



STUDENT LOANS COMPANY (SLC)

STATISTICS – STUDENT SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (ENGLAND, WALES, NORTHERN IRELAND)

Notice of proposed change to Official Statistics

Summary of the proposal for change

SLC is proposing to make some changes to the annual statistics series called Student Support for Higher Education (England, Wales, Northern Ireland) starting with the publications in November 2018. The changes are mainly to support the second pillar of the Code of Practice for Statistics which relates to Quality but also the third pillar regarding Value. For details of the Code of Practice for Statistics visit the UKSA website

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

We are seeking feedback on the proposals. To provide feedback see the section at the end of this notice. Please provide your feedback by **Thursday 27 September 2018**.

The changes will allow the publication to be issued earlier in November than in the past i.e. closer to the end of the academic year that is being completed.

The effective date of the data in the past academic years section will be altered so that the data is all at the same point (end August rather than a mixture of end August, end October and mid-November). This will allow more time for quality checks and provide consistency across all the student finance products. The effect of the date change has been assessed and details of the impact and our approach to that impact are included later in this notice.

The proposal is to retain an 'Early In Year' section which gives an indication of overall student numbers in the year that has just started and the effect of significant new policy.

It is further proposed that SLC publishes a separate Early In Year publication at the end of January with updated figures for the new year and details of core student finance products for that year but at a later point in the year where the administrative data will provide a clearer picture of student finance in the new academic year. This publication would also include updates for past academic years for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and Travel Grant products where awards and payments have been found to move by a statistically significant amount after the end of August following the academic year. See the impact assessment below for quantification.

The proposal does not remove any of the statistics previously published. It simply aligns the dates more closely to their relevance to the cycle for the various student finance products.

Details of the changes

The tables where the data for past academic years will be moved back to end August are listed below.

Where necessary (i.e. for DSA and Travel Grant) past statistics in the series will be amended to ensure a correct year on year comparison. This will be clearly noted on the publication where this has occurred.

England Publication

- Table 3A(i) : Distribution of Maintenance and Special Support Grants Awarded to full time Applicants domiciled in England for All Provider Type

- Table 3A(ii) : Distribution of Maintenance and Special Support Grants Awarded to full time Applicants domiciled in England by Provider Type
- Table 3B : Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) - Full time undergraduate students domiciled in England
- Table 3C : Awards of Other Targeted Support to full time Applicants domiciled in England
- Table 5A: Payments to Part-Time Students domiciled in England and EU (Outside UK) domiciled students studying in England
- Table 5B: Payments of DSA to Postgraduate students

Wales Publication

- Table 3A : Payment of Tuition Fee Grants to Higher Education Providers on behalf of students domiciled in Wales and EU domiciles studying in Wales
- Table 3B (i): Distribution of Welsh Government Learning Grants awarded to applicants domiciled in Wales by All Provider Type
- Table 3B(ii) : Distribution of Welsh Government Learning Grants awarded to applicants domiciled in Wales by Provider type
- Table 3C : Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) - Full time students domiciled in Wales
- Table 3D : Other Targeted Support awarded to full time applicants domiciled in Wales
- Table 5A: Payments to Part-Time Students domiciled in Wales and EU (Outside UK) domiciled students studying in Wales
- Table 5B: Payments of DSA to Postgraduate students

Northern Ireland Publication

- Table 3A : Distribution of Maintenance and Special Support Grants awarded to Northern Ireland domiciled applicants by Provider Type
- Table 3B: Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) Paid in support of full time undergraduate students domiciled in Northern Ireland
- Table 3C : Other Targeted Support Awards to Northern Ireland domiciled Applicants
- Table 5A - Payments to Part-Time Students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK) domiciled students studying in Northern Ireland
- Table 5B: Payments of DSA to Northern Ireland domiciled Postgraduate students

The early In Year section will include a new summary of students receiving support already as at end October. Early indicative figures at that same date will be provided for any product affected by a significant policy change. Core student finance products with little change from year to year would be omitted and included in the later separate In Year publication.

Change to order of sections and tables

We also propose to clarify the contents of the different sections and give prominence to loans compared to other student finance products in line with recent policy changes. It is proposed that the table order changes to the following

- Section 1 - Student Support Available
- Section 2 - Overview of Support Awarded
- Section 3 – Undergraduate Full Time HE Loans
- Section 4 – Undergraduate Full Time HE Grants and Allowances
- Section 5 – Undergraduate Part Time HE Loans and Other Support
- Section 5 - Postgraduate Loans and Other Support
- Section 6 - Early In Year Data – Student counts and new policy

Impact assessment of the proposed changes

The end of August is after most students will have completed the most recent year of their courses. However, student finance can still be paid for certain products after that date, especially for courses that had a January start date or later. Therefore, the moving back of the date may alter the previously published time series. For most products we found the change not to be statistically significant. The exceptions were the products where payments are more “back loaded” as follows:

- UG FT DSA – 2% lower students and 5% lower payments
- UG PT DSA – 3% lower students and 7% lower payments
- PG DSA – similar differences
- Travel Grant – 21% lower students and 21% lower payments

For these products we would restate the time series at the end of August in the primary publication but also provide the full time series as at the end of December in the new separate end January publication.

How to provide your feedback

Please provide your feedback to us via email to:

information_office@slc.co.uk

Alternatively if you would like to speak to us please send your phone number to that email address and we will call you back.

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10 September 2018