



Money Matters

Guide to funding for students with dependants in 2015/16

Who is this guide for?

This funding guide is aimed at full-time, 'home' undergraduate students from England with dependants who will be commencing their studies during the academic year 2015/16.

One of the main questions you may ask yourself when considering entering into higher education is 'what funding am I entitled to'. Because of the responsibilities and commitments you may have, it is important that you are aware of your funding options which are available to you so that the decisions you make are informed decisions.

This guide was therefore produced to provide clear information on the financial assistance available to you whilst studying in full-time education.

*** Please note the funding available for students from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales may vary and you will need to contact your national Student Finance Service for guidance.**

What funding am I entitled to?

As a full-time undergraduate student there is a range of statutory financial support available to you. Eligibility for financial support is dependent on students meeting certain standard criteria related to length of residency and status in the UK. In addition, if you have previously studied at higher education level, your eligibility for financial support may be affected. You are advised to contact Student Finance England (see 'Contacts' at the end of this document) for further guidance.

For eligible full-time undergraduate students, the funding package available is as follows:

Tuition fees

Nottingham Trent University will be charging £9,000 in respect to tuition fees for full-time undergraduate courses during the academic year 2015/16 (£6,750 for foundation degrees). You will be able to apply for a loan to cover the full tuition fees, and you will not have to repay the tuition fee loan until you have left University and you are earning more than a certain amount (currently £21,000 per year). If you choose not to take out the full tuition fee loan, you can arrange to pay all or part of your fees directly to the University. Please check our website for details: www.ntu.ac.uk/onlinepayment.

Living costs

The help with living costs comes in the form of a maintenance loan and a maintenance grant/special support grant.

The maintenance loan

You will be entitled to at least £3,610 per academic year irrespective of household income. The maximum loan can be up to £5,555 per academic year subject to household income and the amount of maintenance grant you receive.

You do not have to repay the maintenance loan until you have left University and you are earning above £21,000 per year.

The maintenance grant

This grant is a non-repayable means tested grant of up to £3,387 and those with a household income of less than £25,000 per annum will be eligible for the full grant.

Special support grant

This grant is payable in place of the maintenance grant and allows the student to receive the maximum amount of maintenance loan of £5740.

The special support grant is means tested and non-repayable and is available to students who are eligible to receive means-tested benefits such as income support or housing benefit. The maximum rate is £3,387. This grant is not taken into account as income when working out entitlement to means-tested benefits.

Disabled students' allowance

If you incur additional course-related costs as a consequence of a disability, mental health difficulty (such as depression or anxiety) or specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia), you can apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance. This is a needs-based allowance and is available for specialist equipment, non-medical personal helpers and/or additional travel costs, subject to a needs assessment.

For further information, please contact Student Finance England or alternatively, if you have any queries regarding your eligibility, please contact NTU Disability Support by email: disability.support@ntu.ac.uk or telephone: 0115 848 4284 / 4495.

NTU Bursary

The University will be awarding an NTU Bursary of £1,000 per year to eligible full-time UK home undergraduate students.

This £1,000 cash award to supplement living costs will be paid to eligible students who meet all of the following criteria:

- You are paying the maximum (post 2012) tuition fee for your full-time undergraduate course
- You have a household income of £30,000 per year or less (as assessed by your national Student Finance Service)
- You are receiving a means-tested maintenance grant or special support grant from your national Student Finance Service (2015 entry), or
- You are eligible for a maintenance loan from your national Student Finance Service (2016 entry).

This bursary will be available for each year of your course (except during any year-long work placement as part of a sandwich degree).

There is no separate application process to apply for an NTU bursary. Your eligibility will be automatically assessed as long as you have applied and been financially assessed for maintenance from your national Student Finance service.

Once your eligibility for the maintenance grant has been established, NTU should automatically receive confirmation of this if you have advised your national Student Finance Service that you will be studying at Nottingham Trent University and provided you (and your sponsors if applicable) have not actively withdrawn

consent to share financial information with the University for the purposes of assessing bursary entitlement. If you are awarded a bursary, you will receive written confirmation from the University.

Any questions?

Should you have any further questions, please email the Student Financial Support Service: financial.support@ntu.ac.uk

Additional support for students with dependants

Parents learning allowance

If you are a parent with dependent children you may be eligible for the non-repayable parents' learning allowance. The maximum entitlement is £1,573 for the academic year 2014/15 but how much you get depends on your income and that of your partner, spouse and any other dependents. It is not counted as income when assessing your social security benefit entitlement.

Childcare grant

If you have the responsibility for a child under the age of 15 (or 17 if they have special educational needs) and you use registered or approved childcare, you can apply for the childcare grant. You cannot receive the childcare grant if you claim the childcare element of working tax credits or the childcare element of Universal Credit, but you can choose to change your funding from working tax credit to the childcare grant if you wish.

The grant can cover up to 85% of your actual childcare costs during term-time and holidays, with a maximum payment of £155.24 a week if you have one child or £266.15 a week if you have two or more children.

How much you receive depends on your household income and the actual cost of your childcare. Student Finance England (SFE) will ask you to provide estimated costs which they will use to calculate your Childcare Grant payments. At the end of each term SFE will ask you to provide evidence of your actual costs and they will reassess the grant based on these costs. If you've been overpaid or underpaid they will adjust the Childcare Grant payments accordingly.

Adult dependant grant

If you have an adult dependant who is wholly or mainly financially dependent on you, you may be eligible for the non-repayable adult dependant grant. Eligible adult dependants include your spouse or civil partner or if you are 25 and over, a cohabiting partner. The maximum grant is £2,757 but the amount you receive depends on your situation and the income of your dependent.

If you have any queries regarding your eligibility for funding you can contact your National Student Finance Service (contact details at the back of this guide) or our Student Financial Support Service: financial.support@ntu.ac.uk or telephone: 0115 848 2494.

How do I apply for funding?

You can apply for all of the funding detailed above in one single application online: www.gov.uk/student-finance. If you cannot apply online, please contact Student Finance England for an application form on: 0300 100 0607. There is, a separate application for the Disabled Students' Allowance which is available from the same places.

Payment of student funding

It is very usual to have your income paid on either a weekly or monthly basis and you would therefore, budget for the week/month. However, your student funding is paid at the beginning of each term and you will need to adjust to this change.

Don't make the mistake of spending the whole of your first instalment of funding in the first few weeks of term!

Your student funding will be paid in three equal instalments, the first during October 2015, the second during January 2016 and the third during April 2016 respectively.

As most of your outgoings would normally be paid on a monthly basis, it is important that your student funding lasts the duration of each term so that your outgoings are met.

If you would like assistance with preparing a budget, please contact the Student Financial Support Service as a Student Finance Adviser would be able to assist you with working on a budget plan for the year. (Email: financial.support@ntu.ac.uk or telephone: 0115 848 2494). Alternatively you can use the Budget Calculator online at: http://www.ntu.ac.uk/apps/student_services/budget_calculator/

Students and benefits – am I able to claim?

Your entitlement to benefits may change when you become a full-time student, as your student income may be regarded as income when your benefits are being calculated.

This section provides information to students who are still able to claim benefits whilst studying on a full-time basis.

Income Support

If you are a full-time student you will not usually qualify for income support for the duration of your course including vacations. This is because your student funding package is provided to meet your living costs.

You may, however, still qualify for income support as a full-time student, if you are:

- * A lone parent (including foster parent) who is responsible for a child under the age of 5 (since May 2012) who lives in your household.

Lone parents who are responsible for a child above the age of 5 will be able to claim Jobseekers Allowance rather than Income Support.
- * A disabled student who:
 - qualifies for the income support disability premium or severe disability premium
 - qualifies for a disabled students' allowance because you are deaf
 - have been treated as incapable of work for a continuous period of at least 28 weeks.
- * A couple who are both full-time students and you or your partner are responsible for a qualifying child.

Your student funding is designed to last the duration of the academic year and qualifying students will therefore only be able to claim full income support during the summer vacation period (1st July 2016 – 31st August 2016).

Housing Benefit

If you are a full-time student you cannot usually claim Housing Benefit. There are however, exceptions that allow some students to claim.

You can claim Housing Benefit as a full-time student if you fall into one of the following categories:

Lone parents - if you are the lone parent of a child under the age of 16 (or a qualifying young person – ie, under 20 and in full-time non advanced education).

Disabled students - if you get Disability Living Allowance, long-term Incapacity Benefit or Personal Independent Payment (PIP).

Disabled students - If you are in receipt of a disabled students' allowance because you are deaf, you are eligible for Housing Benefit from the date you apply for the allowance.

Student couples - If you are a student couple who both study full-time and you have a dependant child or a qualifying young person.

Unlike income support and jobseekers' allowance, those who qualify can claim housing benefit throughout the whole year and not just the summer vacation period

Child benefit

Being a full-time student will not affect your entitlement to Child Benefit and so you will continue to receive this support at the same rate.

You must inform Student Finance England if your benefit entitlement changes as this may have an effect on the student financial support you are entitled to.

Council tax

A place occupied only by full-time students is exempt from Council Tax. If you live in university halls or a house where everyone is a full-time student you should therefore, not get a bill.

Council tax is charged per 'dwelling' or household and each household gets a single council tax bill. If there is one adult in the household who is not a full-time student the household **will** get a bill, but should qualify for the 25% single person discount. If there are two adults who are not full-time students living in a dwelling, the household will not qualify for any reduction.

Therefore, if you live with your partner and your partner is not a full-time student, you will be exempt from paying council tax and your partner will be entitled to a 25% single person discount. If both you and your partner are full-time students you will both be exempt from Council Tax liability.

The University sends a list to 10 local councils containing the details of all full-time students currently studying here. Councils usually accept this as proof of student status and you do not need to take any action unless instructed to do so by the council.

If the council specifically requests that you provide further proof you will need to complete the self-declaration form and send this to your local council. A Council Tax exemption form is available to any student attending a full-time educational programme.

Further information and a declaration form can be located at the following link:
http://www.ntu.ac.uk/current_students/resources/council_tax_exemption/index.html

Tax Credits

Child Tax Credit

You are not excluded from claiming Child Tax Credit simply because you are a student. When calculating how much Child Tax Credit you can get, student loans and most other student income is completely disregarded so the amount you currently receive should remain the same.

Working Tax Credit

You are not excluded from claiming Working Tax Credit because you are now in full-time education, however, you must be in full-time paid work.

If you are 25 or over, full-time work would be 30 hours per week. If you live with a partner and you or your partner are responsible for a child, usually full-time work would be at least 24 hours between you (with 1 of you working at least 16 hours). If you are a lone parent, full time work would need to be at least 16 hours per week. If you have a disability which puts you at a disadvantage of getting a job, full-time work would be least 16 hours per week.

Further information regarding tax credits can be located at the following link:
www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/taxcredits

Student tax advice

When you need to pay tax

Whether you work during the term-time or just in the holidays you will normally have tax and National Insurance contributions deducted from your earnings. However, everybody can earn a certain amount tax-free in each tax year. This is known as your personal allowance. Each tax year begins on 6 April and ends the following 5 April.

Know your personal allowance

The Personal Allowance for the tax year ending 5 April 2015 will be £10,000. This means that over that tax year you could earn £10,600 before you are liable for tax. All income over this amount is taxable. Further information regarding the Personal Allowance for the tax year ending 5 April 2015 will be available at the following link: www.direct.gov.uk/studenttaxadvice

How to get a tax refund

If over the tax year you earn less than your Personal Allowance and have paid some tax, you can claim a refund. There may also be other occasions when you could be entitled to money back. Visit www.direct.gov.uk/studenttaxadvice and use the tax calculator to work out if you are entitled to a refund and find out what to do next.

What to do if you only work in the holidays

If you only work during the holidays, and expect to earn less than the Personal Allowance during the tax year, you should ask your employer for a form called P38(S) as it will mean that your employer does not need to deduct tax from your wages.

Sometimes you may find your employer doesn't offer this option, as it is a voluntary arrangement for them, but it is worth asking. If they do not offer this option, you will still be able to get a tax refund if you find that you pay too much tax over the year.

What if you run into financial difficulties?

If you have any financial difficulties or debt issues before you start university it is important that you do not use your student funding to pay off these debts unless you can afford to do so, as you may find that you will not have enough funding to last the duration of the academic term.

If you are in this position, you may find it beneficial to speak with one of our Student Finance Advisers as they will be able to assist you with the following:

Funding advice

They will make sure that you are in receipt of the funding which you are entitled to receive and assist you with any funding queries you may have.

Budgeting

They will be able to look at your income and your expenses and assist you with preparing a realistic budget plan for the duration of the academic year so that you know exactly what your financial position will be and allow you to make any necessary adjustments.

Social security benefits

If you think you may be eligible for benefits, a Student Finance Adviser will be able to advise you on your entitlement.

Debt advice

If you have any debts, a Student Finance Adviser will be able to advise you on the options available to you and refer you on to an agency for further assistance including negotiating affordable repayments with your creditors on your behalf.

Our Student Finance Advisers can be contacted by email: financial.support@ntu.ac.uk or telephone: 0115 848 2494.

Discretionary Hardship Fund

The Discretionary Hardship Fund is an amount of money available to eligible students who are suffering financial hardship. The Fund is cash limited and demand is high. A standard assessment procedure is used which calculates the level of support based on the gap between annual income and essential expenditure. Priority will be given to the following target groups: disabled students (especially where the DSA is unable to meet particular costs); care leavers, students who are estranged from their family and students who are unable to work due to illness / disability.

You can use this fund to supplement your main source of funding. However, It cannot be relied upon as a sole or main source of financial support and not intended to support your tuition fees. The application deadline is 20 May 2015 during the 2015 / 16 academic year.

Summer Vacation Fund

The University has set aside limited funds primarily to assist students who are unable to work over the summer vacation period due to illness or disability. The Fund can also assist lone parents with dependent children during the period when there is no benefit entitlement. Please note, due to the limitations of the fund we are unable to cover all living costs.

Application forms for the Discretionary Hardship Fund will be available from Student Support Services at the start of the academic year at the following locations:

- Student Support Centre - City Campus
- Clifton Student Centre
- Brackenhurst Student Centre

Useful Contacts

Disability Support Team

disability.support@ntu.ac.uk

0115 848 4284 / 4495

Student Financial Support Team

financial.support@ntu.ac.uk

0115 848 2494

Inland Revenue

www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/taxcredits

0345 300 3900

Student Finance England

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

0300 100 0607

Student Finance Wales

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

0300 200 4050

Student Finance Northern Ireland

www.studentfinancenir.co.uk

0300 100 0077

Student Awards Agency for Scotland

www.saas.gov.uk

0300 555 0505