students starting in multiple academic quarters of the academic year, the HE provider should submit a separate entry for each PGM course to the course database. This ensures that where, for example, some students start a PGM course in the academic year quarter commencing 1 September 2024 and others start in the academic year quarter commencing 1 January 2025, the student can be assigned to the correct course and assessed on the correct academic year driven eligibility criteria. This also ensures that loan payments are only made for the payment periods including and after the student's first date in study.

Note that students who start a PGM course as a direct entrant are **not** eligible for PGLM.

8 Change of circumstances

8.1 Transfers

Under regulation 17, students can transfer between eligible PGM courses and remain eligible for PGLM. This rule applies whether the student transfers:

- to a different PGM course at the same HE provider; or
- to a different PGM course at a different HE provider.

In either case, the student/the student's HE provider should notify SLC of the course change. Where the student transfers to a PGM course at a different HE provider:

- future payments should not be made until the new HE provider has confirmed the course change to SLC.
- Where the new HE provider has confirmed the course change to SLC, the student does not need to subsequently confirm this change to SLC if they have not done so already.

If a student transfers from a designated course to a non-designated course (i.e., to a course which is not listed on the designated courses database) they cease to be eligible for PGLM from the point of transfer and no further PGLM payments are made. Previous payments made where the student was attending the designated course are not reassessed. The student is treated by SLC as if they had withdrawn from the course for PGLM purposes. The student's loan entitlement at this point is calculated in line with the rules detailed in the section [Withdrawal](#).

Students who transfer from a non-designated course to a designated PGM course may submit a new application for support. For example, if a student starts a qualification which is lower level than a PGM course, they are not eligible to apply for PGLM. If they then transfer to a PGM course, they may apply for funding at that point. They are eligible to apply for PGLM from the point of commencing the eligible course and, for the purposes of PGLM, they are treated as a new student starting an eligible course from the point when they start the eligible course. Note that PGLM is only available for full standalone PGM courses and not partial PGM course where previous study/experience is accepted by the HE provider.

8.2 Loan request amendments

The amount of loan requested can be amended up to nine months after the start of the final academic year of the course (regulation 19(1)).

As with applications for support, under regulation 19(2) there is discretion to extend the window of application beyond the ninth month of the final academic year, for example where the student becomes eligible, or their course becomes designated after the start of the course.

8.2.1 Increasing the loan request amount

The amount requested can be increased at any point up to the deadline. Future loan instalments will be increased, and an interim payment will be scheduled where one is required.

For example:

Barb starts a PGM in September 2024 which lasts three academic years. Barb requests £15,000 PGLM in total. Payments will be scheduled per academic year as follows:

AY 24/25 - £5,000

AY 25/26 - £5,000

AY 26/27 - £5,000

Barb increases the loan request amount to £18,950 at the end of the second academic year of the course, which is prior to the loan request amendment cut-off date. Barb is entitled to the additional £3,950 requested. An interim payment of £2,632 will be made when the loan request amendment is processed (£1,316 for each of the first two academic years of the course), and £6,318 will be paid in year three of the course. Barb's payment profile for her PGM course is as follows:

AY 24/25 - £5,000
 AY 25/26 - £5,000
 AY 26/27 - £2,632 (interim) + £6,318 (scheduled)

8.2.2 Decreasing the loan request amount

The amount requested cannot be reduced to less than the amount already paid to the student. If the student wishes to reduce their loan balance to an amount which is less than has already been paid, they can make a voluntary repayment directly to SLC. The voluntary repayment cannot be refunded at a later date, should the student change their mind – however, where the student has not yet requested the maximum loan available, they may still increase the loan request amount if they are within the time limit for doing so.

8.3 Multi academic years

Students may transfer to a PGM course which starts in a later academic year quarter. However, the maximum funding available to the student does not increase. Any remaining payments due to be made are aligned to the payment period dates for the new course. For example:

Mike starts a one-year PGM course on 15 September 2024. His academic year start date is 1 August 2023. He subsequently submits a transfer to a PGM course starting in January 2025 (the next academic year quarter). Payments will be made as follows:

Payment 1: September 2024 (*payment period one of course one*)

Mike then transfers to a one-year PGM course starting in January 2025. No payment is made for the payment period starting January 2025 as Mike has already received his payment period one payment.

Payment 2: May 2025 (*payment period two of course two*)

Payment 3: August 2025 (*payment period three of course two*)

8.4 Cross academic year transfers

Students may transfer to a PGM course which starts in a different academic year. Students retain their full course entitlement, however, the maximum funding available to the student does not increase. In addition, all assessment criteria are based on the applicable academic year of the student's original course. Any remaining payments due to be made are aligned to the payment period dates for the student's new course.

For example:

Colin commences a two-year PGM course in September 2024 and requests the maximum PGLM of £18,950. His payment dates are scheduled as follows:

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Payment Period	Payment Date 24/25 AY	Payment Amounts	Payment Date 25/26 AY	Payment Amounts
1	September 2024	£3,126.75	September 2025	£3,126.75
2	January 2025	£3,126.75	January 2026	£3,126.75
3	April 2025	£3,221.50	April 2026	£3,221.50

At the end of his first year, Colin transfers to year one of a new two-year PGM course starting in September 2025. As he has already been paid £9,475 of their overall entitlement in year 1 of the initial PGM course, the remaining £9,475 will be paid in year two of the new PGM course.

Payment Period	Payment Date 25/26 AY	Payment Amounts	Payment Date 26/27 AY	Payment Amounts
1	September 2025	£0.00	September 2026	£3,126.75
2	January 2026	£0.00	January 2027	£3,126.75
3	April 2026	£0.00	April 2027	£3,221.50

Where students are required to repeat any periods of study following a transfer to a course which starts in a different academic year, the student should not receive further payment until they are confirmed as progressing on their course. See section [Repeat Study](#) for further information.

8.5 Repeat study

Repeat periods of study are not funded. Repeat periods of study represent periods where the student is required to repeat a module or similar unit of work* **and** is not progressing on their course. No payments are made during repeat periods of study. There is no change to the student's total entitlement. The HE provider should inform SLC of any instance where the student is undertaking a period of repeat study. Whilst payments are not made during periods of repeat study, the student receives their remaining entitlement, in line with their payment schedule, once confirmation is received that they are no longer repeating, and are progressing on their course.

A **similar unit of work is any period of the course equivalent to the period already completed on the current course or any previous course prior to a transfer. For example, where the student has undertaken the PG Cert element of a master's course then transfers to a different course and is required to complete the PG Cert element of the new course before being able to progress, the student should not receive further payment until they complete the PG Cert element of the new course and are confirmed as progressing.*

For example:

Louise starts a two-year part-time PGM course in October 2024. At the end of the first year, Louise has not met the required academic standards to progress on to the second year of the course and must re-sit the full year before progressing. Louise will repeat the first year in AY 25/26. As Louise is repeating modules of her course with no progression, Louise will not receive payment in AY 25/26. Once it's confirmed that Louise is progressing on the course, payment will resume. Any payment(s) missed during the repeat period of study will be released when SLC receive notification that Louise is progressing on the course.

Jan starts a one-year PGM course in September 2024. At the end of term one, Jan has not met the required standards to pass that element of the course (PGCert level). As a result, Jan is required to re-sit the full term before being able to progress on the course. As Jan is repeating previous modules and is not progressing on the course, further payment will be held until confirmation is received that Jan is progressing. Once it is confirmed that Jan is progressing on the course, payment will resume. Any payment(s) missed during the period of repeat study will be released when SLC receive notification that Jan is progressing on the course.

SLC may exercise discretion to continue to pay a student throughout a period of repeat study if the student can supply evidence of financial hardship, or of a CPR.

If a student is repeating elements of a course alongside progression, they remain eligible to receive payment throughout this period.

For example:

Jeff starts a one-year PGM course in September 2024. At the end of term one, Jeff has not met the required academic standards to be considered to have completed that element of the course. Jeff's provider agrees to allow him to progress with the next element of the course and repeat the required modules from term one alongside progression of term two. As Jeff is still progressing on the course, this is not considered a period of repeat study, therefore, payments can commence as per the initial payment schedule.

8.6 Change of course length

Students may transfer between PGM courses of different lengths. Where the student transfers to a course with a different number of academic years the maximum loan per academic year changes in line with the duration of the new course. Note however that the overall entitlement for the duration of the student's course does not change – it is only the distribution of the entitlement per academic year that changes. For more information on maximum payment amounts per academic year, please see section [Maximum Loan payments per academic year](#).

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For example, a student with a PGLM entitlement of £18,950, maximum loan payments per academic year would change following a transfer to a PGM course of a different duration as follows:

Maximum PGLM		New PGM course			
		1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years
Previous PGM course	1 year	No change	£18,950 to £9,475	£18,950 to £6,316*	£18,950 to £4,737**
	2 year	£9,475 to £18,950	No change	£9,475 to £6,316*	£9,475 to £4,737**
	3 year	£6,316* to £18,950	£6,316* to £9,475	No change	£6,316* to £4,737**
	4 year	£4,737** to £18,950	£4,737** to £9,475	£4,737** to £6,316*	No change

*£6,318 in the final year of course due to rounding of payments

**£4,739 in the final year of course due to rounding of payments

Note that the above amounts are indicative – the student's new maximum payment proportions are dependent on their loan request/entitlement, however they always represent the student's loan entitlement split equally across course years (rounded up in final years where necessary).

For example:

Imran is undertaking a four-year PGM course and decides to request £8,000 PGLM. £2,000 is scheduled in year one (*one quarter of the total loan request amount*). The following payments have been made in year one:

Payment period 1: £660 (33% of £2,000)

Payment period 2: £660 (33% of £2,000)

Imran transfers to a two-year PGM course during payment period two of year one. The new loan cap for year one is £4,000 (*half of the total loan request amount*). Further payments made in year one are as follows:

Interim payment: £1,320 (66% of £4,000, minus amount already paid)

Payment period 3: £1,360 (34% of £4,000)

The remaining loan request amount of £4,000 is paid in year 2. Total PGLM paid in respect of Imran's PGM course is £8,000.

8.7 Withdrawal

Under regulation 12, a student's eligibility for PGLM terminates at the end of the day on which an eligible student withdraws from their PGM course. Under regulation 22, if the student withdraws from the course the student is under an obligation to notify their HE provider and SLC immediately to ensure that the next payment of PGLM is not released. HE providers are also expected to notify SLC as soon as they are notified of a student's withdrawal under regulation 34(2).

Where an eligible student, with the agreement of their HE provider, ceases to attend a designated course, with no intention of returning, the student is considered to have withdrawn from their course for the purposes of student support. Note, as the withdrawal is considered a termination of a student's period of eligibility, if the student wishes to return to study in the future, they are considered as a new student.

Under regulation 37, where an eligible student has been paid an amount of PGLM, which exceeds the amount to which the student is entitled to, the student must repay the excess amount, and SLC should recover this amount under regulations 38 and 39.

8.7.1 Withdrawal and overpayment

Where a student withdraws from their course, all future payments of PGLM are cancelled. The PGLM payment made for the payment period in which the student withdrew is left in place, i.e. it is not be reassessed based on the number of days in the payment period up to withdrawal and there is therefore no loan overpayment immediately due from the borrower. Payments of PGLM already made are collected through income contingent repayments when the student's loan balance enters repayment status.

Payments of PGLM are treated as loan overpayments where:

- SLC receives confirmation that the student withdrew on a date prior to a previous payment period start date, i.e., the student was not in study in that period, and the student has been paid more than their reassessed maximum PGLM entitlement; or
- the student was incorrectly made eligible for PGLM (PGM Funding if the student began their course prior to 1 August 2024) because, for example:
 - the student is found to already hold an equivalent or higher-level qualification which they did not declare to SLC at the point of application under regulation 10, *Exception 6*;
 - the student does not satisfy the residency requirements for PGLM detailed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations;

- the student was incorrectly confirmed as studying on a course designated for PGLM under regulation 34.

On notification of withdrawal, the student's maximum PGLM entitlement amount is reduced to the amount the student was entitled to for the payment periods that they were in study. Any loan amount paid which exceeds this amount is treated as a loan overpayment.

For example:

Stacey starts a one-year PGM course in September 2024. Stacey requests £18,950 PGLM. Payments are scheduled as follows:

1. £6,253.50
2. £6,253.50
3. £6,443.00

SLC are notified during payment period two that Stacey withdrew from the PGM course during payment period one. Stacey's PGLM entitlement is reduced to 33% of £18,950 (i.e., £6,253.50, the maximum first payment period loan entitlement amount). The second payment period instalment of £6,253.50 will be treated as a loan overpayment and the third payment period instalment will be cancelled.

Where an amount of PGLM is overpaid, collection of the loan overpayment is sought prior to the Statutory Repayment Due Date (unless financial hardship can be demonstrated) and separately from the main loan balance which is collected through income contingent repayments.

8.7.2 Overpayments owed from a previous course of study

Where a student owes any outstanding student loan overpayment from a previous course of HE study which is not a PGM course, this overpayment may be deducted from the student's PGLM entitlement unless the student can demonstrate financial hardship.

Where a student has received an amount of PG Master's support for a previous course, the student would not normally be eligible for PGLM for a new course. However, they may be eligible for further PGLM funding where the student received a payment of PG Master's Funding but did not actually start to attend the course; this may be because the HE provider registered the student, but they or SLC did not process a change of circumstances in time to prevent the payment being made. In this circumstance, the student is only eligible for PGLM for the new course once they have repaid the overpayment for the previous course in full.

8.8 Suspension/resumption

Where an eligible student, with the agreement of their HE provider, ceases to attend a designated course, with the intention of returning to the same course at a later date, the student is considered to have suspended their studies for the purposes of student support. The student remains an eligible student during their period of absence. Note, students who

have suspended their PGM course, may re-join their course on a later intake. Suspension of a student's studies allows students to retain their period of eligibility and therefore retain their entitlement to funding.

Where the student is ceasing their studies and has no intention to return to the same course, the student is considered to have withdrawn from their course and their period of eligibility has ended. For more information on withdrawals, please see the [Withdrawal](#) section.

Suspensions should be notified to SLC where the student is absent for more than 60 days due to illness or for any period for any other reason (regulation 34(2) and (3)).

Where a student suspends study for an academic year to undertake a work placement that is not an integral part of the PGM course, this should be treated as per other suspensions – no funding is available for any academic year in which the student is not in study.

8.8.1 Loan Payments following suspensions

If a student suspends study with the agreement of their HE provider, the default position is that no further PGLM payments are released until the student has resumed study. SLC have discretion to continue paying a student their standard PGLM payment(s) whilst the student is suspended if the student can supply evidence of financial hardship, or a CPR. Note the student does not in any case receive more than the maximum PGLM entitlement for the academic year in which their study began (£18,950 for AY 24/25).

For example:

Martin starts a one-year PGM course in September 2024 and suspends study in December 2024. Payment 1 of the student's PGLM loan has been released. Future payments are blocked while the student remains suspended. The student supplies evidence of financial hardship in February 2025. SLC releases payment 2 of PGLM in February 2025. The student resumes their study in March 2025. The student receives their final instalment of PGLM for the academic year in payment period 3, as scheduled.

Once a student resumes study, PGLM payments also resume. Any PGLM instalments due up to the point of resumption are released once the student resumes their PGM course.

Suspends and resumes in the same payment period	Support not affected
Suspends and resumes in the following payment period	Payments scheduled at the beginning of the payment period following their suspension are held until SLC receive notification that the student has resumed their studies, at which point SLC release the held payments.
Suspends for a full payment period	Missed payments made on resumption (i.e. in the payment period that the student resumes attendance)

For example:

Ingrid commences a one-year PGM course in September for AY 24/25. Ingrid requests £18,950 PGLM.

Ingrid subsequently suspends study on 23 March 2025 and her PGLM payments are stopped. To this point Ingrid has received two PGLM payments totalling £12,507 (66% of £18,950). Reviewing Ingrid's individual circumstances, SFW determines that Ingrid's PGLM should not be paid during the period of absence through the suspension.

Ingrid is absent from the course for 40 days, returning to the course on 1 May 2025 (i.e. after the start of the third payment period). As Ingrid has resumed the course, the PGLM entitlement for the academic year remains the full entitlement of £18,950 loan. The remaining payment of £6,443 (34% of £18,950) is paid following resumption of studies, ensuring that Ingrid receives the full PGLM amount.

Please note, this also applies in situations where the student extends their study following resumption. For example:

Carlton commences a one-year PGM course in September for AY 24/25. Carlton requests £15,000 PGLM.

Carlton subsequently suspends study on 23 March 2025 and so PGLM payments are stopped. To this point Carlton has received two PGLM payments totalling £9,900 (66% of £15,000). Reviewing Carlton's individual circumstances, SFW determines that Carlton's PGLM should not be paid during the period of absence through the suspension.

Carlton is absent from the course for 40 days, returning to the course on 1 May 2025 (i.e. after the start of the third payment period). The student arranges with the HE provider to extend their study to 30 December 2025 and therefore into AY 25/26. As Carlton has resumed his course, the PGLM entitlement for the academic year remains the loan request amount of £15,000 PGLM regardless of the extension of study. As with resumptions of study where no extension of study has occurred, the remaining payment of £5,100 (34% of £15,000) PGLM is paid, ensuring that Carlton receives the full PGLM amount requested. Carlton retains the ability to request the remaining £3,950 PGLM as a loan increase, subject to the usual deadlines.

9 Annexes

9.1 Annex A: Events that fall under regulation 16 of the Regulations

The events are—

- the student's course becomes a designated course;
- the student becomes an eligible student on the grounds that—
 - the student or the student's spouse, civil partner or parent is recognised as a refugee, becomes a person granted stateless leave, becomes a person with leave to enter or remain or becomes a person granted humanitarian protection under paragraph 339C of the immigration rules;
 - the student becomes a person with leave to enter or remain as a relevant Afghan citizen, or the spouse, civil partner, child or stepchild of such a person;
 - the student becomes a family member described in paragraph 8A(1)(a), 8B(1)(a), 8C(a) or 8D(1)(a) or (2)(a) of Schedule 2;
 - the student becomes a person described in paragraph 1(2)(a) of Schedule 2;
 - the student becomes a person described in paragraph 6A(1)(a) of Schedule 2;
 - the student becomes a person described in paragraph 9A(a) of Schedule 2;
 - the student or the student's parent becomes a person with section 67 leave to remain or a person granted leave to remain as a protected partner;
 - the student becomes a person with Calais leave;
 - the student becomes a protected Ukrainian national, or the spouse, civil partner, child or stepchild of such a person;
- the student commences a designated course after the start date of the designated course as the relevant academic authority has permitted the student to commence the course at this later start date.

9.2 Annex B: Updates Log

Date	Updates
23/05/2024	<p>Version 0.1 draft created.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive updates throughout to remove references to grant products available to students who started their study prior to 1 August 2024, and to align certain sections for consistency with PGD Guidance Chapter. • AY 24/25 standard loan rates change updates - throughout. • NINO provision changes updated to reflect requirements for students in certain residency categories to provide a valid NINO prior to release of their second loan payment (section 2.16 – p. 16). • Addition of termination provisions detailed within the guidance (section 3.4 – p. 19) – students eligible via certain leave statuses will cease to qualify for support in future AYs where their relevant status expires, and no further qualifying leave status has been issued. • Updated loan entitlement calculation expectations when a student becomes a prisoner during the academic year to align with regulatory requirements (section 6.2.2 – p. 37). • Eligibility for family members of ARAP/ACRS leave holders for events detailed within guidance, setting out rules pertaining to these student's eligibility status following a regulatory eligibility event (section 9.1 Annex A – p. 50). • Eligibility for family members of Ukraine Scheme leave holders for events detailed within guidance, setting out rules pertaining to these student's eligibility status following a regulatory eligibility event (section 9.1 Annex A – p. 51).
23/05/2024	<p>Version 0.2 draft</p> <p>Minor updates to wording following internal review and shared with stakeholder for external review.</p>
13/06/2024	<p>Version 0.3 draft</p> <p>Minor updates to text following stakeholder review.</p>
13/06/2024	Version 1.0

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	Guidance signed off by stakeholders and sent for publishing.
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