



Student
Loans Company

ONLINE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

BOBBY KING

ONLINE SERVICES ANALYST

9 - 10 March 2011

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The SLC online service

Websites:

- Directgov – ‘Student Finance’
- Student Loan Repayment
- Student Finance England (Practitioners’ website)
- Student Finance Wales
- Student Finance Northern Ireland

We also manage:

- the online service – customers can log in to view their payments, change their details and check their correspondents
- the online application (also known as ‘the customer portal’)

Student Finance on Directgov

Directgov
Public services all in one place

Cymraeg | Accessibility | Help | Site index |

Search this site

Home | Contacts | Do it online | Newsroom

Friday, 18 February 2011

Browse by subject


- ▶ Crime and justice
- ▼ Education and learning
 - ▼ University and higher education
 - ▶ **Student finance**
 - ▶ Employment
 - ▶ Environment and greener living
 - ▶ Government, citizens and rights
 - ▶ Health and well-being
 - ▶ Home and community
 - ▶ Money, tax and benefits
 - ▶ Motoring
 - ▶ Pensions and retirement planning
 - ▶ Travel and transport

Browse by people

- ▶ Young people
- ▶ Britons living abroad
- ▶ Caring for someone
- ▶ Disabled people
- ▶ Parents

Education and learning

Student finance

 **Applying for 2011/12 finance?**
Returning full-time students should apply now for finance for 2011/12. New full-time students will be able to apply for 2011/12 finance from 16 March

- ▶ Apply for finance for 2011/12 - returning students only
- ▶ Student finance reforms from September 2012 on the BIS website

▶ **Quick guide to student finance**
How and when to apply for finance for 2010/11 or 2011/12 and what you can apply for

▶ **Extra help**
If you are disabled or have children or adult dependants, you can apply for extra, non-repayable grants

▶ **Parents and partners of students**
If you are supporting a student's application, find out what you need to do

▶ **Repaying student loans**
How and when to repay your student loan

▶ **Types of finance for new students**
Loans, grants and bursaries for 2010/11 and 2011/12 including finance for teaching, NHS and social work courses

▶ **After your first year**
You need to re-apply for finance every year of your course - what's available depends on when you started

▶ **Not from England?**
Go here if you live in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales - or if you are from another EU country

See also...


- ▶ Student Finance: customer promise
- ▶ Money to learn at 14 to 19
- ▶ Financial help for adult learners
- ▶ Funding postgraduate study
- ▶ Funding if you're studying at an overseas university (Britons living abroad section)

Bookmark with:

Facebook Twitter Google Buzz StumbleUpon Delicious Reddit

▶ How do you use this toolbar?

Provided by



▶ Service updates

▶ Customer promise

Student finance online services

Log on to your student finance account

▶ Register and apply for student finance

▶ Parents and partners: support an application

▶ Find out your login details

Contacts and FAQs

▶ Student finance FAQs

▶ Contact Student Finance England

▶ More student finance contacts

Forms and guides


▶ Forms and guides 2010/11


▶ Forms and guides 2011/12

Student Finance Northern Ireland




[home](#) | [faqs](#) | [contact](#) | [feedback](#)

Login 

Register 

Find out your
login details 

Search

Contain all of the te 



About Us

What's new 

Deadlines for
2010/2011 applications
[Read more...](#)

Student Finance ni
2010/11 presentation
[read more...](#)

Get Safe Online



you are here... [Home](#)

welcome to student finance northern ireland



Online applications for 2011/12 - apply now

Applications for academic year 2011/12 (for courses starting after 1 September 2011) are now available. You can still apply for academic year 2010/11 - for courses starting before 1 September 2011.



Exam results - change your application online

If you need to change your student finance application because you plan to study a different course, you can change your student finance application online. If you haven't applied yet, do it now - you don't have to wait until you go through clearing.

- [Register and log in to the online service](#)
- [How to apply online](#)

I am planning to go into higher education 






Student Finance Wales

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Student Finance Wales website. At the top, the logo "student finance wales" is displayed in black and pink, with a circular profile picture of a woman in a blue circle to its right. To the right of the profile picture is the slogan "invest in your future" in grey. Below the logo is a blue navigation bar with links for "home", "faqs", "contact us", and "feedback". A breadcrumb trail below the navigation bar reads "you are here... Home".

On the left side, there are several utility sections: "Login" and "Register" buttons, a "Find out your login details" link, a "Search" section with a text input field, a "GO" button, and a dropdown menu set to "Contain all of the terms", and "Cymraeg" and "Useful Sites" links.

At the bottom left, there are social media icons for Facebook and Twitter.

The main content area features a list of five categories, each with a colored circle icon and a corresponding text description:

-  I am planning to stay at school or college
-  I am planning on going into higher education
-  I am a continuing student
-  I am the parent or partner of a student
-  I have completed my studies and want to know about repayment

Below this list is a large image of a smiling woman. Underneath the image is a pink exclamation mark icon followed by the text "Coming soon - applications for 2011/12". At the bottom of the page, a small text block states: "At the moment you can apply for academic year 2010/11. Applications for academic year 2011/12 (for courses starting after 1 September 2011) will be available from 21 February."

Student Finance England - Practitioner's website

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Student Finance England Practitioner's website. At the top right is the logo "studentfinanceengland". Below it is a navigation menu with links: Home, Introducing SFE, Student Finance Packages, Specialist Finance, Application Process, Practitioner Resources, Students Outside England, and Regional Support. The main content area is titled "Welcome to Student Finance England" and includes a "site search" box, a "Directgov" logo, and a "FOLLOW US ON twitter" button. A "Useful Links" section lists several news items, such as "Latest News", "Beware of scam emails", and "Persons with leave to remain - new regulations". On the right side, there is a "Sign up for news and updates" form with fields for name, email, and organisation, and a "Subscribe" button. At the bottom, there are social media sharing icons and a footer with links for Accessibility, Sitemap, Terms & Conditions, Links, and Information Charter.

Downloads

INFORMATION PACKS

UNDERSTANDING STUDENT FINANCE 2011/12

To help students identify the financial support they might be eligible for, Student Finance England has produced three information booklets, two for students and one for practitioners:

PRACTITIONER PACK 2011/12

For student advisors, teachers and tutors: for anyone who offers guidance on student finance. This guide provides details on what student finance is available and what resources there are for practitioners and delivery partners to use in order to assist in giving advice to students and their families.

A GUIDE TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS 2011/2012

New full-time students: this provides details of the grants, loans and bursaries available and how to apply for them.


A GUIDE TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR RETURNING STUDENTS 2011/2012

This guide is available for download only.

Make request

Mock account – the online application demo

student finance wales



invest in your future

Welcome, John Henry Bonham | [Logout](#)

Resize text: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

Your application

- ▼ About You
- ▶ Nationality residency
- ▶ Previous loans study
- ▶ Special support grant
- ▶ **Your Course**
- ▶ Your Loan

= Incomplete = Complete

Your student finance application

Your course

To select a different university/college or course, click on 'Course search'.

Provide details of your university/college and course

Give the name and address of the university or college you hope to go to.

Name of university/college:	LEEDS UNIVERSITY
Address:	STUDENT OFFICE WOODHOUSE LANE
Town:	LEEDS
Postcode:	LS2 9JT

Demo Help

Once you have selected your course you can either choose another one by clicking on **course search**, or you can complete the fields provided and click **save and continue**.

Demo Navigation

* click to expand
[Quick links](#)

The online service



Welcome, Xrab Xqueen | [Logout](#)

- Account Links
- ▶ My Account
- ▶ View Payments
- ▶ Ask a Question
- ▶ View Messages
- ▶ Update My Profile
- ▶ Update Security Details
- ▶ View Correspondence
- ▶ Update Bank Details

My Account

Applications for 2011/12

Applications for returning full-time students are available now. New full-time students will be able to apply for 2011/12 finance from 16 March.

Applying for finance if your course started in academic year 2010/11. You can still apply for finance for courses that started since 1 September 2010.

Use the 'Apply for support' links below and submit your application now.

Parents and partners of students

You can provide financial information in support of a students application by clicking the 'Support an application' links below.

Evidence for student finance

Received a letter or email asking for evidence? Click 'View your application, status and next steps' below, to see a summary of what evidence you need to send and to where. General information on evidence:

[Submitting evidence to support a student finance application \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Facebook and Twitter updates

www.facebook.com/SFEngland


www.twitter.com/sf_english

Provided by



My Applications				
2011/12	The facility to apply for academic year 11/12 is not yet available.			
2010/11	Academic Year	Institution	Course	Status
	2010/11	KINGSTON COLLEGE		To be completed
Parents/partners - Support an application				
2011/12	Support an application			
2010/11	Support an application			

The online application




Public services all in one place

Welcome Xkevin Xrnchale, 33501013055 | [Logout](#)

Your application **Your student finance application**

Resize text: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

About you

Service provided by 

▶ Your course

▶ Your loan

Incomplete Complete

The following pages will ask you questions to allow your application for student finance to be assessed.

Click on 'Show Help' for extra information to help you answer each question.

Look under 'Help with this page' for general information.

Marital status

What is your current marital status?

Date of marriage/civil partnership (dd/mm/yyyy)

Have you been married or in a civil partnership at any time before the first day of the academic year?

Yes No

Passport details

Do you hold a UK passport?

Yes No

[Show help](#)

Passport number

Supplying your UK passport details online will assist with the processing of your application.

[Show help](#)

Passport expiry date (dd/mm/yyyy)

[Show help](#)

Passport issue date (dd/mm/yyyy)

[Show help](#)

Help with this page

Answer these questions then click 'save and continue'. If we need more information, the following sections will appear -


- Nationality and residency
- Previous loans and study
- Special Support Grant

Passport details

Please make sure the following are correct if you enter your UK passport details:

- Name - please enter the name which appears on your passport. If your married name is different from the name on your passport, enter the name on your passport.
- Number - this is a nine digit number, such as 987656789. Don't include any letters or symbols (such as AB/45-43244)

Student finance calculator



You are here... Home > Student Finance Estimate

Student Finance Calculator

Resize text: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

Student Finance Estimate

The following assumptions have been made about you based on your age and have not been changed

Based on the following assumptions about you:

- You are under 25, single, live with your parents and have no children or adults who are financially dependant on you; [Edit details](#)
- You do not want your household income to be taken into account [Edit details](#)
- You have not confirmed where you will be studying and/or details of the course you will be studying [Edit details](#)
- You do not want more information on Disabled Students Allowance [Edit details](#)
- You have not previously studied in Higher Education [Edit details](#)
- You have no funding from any other source [Edit details](#)

You could be entitled to the following breakdown

	If you live at your parental home	If you live away from parental home
Maintenance Loan - Paid directly to you	£2812	£3630
Tuition Fee Loan - If you are studying in Wales - Paid directly to your college/university	£3375	£3375
Tuition Fee Loan - If you are studying in England - Paid directly to your college/university	£3375	£3375
Tuition Fee Loan - If you are studying in Northern Ireland - Paid directly to your college/university	£3375	£3375
Tuition Fee Loan - If you are studying in Scotland - Paid directly to your college/university	£1820	£1820
Tuition Fee Loan - If you are studying in Scotland - Medical - Paid directly to your college/university	£2895	£2895

[Previous](#) [Save](#)

Options

- Save
- Print
- Apply

More Information

Next steps

- Payment information
- Repayment Calculator
- Budget Calculator

Recent improvements to the online service

We relaunched the online application in April 2010 making these improvements:

- No more ALIAS IDs for sponsors
- Links between the student finance calculator / UCAS and the Online Application
- Offer messages throughout the application to show what the student can get
- Sponsors can complete the application at the same time as the student or separately
- 'Next steps' messages after the application is submitted
- Customers can complete the sections of the online form in any order
- Better 'save' functions
- Easier to reset your password and log in
- Improved course search – populated from the HEI course database

Online change of circumstances

- Students could already amend their bank details and contact details online, and full-time students could track the progress of their application.

From October 2010 students can now amend their online application after it has been submitted. They can now change the following online:

- Change their course
- Change their loan amount
- Change their application details
- Take a break from their studies
- Withdrawn from their course

Known useability problems

- According to our useability research, customers still find the online process overlong, complicated and frustrating
- Password reset and login could still be improved
- Linking between students and sponsors is complicated
- On the 'estimate' screen, students choose the means tested instead of non-means tested route when it isn't in their best interest
- At the moment, online applicants still need to sign and return a paper declaration
- We ask many students many questions about their courses, rather than using our own information (course fees, start dates, NHS courses etc)
- Some products still require a paper form, and a complicated application process – CCG, DSA, ADG
- Directgov – we have limited scope for making changes
- Some online instructions are unclear – for example, 'blocked payments'
- Sponsor income questions are still complicated

What we're doing - 1

Customers still find the online process long, complicated and frustrating

- We worked with Directgov and BIS to run more useability testing during December 2010 to broaden our understanding of customer issues. We're now preparing a business case for radical change
- Returning students are shown a summary of the information they provided in the last academic year, and asked if they want to change it; they don't have to complete online applications over again
- Returning non-means tested students are now automatically rolled over so they don't need to make a new online application
- Password reset and login could still be improved
 - We'll improve password reset and login during 2011
- Linking between students and sponsors is complicated
 - We've updated the customer portal to provide clearer advice and are looking for opportunities for further improvements
- Students choose means tested instead of non-means tested when it isn't in their best interest
 - We redesigned the 'estimate' screen to help give customers a clearer choice – planned for 2011

What we're doing - 2

Online applicants still need to sign and return a paper declaration

- Currently under review; at the moment we still require a signed declaration for legal reasons

We ask many students many questions about their courses, rather than using our own information (course fees, start dates, NHS courses etc)

- We may be able to use the course database to show the student's correct course fee for that academic year – planned for 2011

- Some products still require a paper form, and a complicated application process – CCG, DSA, ADG

- Under review – there is a 'digital by default' agenda in government to put all public services online. We will review the advice we currently give for these products on Directgov during 2011.

What we're doing - 3


- Directgov – design and content need to be brought up to date
 - Directgov are currently reviewing their overall website design to improve useability.
 - We're running customer testing with DG to improve the content and 'information architecture' of the Student Finance section, in order to make it easier for customers to use
- Some online instructions are unclear – for example, 'blocked payments'
 - We will continue to review and update the online application to ensure we're using plain English and clear instructions. The 'View payments' screen now has extra help content.
- Sponsor income questions are still complicated
 - We reviewed these for 2011/12 to make these simpler, and closer to the tax returns many sponsors make to HMRC
 - Sponsors of new, England students will no longer have to provide financial evidence, due to the VHI link between SLC and HMRC

Accessibility – website access for disabled people

- Website Accessibility is closely related to useability.
- Our websites are tested by User Vision to flag up potential design problems for disabled users, including people with dyslexia, blindness, deafness, colour blindness and motor impairments.
- All forms and pictures have to be treated carefully so that someone can use a 'screen reader' to read our pages out loud.
- We are drafting a plan so that we can reach full 'AA' compliance with the WC3 guidelines for web accessibility. This will help ensure that no-one is prevented from applying for finance due to their disability.

'Your course' screen – discussion point

student finance wales



invest in your future

Welcome, John Henry Bonham | [Logout](#)

Resize text: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

Your application

- ▼ About You
- ▶ Nationality residency
- ▶ Previous loans study
- ▶ Special support grant
- ▶ **Your Course**
- ▶ Your Loan

= Incomplete = Complete

Your student finance application

Your course

To select a different university/college or course, click on 'Course search'.

Provide details of your university/college and course

Give the name and address of the university or college you hope to go to.

Name of university/college:	LEEDS UNIVERSITY
Address:	STUDENT OFFICE WOODHOUSE LANE
Town:	LEEDS
Postcode:	LS2 9JT

Demo Help

Once you have selected your course you can either choose another one by clicking on **course search**, or you can complete the fields provided and click **save and continue**.

Demo Navigation

* click to expand

[Quick links](#)

'Your course' – continued

When will you finish the last year of your course? (mm/yyyy)

Give the full tuition fee amount that your university or college is charging for the course you will be studying?

£

[Show help](#)

Is this course a degree course which you are taking immediately after completing an HNC, HND or DIP HE course?

Yes No

[Show help](#)

Give the date that you started the HNC, HND or DIP HE. (dd/mm/yyyy)

Where will you be?

'Your course' – Where will you be?

Where will you be?

Where will you spend most of your time studying during each term in this academic year? Do not count periods of teaching practice as a placement, so if you are studying an ITT course, tick University or College.

Term 1

Please select 

Term 2

Please select 

Term 3

Please select 

Where will you spend most of your time studying during each term in this academic year? Do not count periods of teaching practice as a placement, so if you are studying an ITT course, tick University or College.

Term 1

Please select 





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