



Paying for Higher Education

Higher Education does cost money and it is one of the biggest concerns for prospective university and college students.

Student fees have historically increased, and understandably, there are concerns about the amount of debt students might get into or if it's affordable. DO NOT panic as financial support is available, so money should not be a deciding factor when considering Higher Education.

The following section aims to give you the information you need about student finance and break down some of the myths about the cost of Higher Education. The good news is that student loan repayments are based on what graduates can afford to pay, rather than the amount that is borrowed. Students don't have to pay anything back until they have finished their higher education qualification and are earning over a certain amount.

TUITION FEES

This is the cost of the course and facilities, including things like teaching time, the library and computer facilities.

- ◆ **Students pay their own tuition fees, but you can get a student loan to cover the cost if you are eligible.**
- ◆ **A Universities can charge up to £9,535 per year (2025/26). This will increase in line with inflation from 2026 onwards.**



LIVING OR MAINTENANCE LOAN COSTS

You will also need to pay for things like accommodation, food, transport, and socialising. You can apply for a maintenance loan to help towards these costs.

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE BURSARIES

Many universities/colleges offer bursaries to qualifying students. These do not have to be repaid. Information can be found on the individual university or college's websites.

WHO PROVIDES STUDENT LOANS?

Student loans are provided by the Student Loans Company (SLC). SLC is a non-profit making, government-owned organisation. For students living in England, applications for a student loan are made through Student Finance England. There's a different process for students from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.



REPAYING STUDENT LOAN

What you pay back is based on what you earn, not what you owe, so it's more like a tax, and it is calculated for you. If you stop earning or earn less, you'll stop paying or pay less. After 40 years any remaining balance is cleared. Visit www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan for up to date repayment information.

STUDENT LOAN INTEREST

While you are still studying, the interest on your loan will be RPI (Retail Price Index) +3%. After you have finished your course, you will pay a rate of interest of RPI plus between 0% and 3% depending on your income.

If your income changes, the amount you repay will change too. But don't worry – this happens automatically.

If you stop working, or start to earn below the repayment threshold, your repayments will stop until you earn over the threshold.

If you're unsure about questions such as fees and support entitlements, for example if you've been living abroad, give your chosen university or college admissions team a ring.

There's more information about repaying student loans at, www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan



USEFUL WEBSITES

To find out more about student loan repayments.

- ♦ GOV.UK
www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan/what-you-pay
- ♦ Student Loans Company
www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan
- ♦ Money Saving Expert
www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/



APPLYING FOR STUDENT LOANS

You can apply for your tuition fee and maintenance loans online at www.gov.uk/student-finance.

We encourage you to do this as early as possible, as it can take up to six weeks to process your application. You don't need to wait to receive offers from universities or colleges before applying. For more guidance and application deadlines visit www.gov.uk/apply-for-student-finance.

Most of the application process is done online, however you may need to send proof of identity through the post, and will have to print, sign and return a declaration form. You will then receive a letter confirming how much you can borrow.

Once you have registered at university or college, the tuition fee will be paid straight to your institution. The maintenance loan will be paid into your bank account at the start of each term.

If you are an international student or a student from the EU with non-settled status, then you will not be eligible for any student finance and may face higher tuition fees. However, there may be bursaries and grants available to you from your university and these can be found on your university's website.

NEW: Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)

- The Big Change: A flexible student loan allowing you to train, retrain, or upskill throughout your working life, not just at age 18.
- The Pot: You get a tuition loan entitlement worth £38,140 (equivalent to 4 years of study) to use for full degrees or short modules.
- Eligibility: Available for learners aged 18 to 60. Even if you have studied before, you may still be entitled to residual funding.
- Key Dates: Applications open September 2026 for courses starting from January 2027.

For more information search 'Gov.uk LLE'

Other support for students

DON'T WORRY... If you require additional support, this is available from universities and colleges.

Providers are keen to help young people with disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, long-term health conditions, young people who have been through the care system, estranged from their parent/s and young people who have caring responsibilities themselves. Circumstances and conditions can be disclosed on your UCAS form and the university or college should get in touch to arrange an appropriate support plan. If you have concerns, you can contact the universities and colleges before applying to discuss what support is available.

This is not an exhaustive list of options; it is always best to do your own research to find options that best suit you as an individual. The best places to find out about support open to you is your university or college website.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OFFERED BY UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to access extra financial support from your institution, such as:

- ▶ **Scholarships** – often these take the form of a lump sum and are offered to academically talented students.
- ▶ **Bursaries** (cash grants that don't have to be repaid) and **fee waivers** (reduced fees) – these may be offered to students from lower-income households.
- ▶ **Hardship funds** – assistance for students who are experiencing financial difficulties, usually in emergencies or exceptional circumstances. Each university or college has their own schemes and eligibility rules, so you should check with your chosen institution for details.

DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCE

The Disabled Students' Allowance is designed to cover any extra costs you may have due to a disability, long-term illness, mental health problem or specific learning difficulty. This could include specialist equipment such as computers or extra travel costs. For eligibility criteria and more details, visit www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa. You can also find information about local institutions via our website at <https://www.thefuturefocus.co.uk/students/information-for-students-with-a-disability/>

PART-TIME AND HOLIDAY JOBS

Many students choose to earn some extra money by working during term time, holidays, or both. This can give you useful experiences and help to enhance your CV. However, it's important that you leave plenty of time for your studies.

- ▶ **Student groups on social media may also be a good place to find out what sort of job opportunities are available locally.**
- ▶ **A temping agency may be able to find you short-term jobs during holidays. Or you could ask around in local shops, bars or restaurants. Zero-hour contracts can be really advantageous to students, as it means you are not tied down to working specific hours – this means when you are busy with assignments or want to go home during the holidays, you can do so but keep your job!**

