

SLC SP 07/2018

15 November 2018

Coverage:
Northern Ireland

Theme:
Children, Education
and Skills

Issued by
The Student Loans Company
100 Bothwell Street
Glasgow
G2 7JD

Press Office
☎: 0141 306 2120
✉: press_office@slc.co.uk

Public Enquiries
☎: 0141 306 2000

Statistician
Dave Cartwright
☎: 0141 243 3209
✉:
information_office@slc.co.uk

Online:
www.slc.co.uk/statistics.aspx

Student Support for Higher Education in Northern Ireland 2018

Full Year 2017/18 and Early In Year 2018/19

Introduction

This statistics publication presents figures on the student support awarded to applicants and paid to students or their Higher Education Provider. It shows final figures from Academic Years 2012/13 to 2017/18. Section 7 gives an early indication of student counts and amounts paid for new policy products.

Once applicants who were awarded support have their attendance at a HE Provider confirmed and their first payment made, they are classified as paid students.

It covers applicants and students domiciled in Northern Ireland taking a course in a Higher Education Provider in the UK or in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) as well as applicants and students domiciled in the EU (Outside UK) studying in a Higher Education Provider in Northern Ireland.

Key points

Academic Year 2017/18



The total number of students supported has increased from 50,400 in academic year 2016/17, to 51,900 in 2017/18. The amount of support has increased from £411.5 million in 2016/17 to £426.2 million in 2017/18 (Table 2).



In academic year 2017/18 Higher Education Providers were paid Tuition Fee Loans on behalf of 40,900 Northern Ireland domiciled Undergraduate full time students studying in the UK or the Republic of Ireland plus EU (Outside UK) domiciled students studying in Northern Ireland. This is a decrease of 1% on the number of students applying for tuition fee loans from 2016/17.



The amount paid to Higher Education Providers in 2017 on behalf of Northern Ireland domiciled Undergraduate full time students studying in the UK or the Republic of Ireland plus EU (Outside UK) domiciled students studying in Northern Ireland increased by 4% from 2016/17 to £208.8 million.



In academic year 2017/18, 42,700 Northern Ireland domiciled full time students were awarded a maintenance loan totalling £133.4 million. This is a decrease of 1% on the number of students awarded and the amount paid out in maintenance loans from 2016/17 (Table 2.)

Contents

Introduction	1
Key Points	1
Definitions	3
Statistical commentary	5
<i>Chart 1a</i> : Full Time Undergraduate Loans - Number of Awards (000's)	5
<i>Chart 1b</i> : Full Time Undergraduate Loans - Amount of support awarded (£m)	5
<i>Chart 2a</i> : Full Time Undergraduate Grants & Allowances - Number of Awards (000's)	6
<i>Chart 2b</i> : Full Time Undergraduate Grants & Allowances - Amount of support awarded (£m)	6
<i>Chart 3a</i> : Part Time Undergraduate Loans, Grants & Allowances - Number of Awards (000's)	7
<i>Chart 3b</i> : Part Time Undergraduate Loans, Grants & Allowances - Amount of support awarded (£m)	7
Chart 4a: Postgraduate Loans & Allowances - Number of Awards (000's)	8
Chart 4b: Postgraduate Loans & Allowances - Amount of support awarded (£m)	8
<i>Chart 5</i> : Amount of Maintenance and Special Support Grant awarded to Northern Ireland domiciled applicants	9
<i>Chart 6</i> : Distribution of Maintenance and Special Support Grants awarded to Northern Ireland domiciled applicants	9
<i>Chart 7</i> : No. of Northern Ireland domiciled and EU students studying in Northern Ireland taking out Tuition Fee Loans by Academic Year & Domicile	10
<i>Chart 8</i> : Tuition Fee Loans paid to HE Providers on behalf of Northern Ireland domiciled and EU students studying in Northern Ireland by Academic Year & Domicile	10
<i>Chart 9</i> : Payments to Part Time students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU domiciled students studying in Northern Ireland	11
Data sources	12
Data quality	12
Data uses	12
Revisions	12
Policy context	12
Related statistical publications	13
Notes for users	14
User consultations	14
National statistics	14
Table guide	14

Definitions

Term	Definition
Alternative Provider	An Alternative Provider is any provider of higher education courses which is not in direct receipt of recurrent funding from the Department for Economy or from equivalent bodies in the other Government Administrations; or does not receive direct recurrent public funding (for example, from a local authority, or from the Minister for Economy); and is not a further education college. Only providers with courses designated for student support are included in the statistics.
Applicant	This is a person applying for student support. Not all applicants take up a place. Applicants become students once they took up place and the SLC has received a confirmation of their attendance.
Award	Number of and amount of money awarded to applicants for student finance who have passed the eligibility criteria as stipulated within the student finance regulations and have been assessed for the respective support package accordingly. Awards will be paid on condition that the applicant subsequently attends the Higher Education Provider at which point will be considered a student and payments will be released according to the payment schedule for the support types awarded.
Country of Study	The country in which the higher education institute is located to which the applicant intends to/ is studying at.
Domiciled	The country in which the applicant normally lives. Student Finance Northern Ireland covers those students domiciled in Northern Ireland and European Union Students studying in Northern Ireland.
Estimated Eligible Population	The numbers of students that are eligible to apply for student finance including those who do not apply. Figures for the estimated eligible population are supplied by the Department for Economy (DfE).
Entry Cohort	Grouping of student finance applicants according to the student finance regulations against which the applicant was assessed for support. Student finance applicants are covered by transitional protection which means they continue to be assessed against the regulations in place for their first year of study. Students changing courses, or starting a new period of study no longer receive transitional protection and will be assessed under the arrangements in place for their latest year of study.
Final Figures	The final position refers to the readiness of the statistics being in a steady state. Final figures are not expected to change significantly and should represent the final outcome.
Full Year Maintenance Loan	The amount of maintenance loan available to students varies between those studying in their final year and those studying in an earlier year of their course. Those in their final year will be entitled to a reduced amount to reflect the reduced length of time in attendance at their university over which maintenance support is required.
Level of Support	Identifies if the applicant was awarded the full level of means tested grant, partial level or no grant.
Maintenance Loan Rate	The rate determines how much loan is available to the applicant in principle and depends on where the applicant is residing during their term time. There are three

	rates: Home rate, London, and Elsewhere (not London).
Public Provider	A Public Provider is any provider of higher education courses which is in direct receipt of recurrent funding from the Department for Economy or from equivalent bodies in the other Government Administrations; or in receipt of direct recurrent public funding (for example, from a local authority, or from the Minister for Economy); or is a further education college. Only providers with courses designated for student support are included in the statistics.
Residual Income	The income from the household from which the applicant normally resides. This income determines how much means tested support the applicant is entitled to. Residual income comprises of the taxable earned and unearned income of the applicant and/or the taxable earned and unearned income of the applicants sponsors minus any allowable deductions.
Student	Those student finance applicants for whom an attendance confirmation has been received from the university which indicates that the applicant is or has taken a place at university. This is an important distinction as those making student finance applicants go on to take a place at university.
Student Support Arrangement	The range of support available, the eligibility rules, and income thresholds which are in place for a given academic year.
Take up rate	The rate of which the Eligible Population chooses to apply for maintenance loan.
Targeted Support	Grants and allowances which are aimed to provide additional student support to student to meet costs specific to their circumstance. Covers Travel Grant, Parental Learning Allowance, Childcare Grant and Adult Dependants Grant.

Statistical commentary

Chart 1a: Full Time Undergraduate Loans - Number of Awards (000's) by Academic Year

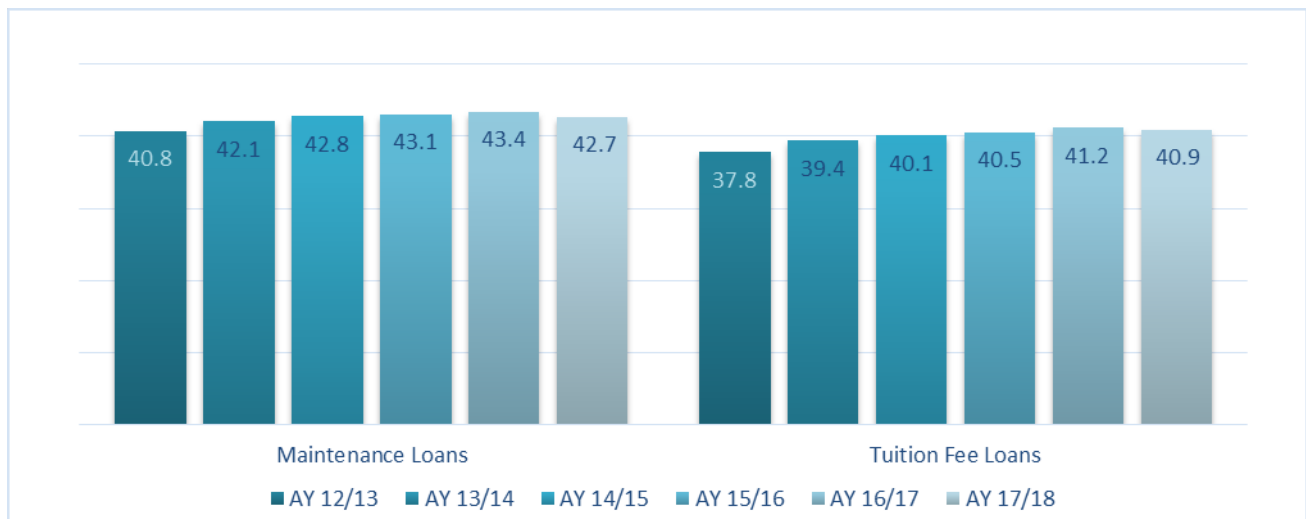


Chart 1a shows a marginal decrease for 17/18 for all successful loan applications for full time Higher Education student finance from applicants domiciled in Northern Ireland. See Table 2.

Chart 1b: Full Time Undergraduate Loans - Amount of support awarded (£m) by Academic Year

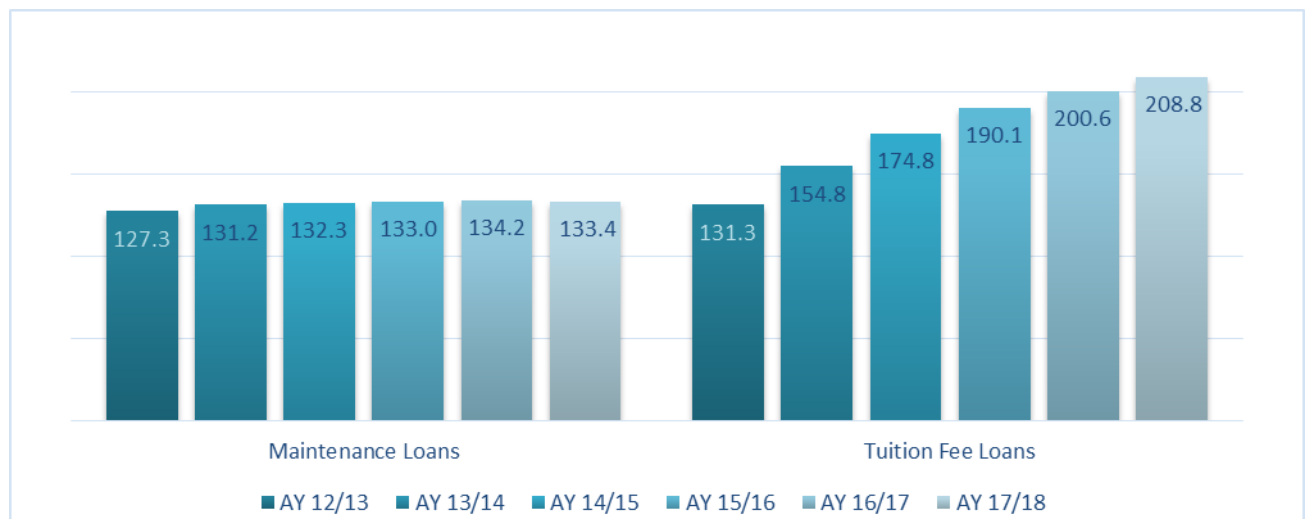


Chart 1b shows a rise in the amount of tuition fee loans awarded over the past six years which is a result of the shifting of the student body from the pre 2012/13 to the post 2012/13 fee system. See Table 2.

Chart 2a: Full Time Undergraduate Grants & Allowances - Number of Awards (000's) by Academic Year

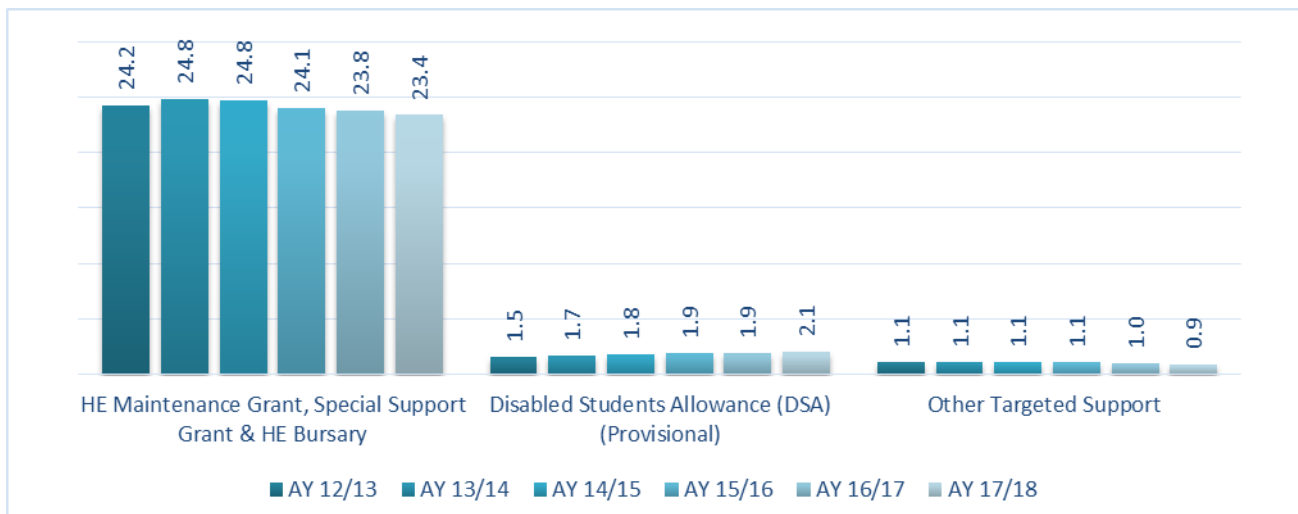


Chart 2a shows the number of awards for all successful support applications for full time Higher Education Grants and Allowances from applicants domiciled in Northern Ireland. See Table 2.

Chart 2b: Full Time Undergraduate Grants & Allowances - Amount of support awarded (£m) by Academic Year

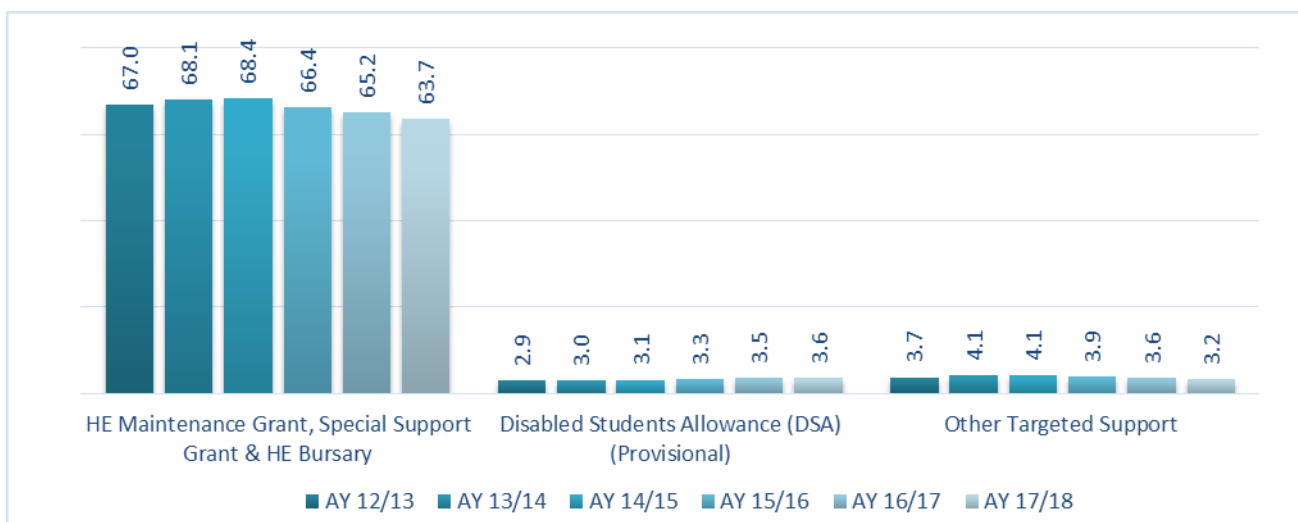


Chart 2b shows a decline in the amount of HE Maintenance Grants awarded to full time support applicants awarded over the past six years. DSA continues to increase whilst Grants, Bursaries and Other Target Support continue to decrease. See Table 2.

Chart 3a: Part Time Undergraduate Loans, Grants & Allowances - Number of Awards (000's) by Academic Year

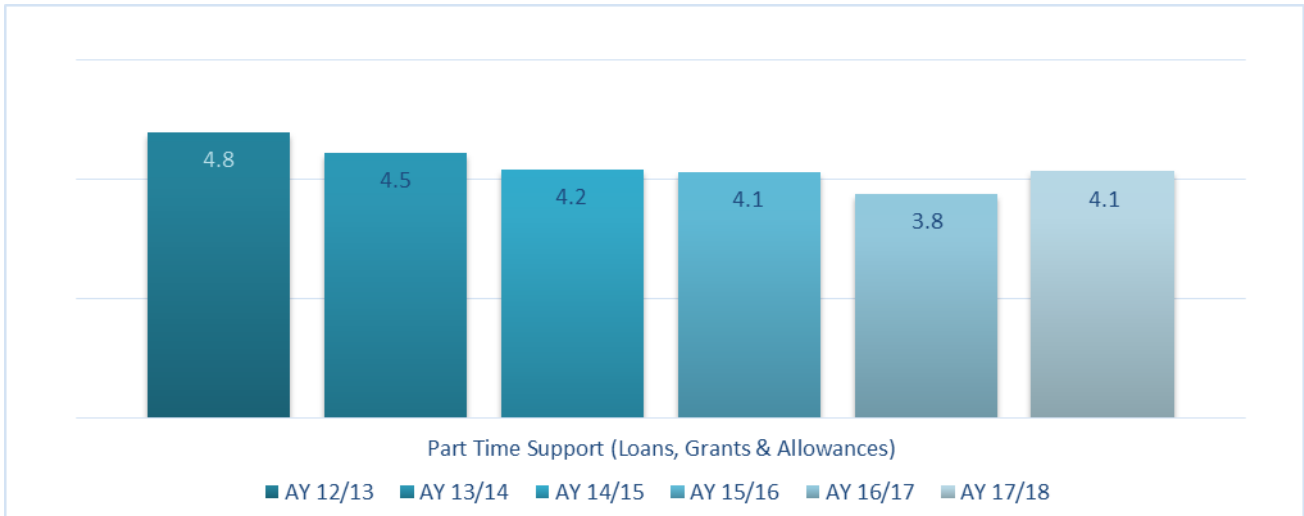


Chart 3a shows the number of awards for all successful applications for part time Higher Education student finance from applicants domiciled in Northern Ireland. See Table 2.

Chart 3b: Part Time Undergraduate Loans, Grants & Allowances - Amount of support awarded (£m) by Academic Year

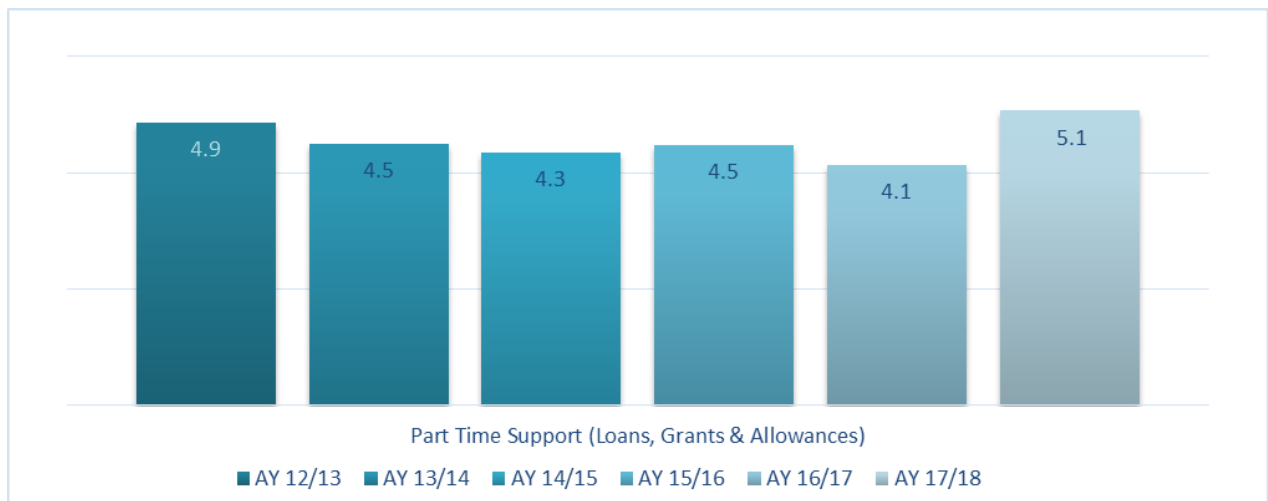


Chart 3b shows a fall in the amount of part time undergraduates awarded over the past 6 years which is a result of the shifting of the student body from the pre 2012/13 to the post 2012/13 fee system. The increase seen in 17/18 is due to the introduction of Part Time Tuition Fee Loans. See Table 2.

Chart 4a: Postgraduate Loans & Allowances - Number of Awards (000's) by Academic Year

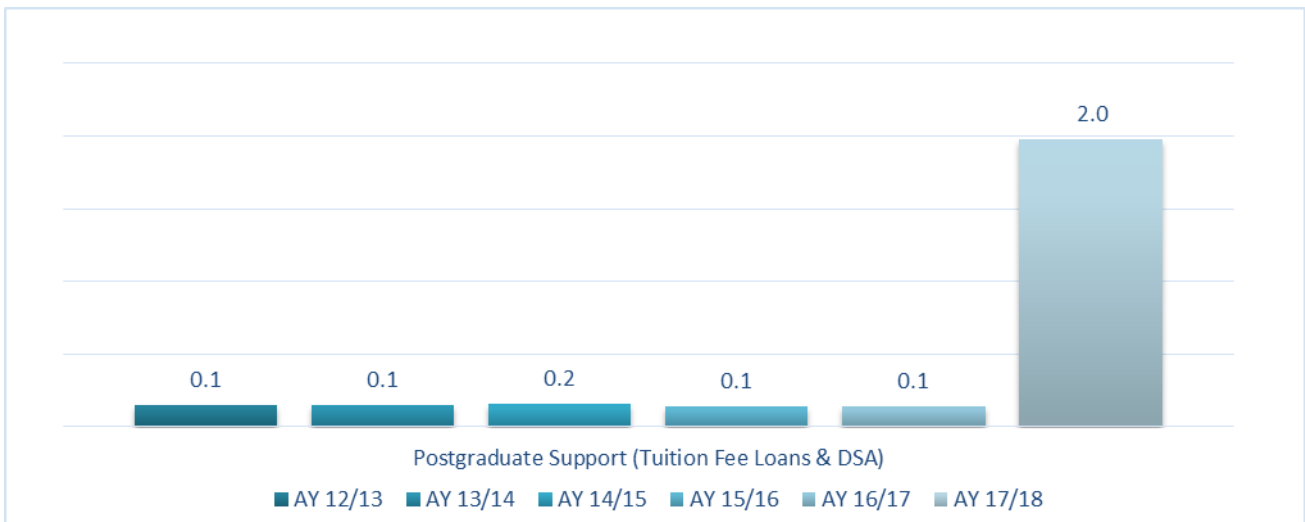


Chart 4a shows the number of awards for all successful applications for Postgraduate student finance from applicants domiciled in Northern Ireland. The significant increase is due to the introduction of the Tuition Fee Loan for Postgraduate students, prior to this the figures were purely DSA awards. See Table 2.

Chart 4b: Postgraduate Loans & Allowances - Amount of support awarded (£m) by Academic Year

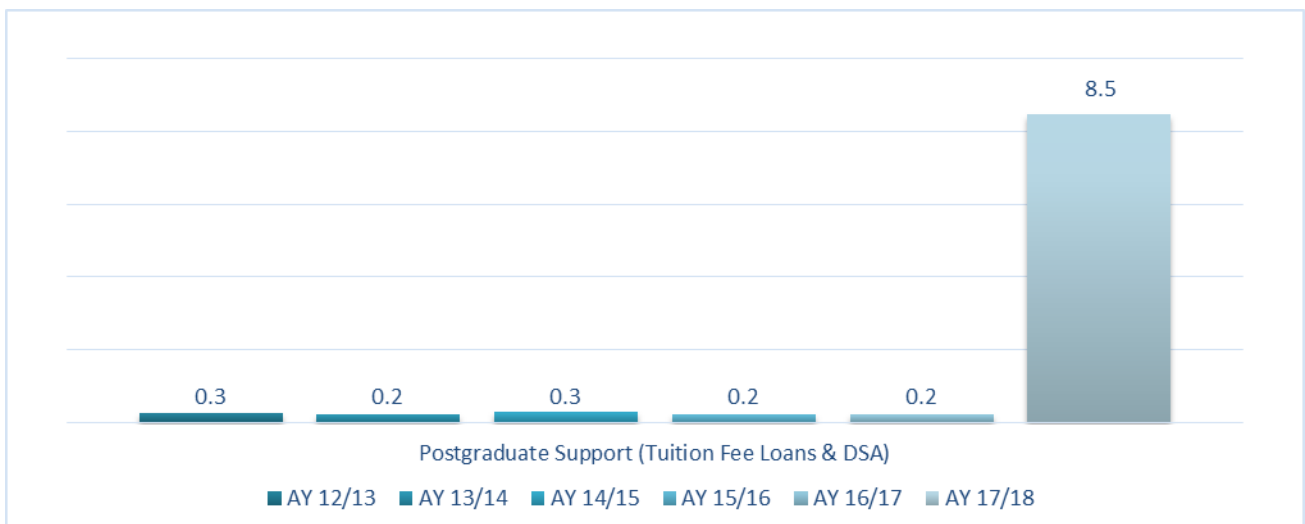


Chart 4b highlights the amount of support awarded over the past six academic years in regards to Postgraduate DSA, along with the first year of the Tuition Fee Loan for Postgraduate students. See Table 2.

Chart 5: Amount (£m) of Maintenance and Special Support Grant awarded to Northern Ireland domiciled applicants

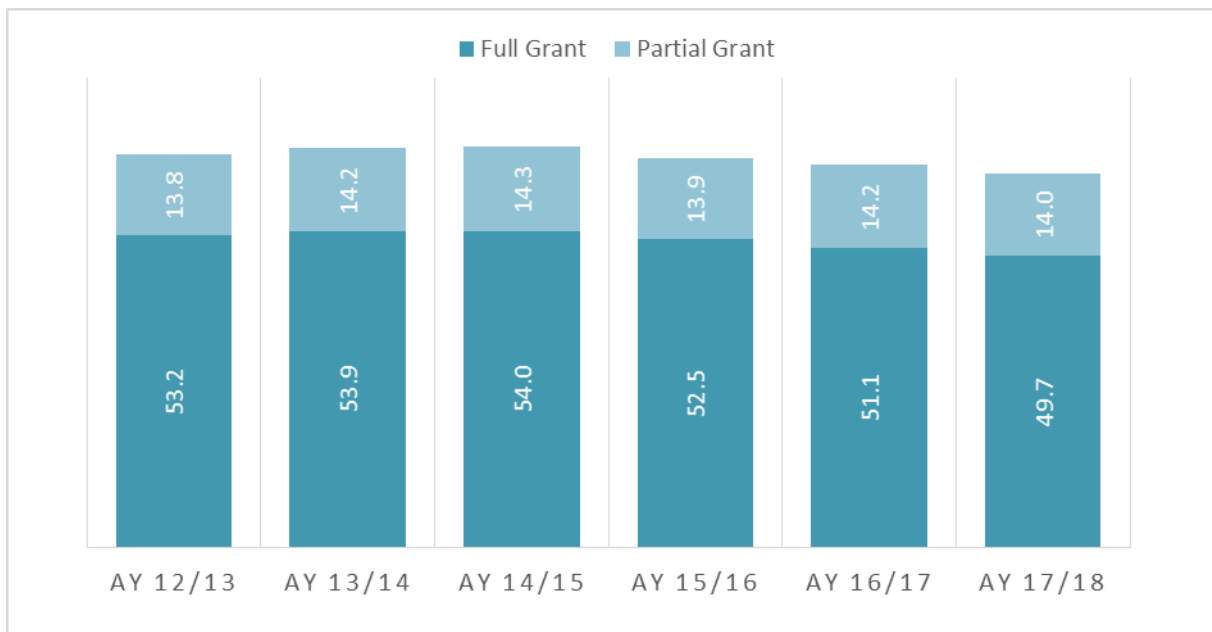


Chart 5 shows the amount awarded as full and partial maintenance grant to Northern Ireland domiciled applicants has seen a decline in recent academic years. See Table 4A.

Chart 6: Distribution of Maintenance and Special Support Grants awarded to Northern domiciled applicants

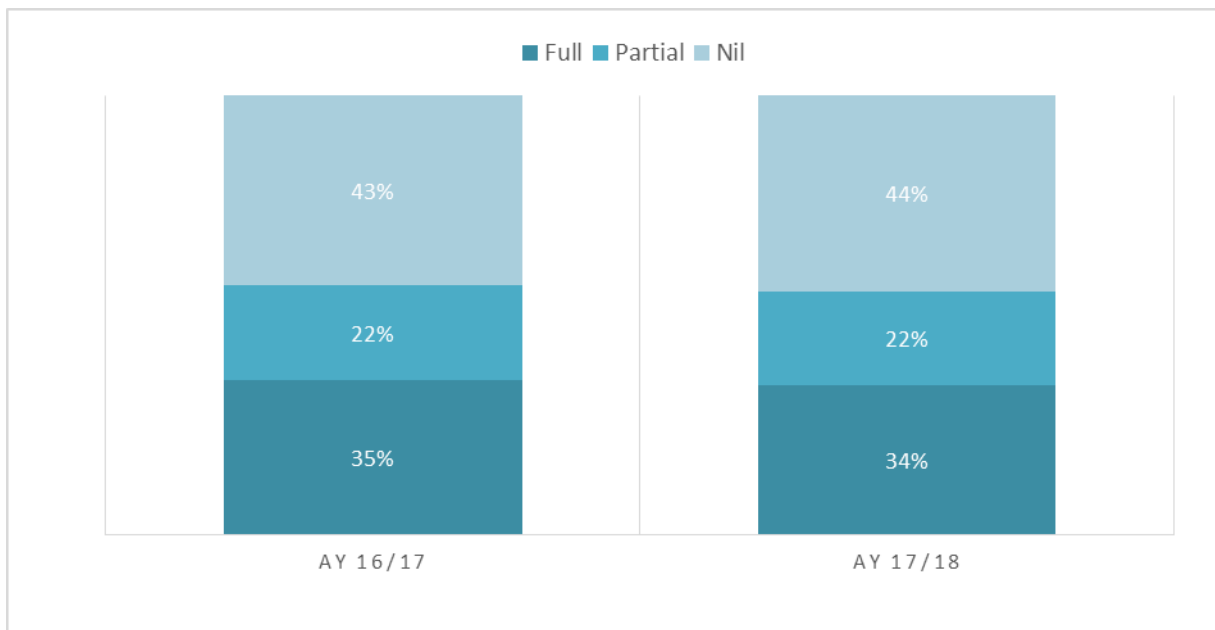


Chart 6 shows that in academic year 2017/18, 34% of applicants were awarded the full maintenance grant. 22% were awarded a partial grant and 44% were not awarded a grant. This represents a decrease of 1 percentage point on the full maintenance grant, no change on the partial maintenance grant and an increase of 1 percentage point on those not awarded a grant. See Table 4A.

Chart 7: Number of Northern Ireland domiciled and EU students studying in Northern Ireland (000's) taking out Tuition Fee Loans by Academic Year & Domicile

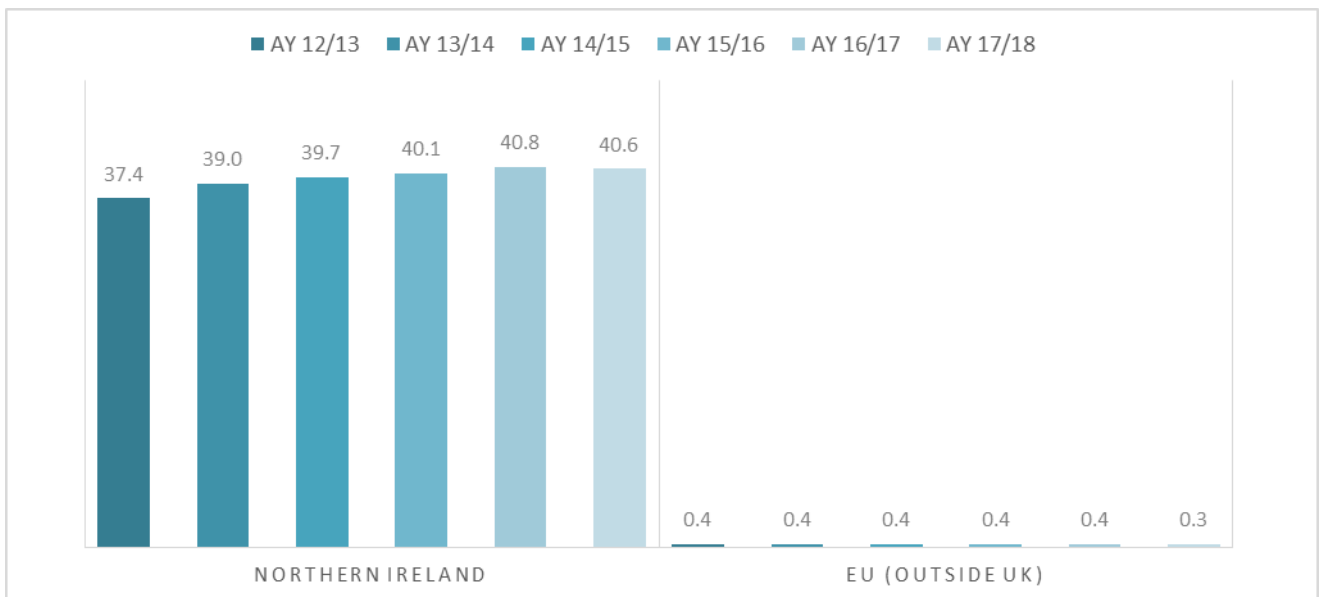


Chart 7 shows that, with the exception of the academic year 2017/18, the number of Northern Ireland domiciled students being awarded Tuition Fee Loans rises slightly year on year however the number of EU domiciled students remains fairly constant. See Table 3B.

Chart 8: Tuition Fee Loans paid to HE Providers on behalf of Northern Ireland domiciled and EU students studying in Northern Ireland by Academic Year & Domicile

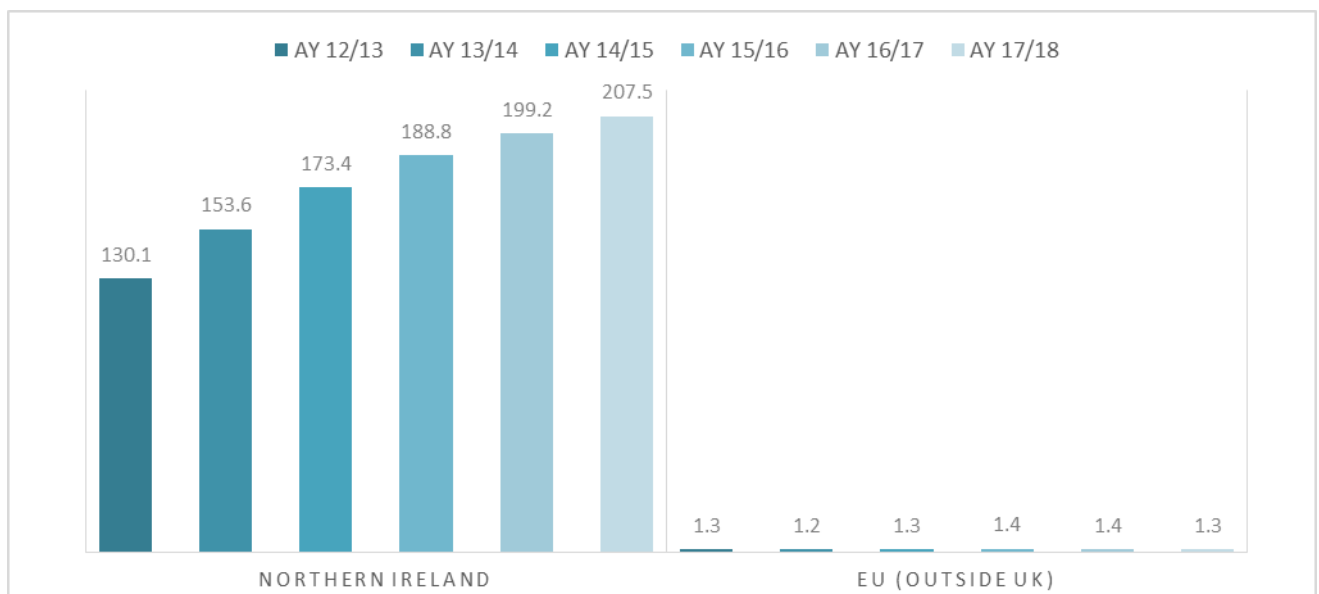


Chart 8 shows the amount of tuition fee loans paid year on year to institutions on behalf of Northern Ireland domiciled students. The number of EU domiciled students remains fairly constant. See Table 3B

Chart 9: Payments to Part Time students (£m) domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU domiciled students studying in Northern Ireland

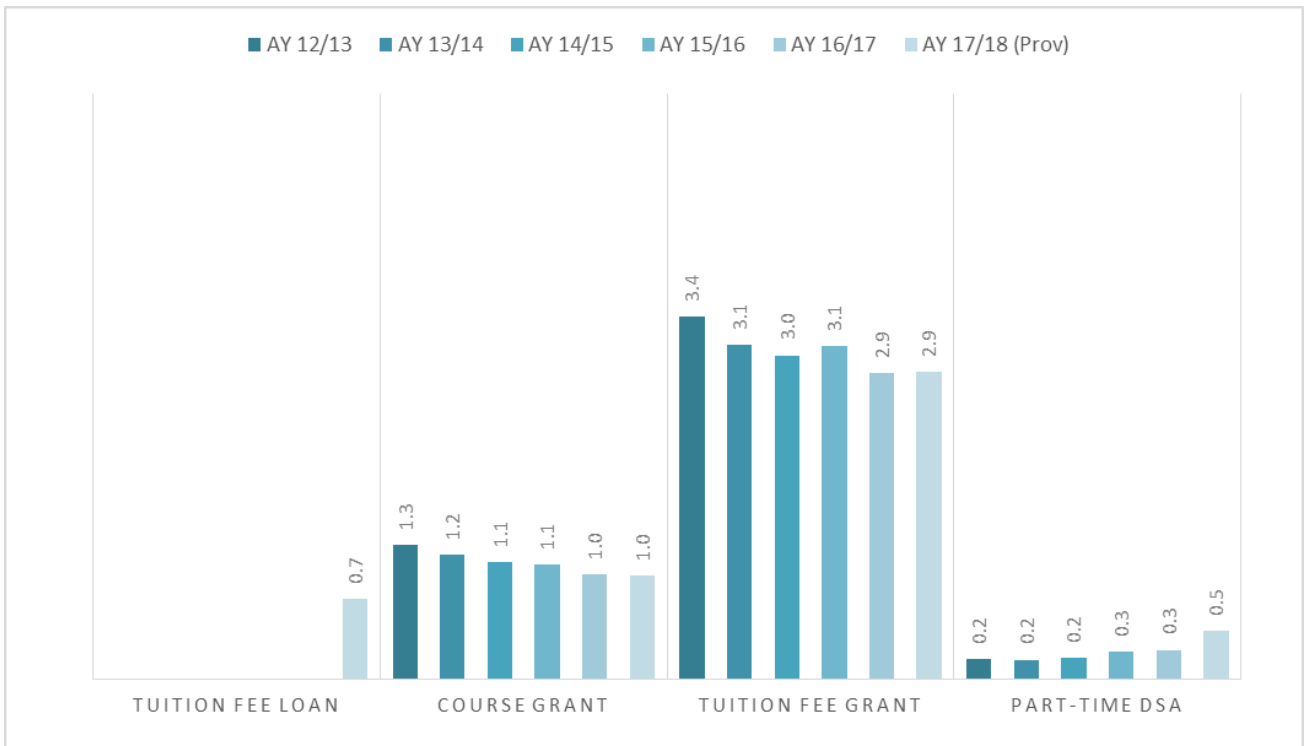


Chart 9 shows that payments for part time tuition fee grants between academic year 2016/17 and academic year 2017/18 (provisional result) remain constant. 2017/18 was the first academic year Part Time Tuition Fee loans were available. See Table 5a.

Data sources

1. This publication uses data from a single source: administrative data from the SLC Customer Ledger Account Servicing System (CLASS). For details of the administrative sources see the published Statement of administrative sources published on the SLC website using the following link:
https://www.slc.co.uk/media/5450/slc_statistics_-_statement_of_administrative_sources.pdf

Data quality

2. SLC has published the Quality Guidelines that it follows. As per those guidelines a Quality Plan is produced for each publication. The Quality Plan stipulates two stages of Quality Assurance. Data is extracted from the administrative systems then reviewed using a standard Quality Assurance checklist. The statistical tables created using that data are quality assured using the Statistical Quality guidelines. Further details can be found by following the link below:
http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5403/slc_statistics_-_quality_guidelines.pdf

Data uses

3. SLC has published a Uses Made document for Official statistics. Further details can be found by following the link below:
http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5454/slc_official_statistics_-_use_made.pdf

Revisions

4. Revisions within the data are denoted with an [r]. Some of these revisions are carried over from the previous year's publication and are, therefore, not revisions to this year's publication. Further details can be found by following the link below:
http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5449/slc_statistics_-_revisions_policy.pdf

Policy context

2017/18 Entrants

5. From 1 September 2017, Northern Ireland students studying part time undergraduate (or full time distance learning) courses in Northern Ireland, England, Wales or Scotland can apply for a tuition fee loan of up to £3,022.50 for the academic year.
6. Northern Ireland students starting Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, or Taught or Research Master's courses in Northern Ireland, England, Wales or Scotland can apply for a non-means-tested tuition fee loan of up to £5,500 per course to help with fee costs.
7. For full time undergraduate students from Northern Ireland studying in England, Wales or Scotland the maximum tuition fee loan available increased from £9,000 to £9,250 from 1 September 2017. All other full time Northern Ireland domiciled students can apply for a fee loan of up to £4,030 for the academic year.
8. From 1 September 2017, Northern Ireland domiciled members of the armed forces (and their immediate families) posted overseas can apply for student support for distance learning courses (up to £3,022.50 for the academic year for full time/part time/undergraduate and up to £5,500 per course for designated postgraduate courses).

9. From 1 September 2017, full time undergraduate students from Northern Ireland studying in Scotland can apply for a tuition fee loan of up to £1,385 to cover the costs of an Erasmus study year or Erasmus work placement abroad.

2016/17 Entrants

10. No significant changes have been made to the policy introduced for new entrants in 2012/13.

2015/16 Entrants

11. No significant changes have been made to the policy introduced for new entrants in 2012/13.

2014/15 Entrants

12. No significant changes have been made to the policy introduced for new entrants in 2012/13.

2012/13 Entrants

13. Full time students from Northern Ireland who start a course on or after 1 September 2012 in England, Wales or Scotland can apply for a tuition fee loan of up to £9,000. All other full time Northern Ireland domiciled students can apply for a tuition fee loan of up to £3,805.

2011/12 Entrants

14. Maintenance grant - Postgraduate teacher trainees (or those on equivalent courses) who commenced their teacher training courses before 1 September 2010 and are continuing on that course in AY 2011/12 receive a portion of the maximum grant irrespective of their income (the maximum amount of guaranteed grant is £1,318 for NI domiciled students); and the remainder is income assessed. Note that postgraduate or equivalent teacher trainees on part time or short flexible courses which commenced before 1 September 2010 receive about half the rates of maintenance grant / special support Grant quoted above.

2010/11 Entrants

15. Maintenance grant - Northern Ireland domiciled teacher training students on postgraduate or equivalent courses will still be awarded a minimum maintenance grant / Special Support Grant regardless of income, with the remainder income assessed. If a full time undergraduate student receives maintenance grant, a portion of the loan is substitutable for a grant of £1,887 for Northern Ireland domiciled students.
16. Maintenance loan - For all students entering HE in September 2006 or later (other than those on an ITT course of type 1,2 or 3) reduce the maximum loan by the amount of grant awarded if the grant is less than £1,318. If the grant awarded is the maximum £3,475, reduce the loan by £1,887. Where students are eligible for a grant between £1,318 and £3,475, reduce the loan by £1,887 less £1 in every £17.25 by which the income exceeds £19,203 or the actual maintenance grant awarded if less
17. If the student is being assessed for a financial contribution, deduct the assessed contribution from the financially-assessed part of the loan.

Related statistical publications

18. Statistics on loans and grants awarded to Higher Education student in Northern Ireland during academic year 2016/17 (final) were published in SLC SFR 07/2017 on 29 November 2017. These can be found at:
<https://www.slc.co.uk/media/9583/slcsfr072017.pdf>
19. Statistics on the repayment of loans in financial year 2017-18 were published on 14 June 2018 in SLC SFR 03/2018. These can be found at
<https://www.slc.co.uk/media/10025/slcsp032018.pdf>

Notes for users

20. The figures in this statistics publication have been compiled by the Student Loans Company Limited (SLC). All student numbers and amounts have been rounded to the nearest 100 and £100,000 unless specified otherwise. All totals and averages are calculated from un-rounded numbers.
21. Details of the amounts of loans and grants available in academic year 2017/18 are publicly available in the Student Finance NI booklet 'A guide to financial support for higher education students in 2017/18', which can be found on the Student Finance NI website.
https://www.studentfinancenri.co.uk/media/1067/sfni_terms_and_conditions_guide_1718_d.pdf
22. Figures also include postgraduate applicants and students taking their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) course on a full time, part time or flexible basis. All other part time and postgraduate applicants and students are excluded as they are entitled to different support packages.

User consultations

23. Consultation exercises are conducted by SLC on the Official Statistics it produces in order to understand who uses the publications, for what purpose, and to find out how they can be made more useful in terms of content, methodology, timeliness and presentation. As part of the consultation process SLC runs surveys. See the User Consultation Survey section of the SLC website at:
<https://www.tellslc.co.uk/R.aspx?a=63& E=SLC>

The most recent consultation was conducted on 10th September 2018. Details can be found at:
<https://www.slc.co.uk/media/10148/notification-of-change-to-student-support-publications.pdf>

The most recent response to user feedback can be found at:
http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5452/consultation_response_nov-jan_13_v7.pdf

National statistics

24. This is an Official Statistics publication. National and Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

Table guide

Section 1 - Student Support Available

Table 1A shows the maximum support available for maintenance in Northern Ireland through the grants and Maintenance Loans schemes for student support scheme students between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Table 1B shows the support arrangement for new entrants in academic year 2017/18.

Section 2 - Overview of Support Awarded

Table 2 shows the overview of all the products for student support scheme in Northern Ireland. It details the number of awards and the total amount of support awarded to Northern Ireland domiciled applicants for academic years from 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Section 3: Undergraduate Full Time Higher Education - Loans

Table 3A (i) shows the number and take up of maintenance loans, the amount borrowed and the average loan value for the student support scheme for students domiciled in Northern Ireland between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Table 3A (ii) shows the take-up rate of Maintenance Loans in academic years 2011/12 and 2016/17.

Table 3B shows the number of Tuition Fee Loans taken out, the amount borrowed and the average loan value for the student support scheme for all students domiciled in Northern Ireland and for EU (Outside UK) students attending HE courses in Northern Ireland between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Table 3C shows the number of Tuition Fee Loans taken out, the amount borrowed and the average loan value for the student support scheme for all students domiciled in Northern Ireland broken down by Northern Ireland and other UK countries of HE Provider attended between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Table 3D shows the number for Maintenance Loans and Tuition Fee Loans combined, the amount borrowed and the average loan value for the student support scheme for students domiciled in Northern Ireland between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Section 4 - Undergraduate Full Time Higher Education - Grants & Allowances

Table 4A shows the distribution of Maintenance Grants for Northern Ireland domiciled students between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Table 4B shows the summary of Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) expenditure authorised for payment to full time Northern Ireland domiciled undergraduate students, between academic years 2011/12 and 2017/18.

Table 4C shows the distribution of Other Targeted Support awards to Northern Ireland domiciled applicants between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Section 5 - Undergraduate Part Time Higher Education - Loans & Other Support

Table 5A shows the support given to part time students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (outside UK) students studying in Northern Ireland between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Section 6 - Postgraduate - Loans & Other Support

Table 6A shows payments of Postgraduate Masters Loans to full time Students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK) for academic year 2017/18.

Table 6B shows the DSA support to Postgraduate students between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Section 7 - Early In Year Data - Student Counts & New Policy

Table 7A shows the maximum support available for maintenance in Northern Ireland through the grants and Maintenance Loans schemes for student support scheme students between academic years 2016/17 and 2018/19.

Table 7B shows the support arrangement for new entrants in academic year 2018/19.

Table 7C shows the overview of all the products for the student support scheme in Northern Ireland. It details the number of awards and the total amount of support awarded to Wales and EU (Outside UK) domiciled applicants between academic years 2013/14 and 2018/19 at an end-October effective date.

Table 7D shows the number of Tuition Fee Loans to Postgraduate Students paid, the amount requested for the year and the amount paid so far by year of loan for Postgraduate students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK) by year of loan between academic year 2017/18 - early indicative figures for academic year 2018/19 are also provided.

Table 7E shows the early indicative (end-October position) number of Part Time Tuition Fee Loan students paid, the amount paid so far, plus average paid for students domiciled in Northern Ireland and EU (Outside UK) for academic years 2017/18 and 2018/19.