Student Finance for University

Using 2026 Entry – figures

Information

video

What is student finance?

When you go to university you will need finance for 2 things:

- **Fees** – the university will charge for the course/degree you are taking – it charges fees for every year you are at university.

- **Living costs** (this is called maintenance) for rent/food/books/phone/clothes and anything else you spend money on

Can I get finance?

The UK government has some rules about if you can claim financial help or not

To apply for full support, the following 3 conditions must apply to you:

- **You are one of the following:**
    - **a UK national or Irish citizen**
    - **settled under the EU Settlement Scheme**
    - **granted settled status for other reasons**
- **AND you've been living in the UK, for 3 years before starting your course**
- **AND England is your home, for example, you live and work in England and have not moved there solely for the purposes of study**

If you're a UK national who was living in the European Economic Area, Gibraltar or Switzerland, you may be able to apply for full support.

- You **could** also be eligible if you’re not a UK national and are either:

- under 18 and have lived in the UK for at least 7 years
- 18 or over and have lived in the UK for at least 20 years (or at least half of your life)

Who can get tuition fees only

You can apply for tuition fee funding if you’ve been living in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland or the overseas territories for the past 3 years and you:

- have pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme or have temporary protection under the Withdrawal Agreements which may be evidenced through a certificate of application, and are an EU national or a family member of an EU national
- have Irish Citizenship and were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, or are a family member of an Irish Citizen or Person of Northern Ireland and you have pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
- are a person with settled status in the UK and you’ve been living in the UK
- are a person of Chagossian descent and have British citizenship
- are a person with settled status in the UK and have been living in the UK, Islands or Ireland for the past three years with at least part of that time spent in Ireland
- are a family member of a person with settled status in the UK and you have been living in the UK and Islands for the past three years

Martin Lewis – Money Saving expert

- Martin Lewis: Student Finance (moneysavingexpert.com)

What do I get?

Tuition Fees

- If you are eligible then the Student Finance, England will pay your fees direct to your university (you need to apply every year)

- The maximum level of tuition fees for standard full-time courses will be up to (£9,790 for AY 2026/27) **£10050 for 2027/28, this is paid directly to your university when you enrol on your course.**

Maintenance Loan

This is the more complex element to explain

- The amount you receive is based on your [Household income]
- Normally - Your household income includes:
  - your parents' income, if you live with them or depend on them financially
  - the combined income of one of your parents and their partner, if you live with them or depend on them financially

All eligible students can get the minimum amount – even if household income is high

The maximum amount you can get depends on where you live.

	2025 to 2026 academic year	2026 to 2027 academic year
Living with your parents	Up to £8,877	Up to £9,118
Living away from your parents, outside London	Up to £10,544	Up to £10,830
Living away from your parents, in London	Up to £13,762	Up to £14,135
You spend a year of a UK course studying abroad	Up to £12,076	Up to £12,403

How much can you get – this is a maximum few students get the maximum – it depends on your parents/guardian's household income

Full-time undergraduate students not eligible for benefits

The table gives maximum and minimum rates of loans for living costs, in the 2026 to 2027 academic year, for full-time undergraduate students who are not eligible for benefits.

Rate of loan for students	Maximum loan	Minimum loan
Living at home	£9,118	£4,013
Living away from home and studying in London	£14,135	£7,039
Living away from home and studying outside London	£10,830	£5,048
Studying overseas as part of a UK course	£12,403	£5,996

For 2026-27

Household income	Loan for living costs
£25,000 and below	£10,830
£30,000	£10,058
£35,000	£9,285
£40,000	£8,512
£42,875	£8,068
£45,000	£7,739
£50,000	£6,967
£55,000	£6,194
£60,000	£5,421
£62,410 and above	£5,048 (minimum loan)

- If your parents don’t give these details, you will not get the full amount of Maintenance Loan available, you will get the mimimum.

- For academic year 2027 to 2028, we’ll usually look at your parents’ household income for the financial year 2025 to 2026.

- But if your parents’ household income has dropped by 15% or more, they can ask us to look at their likely income for the current financial year.

Extra money

You might be able to get extra money if you:

- are under 25, have no contact with your parents and support yourself
- pay for childcare
- are a full-time student with children
- have an adult who depends on you financially
- have a disability, mental or physical health problem or learning difficulty like dyslexia

You might also be able to get other financial help, for example from your university or the government.

- Find out about extra help

Student Finance Calculator

Check how much student finance you could get

This calculator is for students living in England starting a new undergraduate funded course in academic years:

- 2025 to 2026
- 2026 to 2027

> Student finance is changing. If your course starts on or after 1 January 2027, find out what you could get.

There's a different way to check how much you can get if you're a student from Scotland, a student from Wales or a student from Northern Ireland.

Use this calculator to estimate the amount you could get in:

- Tuition Fee Loans to help pay your course tuition fees
- Maintenance Loans to help with your living costs
- extra funding, for example if you're on a low income, are disabled, have children or are studying a certain course

The name 'student loans' frightens people.

They scare the risk averse, which tends to especially include those from non-traditional university backgrounds, off going to university. They make parents do silly things like borrowing on their expensive mortgage so their child won't be 'in debt'.

- Yet the truth is what we call a student loan isn't really a debt like any other, in fact it acts far more like a tax than a loan. After all...

- It's repaid through the income tax system.
- You only repay it if you earn over a certain amount.
- The amount repaid increases with earnings.
- It does not go on credit files.
- Debt collectors will not chase for it.
- Bigger borrowing doesn't increase repayments.
- Many people will continue to repay for the majority of their working life.

But in reality it isn't a tax, it's more of a contributory contract. In effect though, it's somewhere between the two.

Repayments

You'll have to pay back any loan you get.

- Find out how much you'll repay
- Find out when you'll start repaying

- You only repay when you are earning over £25,000 a year. You pay 9% of what you earn over £25,000.
- E.g. earning £30,000 (£5,000 over £25,000) so pay £5,000 x 9% = £450 pa (£37.50 per month)
- Earning £45000 (£20,000 over the £25,000) so pay £20,000 x9% = £1,800 per year = £150 per month

When to Apply

- Student Finance opens late March in the year you want to go to university. Life Long learning Entitlement

- The deadline for applications, which ensure you get your money on time, is the end of May this year

- So if you want to start your course in September/October 2027 you need to apply in 2027.

Student Finance England websites

- Frequently asked questions
- https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/#common_questions_about_student_finance

Can I get money from other sources?

- All Universities will have bursaries/Scholarships that they might give you – some you will need to apply for so check out the university website. This is money that will not have to be repaid.

- There is bursary and scholarship information on the UCAS website – some charities, local people, organisations will give money to students who meet certain criteria.

- There is a list of all universities and their bursaries

Contributions to help

- You will need help from your parents if you are not on the maximum amount
- You can get part time work whilst at University – universities employ students
- Help from relatives – they always want to know what to get you for presents - ask for things that you will need (supermarket gift cards!)

How do you get paid the maintenance loan?

Student Finance Entitlement letter

We'll send you a Student Finance Entitlement letter telling you how much student finance you can get.

The letter will tell you when your instalments will be paid and details of any grants or other payments you may be due. You'll usually be paid in 3 instalments, normally at the start of each term.

Payment of your Maintenance Loan and Grant

> Remember to register at your university or college – we can't pay you until you do!

You need to register at your university or college before we can make your first payment. You'll usually do this in the first week of your course and you may have to take along your Student Finance Entitlement letter, so make sure you keep this safe. Once you've registered, your university or college will let us know and we'll make your payment. We'll pay any Maintenance Grant or Loan into your bank account.

You don't need to do anything other than register. It can take up to 5 working days for your money to reach your account, depending on your bank.

Disabled Students’ Allowance

- The Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) will be available for those studying 30 or more credits per course or module under the LLE. This also includes courses that were previously funded by Advanced Learner Loans, which will be newly funded under the LLE .

- Eligible students may qualify for DSA for multiple LLE courses within the service year, though their entitlement cannot exceed the maximum available within that relevant service year. SLC will provide further details on this ahead of the opening of DSA applications for courses starting from 1 January 2027.

Life Long Learning Entitlement

- The lifelong learning entitlement (LLE) will transform the post-18 student finance system to create a single funding system. It will replace: higher education (HE) student finance loans and advanced learner loans for level 4, 5 and 6 qualifications. (not masters funding)
- The LLE will allow people to develop new skills and gain new qualifications at a time that is right for them.
- The LLE will be available to new learners and returning learners who have previously studied a course or module in higher education.
- For returning learners, the amount they can borrow will be reduced depending on the funding they have previously received to support study.

This funding will only be available to students living in England at a provider registered with the Office for Students (OfS). Eligible learners will be able to apply for LLE funding for modules from September 2026.

- Under the LLE, eligible learners will be able to access:
- a tuition fee loan, with new learners able to access up to the full entitlement of £39,160 – equal to 4 years of study based on the maximum tuition fee for academic year 2026 to 2027
- a maintenance loan to cover living costs, for courses with in-person attendance

Financial help will also be available for:

  - learners with disabilities
  - support with childcare
  - those needing travel grants

- An additional entitlement will be available for priority subjects and longer courses, such as medicine and architecture degrees.

Learners will be able to see their loan balance through their own student finance account. The Student Loans Company (SLC) will host this.

Student finance account

- Users will be able to login to this SLC digital service to obtain their LLE tuition fee loan balance tailored to their specific circumstances.
- This digital service will enable individuals to manage their LLE entitlement. Individuals will be able to:
- check their LLE balance
- track the progress of applications
- get information, advice and guidance to help them plan their learning and further their career aspirations
- Before logging onto the SLC Student Finance Account, there will also be information and guidance on maintenance and tuition fees, for individuals to estimate how much they may be entitled to. More information will be shared on this in due course.

Subject groups eligible for modular funding

These are:

- computing
- engineering
- architecture, building and planning, excluding the landscape gardening subgroup
- physics and astronomy
- mathematical sciences
- nursing and midwifery
- allied health
- chemistry
- economics
- health and social care

Foundation years and foundation degrees

Higher education tuition fees for foundation years provides guidance for HE providers on tuition fees for foundation years in the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Foundation years are not:

- the same as foundation degrees
- standalone courses and do not typically lead to the award of a recognised qualification

A foundation year is a 1-year (or equivalent, if studied part-time) programme of study that is integrated at the start of an undergraduate course.

Foundation degrees are 2-year undergraduate courses that lead to the award of a level 5 qualification.

Both foundation years and foundation degrees will be eligible for funding under the LLE. To be eligible, a foundation year must form part of an eligible undergraduate course.

Loan entitlement

- A new learner will be able to access a full entitlement equal to 4 years of full-time tuition. This is currently equal to £39,160. It is based on the current maximum fee limit of £9,790 per year and academic year 2026 to 2027 fee rates.
- New learners are those who have not yet received government support to undertake higher-level learning or level 4 to 6 courses funding by an advanced learner loan.
- This means a learner could use their £39,160 to pay for more than 480 credits of learning, depending on the per-credit cost of the course.
- **Example: a new learner with a full entitlement**A new learner has a full entitlement of £39,160. They decide to use £7,000 to fund a 120-credit course. This means they would have £32,160 of their entitlement left to use towards other courses.
- Learners will be able to draw down loans to study up to 180 credits per year. This includes credits taken across multiple courses or modules within the same year.

Tuition fees and fee loans

Information is available on tuition fees and student support for 2026 to 2027, and 2027 to 2028 academic years.

- Under the LLE, tuition fee limits will be based on credits. This is instead of being based on the number of academic years in the course, as is the case under the existing system.
- To qualify for tuition fee and maintenance loans, a student must be undertaking a minimum of 30 credits in a course year.
- Learners with less than £1,587.50 (based on academic year 2026 to 2027 fee rates) left of their tuition fee loan entitlement balance will only be entitled to maintenance loans if they use their remaining balance to pay for a course they are seeking maintenance loan support for.
- In circumstances where a student has less than £1,587.50 (based on the 2026 to 2027 fee rates) left of their tuition fee loan entitlement, they may have to self-fund the tuition fee costs of the course year that exceed their remaining balance.
- There will be a maximum financial amount per credit and a maximum number of credits that can be charged for in each course year. This will be set by the government.

Lifelong learning entitlement: tuition fee limits has a list of the:

- standard numbers of credits for different course types
- maximum or default numbers that can be charged for in any one course year
- We will treat certain course types under the LLE as ‘non-credit-bearing’. This means that different rules will apply. Non-credit-bearing courses include:
- medicine
- PGCEs
- courses where the provider has not assigned a qualifying credit value

The new system will support people to study at a pace that is right for them.

Residual entitlement

- Returning learners are those who have previously received government support to undertake higher-level learning. They may only have some, or none, of their entitlement left, depending on previous funding received.
- Learners who have not used all of their entitlement will have access to a residual entitlement.
- **Example: a graduate completing a 3-year degree**

A typical graduate who completed a 3-year degree, worth £29,370 based on 2026 to 2027 fees, will have a £9,790 residual entitlement. This amount will be adjusted if the maximum fee limit changes.

- The guidance on how much LLE learners could get has more information on residual entitlement.

Priority additional entitlement

Priority additional entitlement will give learners whose LLE balance is £0 tuition fee loans to complete their course. It will come with the usual maintenance support and repayment terms.

Existing graduates who have already drawn down on all their fee support can also access priority additional entitlement to retrain in an eligible subject.

Qualifications will qualify for priority additional entitlement in:

- medicine
- dentistry
- nursing
- midwifery
- allied health profession subjects
- initial teacher training
- social work

- Students who choose medicine or dentistry as a second degree under the LLE will be able to access full tuition fee and standard maintenance support for those years not covered by the NHS bursary.

Special additional entitlement

Learners will be able to access limited special additional entitlement for qualifications that could cost more than their standard entitlement in longer courses that are not priority subjects. This entitlement will come with usual maintenance support and repayment terms.

Learners will only be able to access special additional entitlement when they have a £0 LLE balance.

- Learners will get up to 2 years of special additional entitlement if they take these courses, this is equivalent to 240 credits at the maximum cost per credit rate, with at least 5 full-time years of taught study:
  - **veterinary surgery**
  - **architecture (including ‘part 2’ courses taken after they complete an undergraduate degree in architecture)**
  - **bachelor’s degrees and integrated master’s degrees provided in Scotland**

Learners can get special additional entitlement worth the cost of their study if they:

- **take foundation years**
- **study abroad**
- **are on a work placement**
- **are on the Turing scheme**

Repeat study

Additional entitlement will also be available for repeat study. This will be broadly equivalent to the support available for repeat study under the current system. Under the LLE, funding for repeat study will come with the usual maintenance support and repayment terms. There is no lower limit on the number of repeat credits that can be funded, provided the student is undertaking the overall minimum of 30 credits that is required to qualify for funding in a course year.

- If a learner’s studies are affected by compelling personal reasons, such as illness or bereavement, the cost of the affected study will be added back to their LLE balance.
- Learners on courses that have a full-time equivalent length of 4 or 6 years will also be eligible for additional entitlement for repeat study that is not due to compelling personal reasons.

- **Maintenance loans and grants**
- The government recognises the importance of loans for living costs and targeted grants for learners with child and adult dependants and for learners with disabilities.
- Maintenance loans are designed to help learners with living costs while they study. There is a maximum claim amount based on a student’s course, location and personal circumstances.
- From January 2027, the LLE will offer maintenance loans on all designated in-person courses and modules.
- Distance learning courses will still be out of scope of maintenance support, as they are in the current system. The government intends to roll over the existing exemptions.
- We have published guidance explaining how maintenance loans will work when the LLE launches. This has further detail on the calculation process and changes to the split contribution policy.

Useful websites

- Student Finance - Student Loans And Tuition Fees
- Tuition fees and maintenance loans to rise – Martin Lewis analysis
- Student Finance Maintenance Loans 2025 - Save the Student
- Student loans and finance 2025 | Prospects.ac.uk