

NHS Learning Support Fund and recent developments

Student Support Seminar

April 2023

NHS Learning Support Fund



What is NHS LSF?

The NHS LSF package is additional funding support for students on nursing, midwifery and many allied health professional courses at university. It includes:

- **Training Grant** – a non means tested allowance of £5,000 per student per year
- **Parental Support** – a non means tested allowance of £2,000 per student per year
- **Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses (TDAE)** – Help with excess travel and temporary accommodation costs for students attending practice placements
- **Exceptional Support Fund (ESF)** – Non-repayable grant of up to £3,000 per year for students in genuine and unforeseen financial difficulty

Eligible courses

- Eligible courses for the 2022/23 academic year:
 - dietetics
 - dental hygiene / dental therapy (DipHE and undergraduate and postgraduate degree)
 - midwifery
 - nursing (adult, child, mental health, learning disability, joint nursing / social work)
 - occupational therapy
 - operating department practitioner (DipHE and undergraduate and postgraduate degree level)
 - orthoptics
 - orthotics and prosthetics
 - paramedicine (undergraduate and postgraduate degree level only)
 - physiotherapy
 - podiatry / chiropody
 - radiography (diagnostic and therapeutic)
 - speech and language therapy
- Foundation degrees are not eligible for NHS LSF

Eligibility criteria

All students applying for any of the NHS LSF allowances must meet the following criteria:

- Studying on an **eligible programme** which leads to professional registration
- Eligible for, and **in receipt of, tuition fees and a maintenance loan** from the **Student Loans Company (SLC)**. Alternative arrangements are in place for people who do not take out a loan for personal reasons
- **Actively in training**, whether academic or practice learning
- Attending a university **in England**
- **Be in attendance on a specified date**, this will depend on your start month

Paramedics

- Students on eligible paramedic courses **starting from September 2020** are eligible to apply for all elements of the new NHS LSF package
- Students on undergraduate and postgraduate paramedic science degrees that lead to registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) can apply for NHS LSF
- Only students studying undergraduate or postgraduate courses, including bachelors and master's courses can apply for NHS LSF. **Paramedic DipHEs and foundation degrees are not eligible for NHS LSF**
- Students studying paramedic courses as a second degree who are not eligible for student loan funding may now be entitled to NHS LSF from 2022/23

Blended learning courses

- The Blended Learning programme has been developed to address national shortages in clinical expertise and explores the opportunities of providing predominantly online, remote-access study to those people who may have the aptitude and values to join the healthcare profession, but currently are unable to learn in traditional ways
- This blended learning approach means the NHS and partners can widen access and participation for healthcare training and education and promote diversity and inclusion in the workforce
- NHS LSF currently provides support for students attending Blended Learning Adult Nursing and Midwifery courses in England

Training Grant

- Eligible students can apply for the Training Grant which provides a set amount of £5,000 per student per academic year
- Students who are studying one of the following courses can also receive an additional £1,000 **specialist subject payment**, this is automatically added to their payments:
 - mental health nursing
 - learning disability nursing
 - radiography (diagnostic and therapeutic)
 - prosthetics and orthotics
 - orthoptics
 - podiatry
- **Combined courses** which include a shortage course subject, for example adult and mental health nursing, will also attract the additional £1,000 uplift

Evidence: Training Grant

In order for a student to confirm they are eligible for NHS LSF they must initially show that they meet the eligibility criteria

In most cases this will be demonstrated when they supply a valid Student Finance letter

The letter must confirm that they are eligible to apply for both the **Tuition Fee** and **Maintenance loans** available

European tuition fee only students are not eligible for NHS LSF

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Student Finance England
Leads to better success

You need to write your Customer Reference Number on every document you send us.

Student Finance England
PO Box 210
Derlington
DL1 6RJ

www.gov.uk/studentfinance
0800 100 9607

13 January 2020

Customer Reference Number: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Student Finance for Academic Year 2019/20

Your current course details:
University or College: EDGE HILL UNIVERSITY
Campus name: EDGE HILL UNIVERSITY
Course: OPERATING DEPARTMENT PRACTICE
Course year: 1

This offer of student finance replaces any offer you have received in the past.

The total amount to be paid to your university or college:	£5,937.50
The total amount to be paid to you:	£5,709.34

This letter details how your student finance total is made up and when to expect payments. We have also included a list of Frequently Asked Questions to help answer any questions you might have about student finance and a University or College Payment Advice.

We'll send you a separate letter about your application for Childcare Grant.

Next steps
You don't have to do anything.

Yours sincerely
Student Finance England

Student Finance England is the student finance service provided in England by the Student Loans Company. Student Loans Company (S.L.C.) Reg. No. 044-435720 Registered in England No. 282616. Registered Office: Marston Building, Unwin Road, Watlington, Oxfordshire, EN10 6DT

Evidence: non-loan students

- If a student has chosen not to take out a student loan we will need to determine their eligibility
- The student must supply a **valid passport** to demonstrate their identity
- Depending on their nationality they will also be asked to provide evidence of their UK residency and current immigration status, where applicable confirm their residency for the years prior to starting their course

Parental Support

- Eligible students can claim a non-repayable grant of £2,000 per student, per year. This is regardless of the number of dependent children the student has parental responsibility for
- Students must have **parental responsibility** for at least **one** child who, at the start of the academic year, is aged:
 - **under 15 years** or
 - **under 17 years** if the child is registered with special educational needs
- The £2,000 is paid in **three termly instalments along with the Training Grant**

Evidence: Parental Support

- If a student has applied for Parental Support they must demonstrate that they have parental responsibility for a child. Parental responsibility is defined as someone who has the same legal rights, responsibilities and authority as a parent for a child
- The child must meet the age criteria of under 15 years of age at the start of the academic year
- The evidence we expect to be provided is either a valid **birth certificate** or **passport**
- If the child is 15 or 16 years of age we would expect the student to provide additional evidence that the child is **registered with special educational needs**
- A student can apply for a child born part way through the academic year and payments will be made on a pro-rata basis, payable from the month the change occurred

Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses (TDAE)

- **Reimbursement of travel** to and from a student's placement site(s) where this **in excess of** their normal daily travel to and from university. Placement sites include patient homes

Please note, students are expected to travel by the **cheapest form of transport** available where it is reasonable and practical to do so

- **Temporary accommodation** if a student has to stay away from their normal term-time accommodation whilst attending a placement, **up to a maximum** set amount of £55 per night

Exceptional Support Fund (ESF)

- Eligible students who find themselves in unforeseen **financial hardship**, having exhausted all other available sources of funding, may be able to apply for additional help from the ESF
- The ESF is a non-repayable grant of **up to** £3,000 per eligible student per academic year
- The amount awarded to a student depends on their **individual financial circumstances** and is subject to them demonstrating that there is a shortfall between their available income and essential day to day expenditure. This is done through their application and supporting evidence

How does it work with a student loan or benefits?

- The allowances are not means tested and won't affect any student finance payments
- NHS LSF is provided in addition to the maximum maintenance loan. This includes any uplift for long courses
- If students are in receipt of any social security benefits they would need to check their position with the relevant agency

When to apply for NHS LSF

- Students must apply using the online NHS LSF application system

- **New students**

- Students due to start their course in the 2023/34 academic year can now register for an NHS LSF account online and start their application

- **Continuing students**

- Students continuing their studies in the 2023/24 academic year will receive an email from NHSBSA Student Services inviting them to apply. Invites are sent in groups to enable us to process all applications in time for the academic year

- Students should still apply for tuition fee and maintenance loans from the Student Loans Company, if they wish to

Payments

- Training Grant and Parental Support payments are made in three instalments across the academic year. This provides students with a consistent flow of funding throughout their academic year as payments will intermit with termly student loan payments
- Students must be in attendance on a specific date to start to receive payment, and we will require confirmation of attendance from their university
- Dates of attendance are as follows:

Start of academic year	Student must be in active study on....
September/October 2023	1 November 2023
January / February 2024	1 March 2024
March / April 2024	1 May 2024

Payments: additional information

- Students on part time courses will receive a pro rata payment
- Students will need to reapply for their funding each academic year
- Students can claim up to 12 months additional funding beyond the time it usually takes to complete their course. Their university should send in a request explaining the reason for the extension and confirming there is reasonable prospect the student will complete their course in the given time

Maternity

The maternity award will be paid during periods of pregnancy and maternity leave authorised by the HEI providing the course, up to a maximum of 12 months

The maternity award includes all elements of the NHS LSF that the student would otherwise be eligible for except Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses, which is associated with actual attendance on the course

If a student's maternity leave spans two academic years, students must continue to apply for the NHS Learning Support Fund on an annual basis

An adoption award is also available to students following the same guidelines as the maternity award

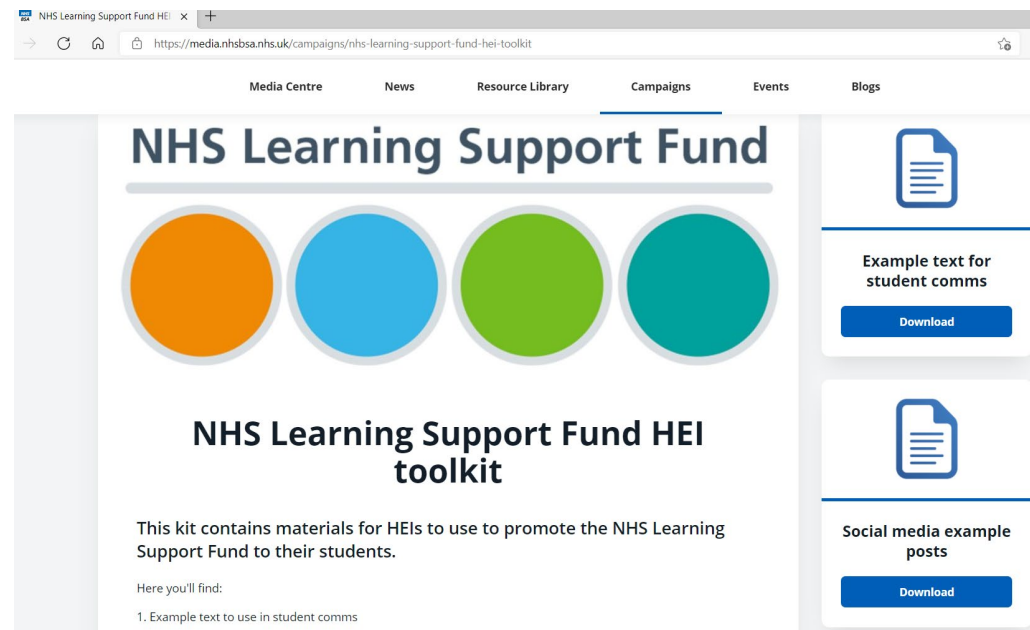
When a student returns to their course after a period of maternity leave, they are entitled to full NHS LSF from the month in which they re-join the course

What happens if a student is on long term sick?

- A student will not normally be considered absent from their course due to illness if their authorised absence does not exceed 60 days
- From day 61 you should inform us the student has not returned to the course. We do not need to be told about earlier dates
- However, if a student steps off the course due to illness earlier, for example day 34, you should inform us as soon as possible and that date will be their last date in attendance
- We cannot accept future withdrawal requests for known absence due to say surgery etc.

The online toolkit

- We have created an online toolkit with various materials to help university staff communicate to their students about the benefits of applying for NHS LSF
- It can be accessed at: [NHS Learning Support Fund HEI toolkit \(nhsbsa.nhs.uk\)](https://media.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/campaigns/nhs-learning-support-fund-hei-toolkit) or through our website: [Information for universities and colleges | Guides and Toolkits \(nhsbsa.nhs.uk\)](https://media.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/campaigns/nhs-learning-support-fund-hei-toolkit)



Further information

- You can find information about NHS LSF on our website: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/LSF
- You can also follow us on social media for the latest news and updates:
 - Facebook: [/LearningSupportFund](https://www.facebook.com/LearningSupportFund)
 - Twitter: [@NHSBSA_LSF](https://twitter.com/NHSBSA_LSF)

Continuous improvements programme

What are we currently working on?

- Our team is currently working on updates to the NHS LSF university portal based on feedback from users. This includes:
 - Adding a history of events/audit train which will be viewable to university staff
 - Improvements to change requests
 - Adding a filter function for university staff

These updates will be live later this year

- We are also working on digitising the TDAE application process. The outcome will be an end to end digital application for the student and approval by university staff. This will launch later this year

What's coming up?

- Our aim is to fully digitise all application processes across our three funding areas
- We will move on to a fully digital application for ESF before moving on to other additional elements of NHS Bursary and Social Work Bursary applications such as DSAs, hardship grants and Childcare Allowances
- The updated university portal will act as a template for NHS Bursary and Social Work Bursary courses
- Your feedback is important to us to help us develop systems that meet your needs. Please use the feedback options within the portal to send us any comments, and if you'd like to take part in future user research sessions please contact Tracy Mack, Project Lead at tracy.mack@nhs.net

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Thank you for listening.

Any questions?

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