



Student
Loans Company

STUDENT SUPPORT IN WALES

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Student Finance Delivery Partnerships

- Student Finance Wales (SFW) is the brand



- SLC and the Local Authorities are joined up to deliver student support
- Single assessment system
- Integrated call-handling process gives a transparent service to the students
- Consistent “UK” business service to HEIs

Student Finance Delivery Partnerships Applications and Assessments

- Local Authorities
 - Data entry of paper forms
 - Identity and income evidence
 - Assessments & approvals
- SLC
 - Provide assessment systems
 - National insurance numbers / fraud systems
 - Scheduling and making payments

Student Finance Delivery Partnerships

Student Enquiries and Support

- Student Enquiries are made to SFW
 - Contact centres' extended opening hours
 - Automated response and identity authentication available
 - Payment and repayment enquires handled by dedicated SLC teams
 - Assessment queries handled by the LA
- SF Information, Advice & Guidance
 - Undertaken by Local Authorities for new students
 - Returners process being enhanced towards full automation

Student Finance Delivery Partnerships Annual Planning

- SLC & the AAs work together to prepare for each new year
 - Systems design
 - Application literature
 - Communications to other stakeholders
- Implementation Planning
 - Award authority planning is aligned with systems readiness
 - DCELLS provide policy changes and manage some customer-facing communications
 - Occasionally, specific change projects pull experts from all partners to work together on development and implementation

Student Finance Wales (SFW) - General

- Most HE student support functions devolved to Wales in 2006.
- Welsh Assembly Government's delivery partners are 21 Local Authorities (LAs), the SLC and Welsh HEIs; joint Wales/NI project board chaired by SLC (separate arrangements for FE - EMA payments etc.).
- Operate under the Student Finance Wales brand; bilingual service; Contact Centre; LAs assess eligibility for support; SLC handles payments.
- Main SFW stakeholder group comprises delivery partners, HE/FE representatives, UCAS, NASMA, NUS(W).

SFW in 2010/11

- Tuition fee up-rated by 2.04% to £3,290; most of FT package frozen; PT package up-rated but not targeted grants.
- Fee Grant phased out; no Fee Grant for the new “2010 cohort student”; Assembly Learning Grant (ALG = maintenance grant) raised to maximum £5,000 for incomes of £18,370 or less and upper ALG threshold raised to £50,020.
- Maintenance loan (up to £3,673 if living with parents; up to £4,475 if living away; up to £6,648 in London).
- “Debt relief” – partial cancellation of maintenance loans taken out in 10/11 – up to £1,500. Can only be accessed once.
- Welsh National Bursary set at £329.

SFW in 2011/12

- Main student support regulations in force on 21 February 2011.
- Tuition fee up-rated by 2.6% to £3,375.
- ALG raised to a maximum of £5,600 for the “2011 cohort student”; 10/11 thresholds still apply.
- Welsh National Bursary available to continuing students only (£338).
- Maintenance loans (up to £3,673 if living with parents; up to £4,475 if living away; up to £6,648 in London) – no change.
- Partial cancellation of maintenance loans taken out in 10/12 – up to £1,500.
- Student guidance (“White Book”) simplified.
- Encourage online applications (now around 50%).
- Gap Year – will be subject to 2012/13 terms and conditions.

SFW in 2012/13

- Tuition fee ceiling of £9,000. New suite of regulations coming into force in Wales to permit this. Due to be laid before 31 March 2011.
- Tuition fee loan up-rated by 2.7% to £3,465 and a “New Fee Grant” to be introduced for the “2012 cohort student” – studying anywhere in the UK – to top-up the difference between the maximum loan and the tuition fee charged by an HEI. Maximum Grant will therefore be £5,535.
- Assembly Learning Grant re-set at 10/11 level - £5,000.
- Maintenance Loan levels and partial cancellation – no change.
- Part-time: access to a student loan for the first time. To be part of an amending regulation later this year.

New Fee Grant

- Maximum non repayable £5,535 available to eligible Welsh students (and EU students in Wales) undertaking their first degree/other HE course whether or not they apply for any other loans/grants (requirement to tick a box on the PN1).
- Basic fee level set at £4,000 (£6,000 in England), above which Welsh HEIs will be expected to provide a fee plan (access, equality etc.)
- Welsh students undertaking a second undergraduate degree (such as medicine, architecture, social work) will not be eligible for the new fee grant.
- DCELLS, Funding Council (HEFCW) and SLC discussing payment mechanism to HEIs.
- Around a third of HEFCW's teaching grant will be redistributed, together with income from other UK students studying in Wales, to pay for the new grant.

Future Developments

- Centralisation of student support delivery service in Wales – LA consortia initially.
- “Reconfiguration and collaboration” for Welsh HEIs; Funding Council expects no more than 6 HEIs in Wales by March 2013 (down from 11).
- UK HEIs setting a tuition fee at course level – how will the “market” develop?
- Legislation/administration overload from each UK administration is a risk for SLC delivery.





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