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HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT SUPPORT APPLICATIONS TO STUDENT FINANCE ENGLAND IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2011/12 (PROVISIONAL) AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

INTRODUCTION

As we reach the main term start dates for university and college courses in academic year 2011/12, the Student Loans Company (SLC), in conjunction with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, is publishing figures to show progress by its Student Finance England (SFE) service with the assessment and payment of student support applications from English domiciled applicants.

This is the fifth publication for this academic year. The first publication showed the position at the end of May allowing users of this publication to follow how Student Finance England (SFE) is managing the applications workload in the 3 to 4 months from the end of May to the main term start dates. This is the third publication to show progress with applications for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), which follow a different cycle from the processing of core applications.

All full time applications for England this year are assessed by the Student Loans Company (SLC); the English Local Authorities are no longer involved.

The publication covers applications from English domiciled applicants applying to UK universities. Information about EU domiciled applicants applying to English universities does not form part of this publication as they are dealt with separately by SLC and do not form part of its SFE service.

Table 1 covers all full time applications for maintenance loans and maintenance grants and tuition fee support (collectively known as core support) made to Student Finance England (SFE).

Table 2 shows the payment status of maintenance loans and grants.

Table 3 covers all applications for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) assessed by Student Finance England. This includes applications for full time, part time and postgraduate study except those applicants planning to study at the Open University (OU).

KEY POINTS

Table 1 Core applications

- The number of live applications for core support as at 30 September 2011 was 989,000.
- An additional 20,000 applications have been pre-approved for expected returning students and are just awaiting the return of a signature.
- 867,000 (88%) core support applications have been prepared for payment.
- 58,000 (6%) core support applications have been received, assessed and approved and just require the applicant to sign a declaration form for it to become prepared for payment.
- 32,000 (3%) core support applications are awaiting further details or evidence from the applicant and/or their sponsor(s) before they can be progressed.
- 31,000 (3%) core support applications are currently being assessed by Student Finance England.
- 840,000 (97%) of those applications prepared for payment have received the full entitlement or will receive the full entitlement once attendance has been confirmed.

Table 2 Maintenance loans and grants payment status

- Of the 867,000 core support applications prepared for payment, 833,000 have a maintenance support entitlement. The remainder have submitted a core application on which to base an application for other support only i.e. tuition fee support, Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), or a bursary from their HEI.
- 576,000 applicants (69%) have had their attendance confirmed and have received their first payment.
- 15,000 (2%) studying remotely have received their first payment.
- 127,000 (15%) have had their attendance confirmed and their first payment will be made at the term start date or is currently being processed through the banking system.
- 4,000 (1%) have had their attendance confirmed but their payments have been withheld because their bank details are invalid or their National Insurance Number has not yet been validated with the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 111,000 (13%) await confirmation of attendance before the maintenance payment can be made.

Table 3 Disabled Students' Allowance applications

- Of the 22,000 live applications for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), 10,000 (47%) have been prepared for payment
- 1,000 (5%) DSA applications are currently with Student Finance England.
- The other 11,000 (48%) DSA applications are awaiting additional information from the applicant or are awaiting the results of a needs assessment from a Needs Assessment Centre.

CONTENTS

Table 1 shows the status of core student support applications submitted by 30 September 2011 to Student Finance England for academic year 2011/12. It shows the number of applications that are still live and a breakdown into the following categories:

- Prepared for payment
- Awaiting signature from applicant
- Awaiting further details or evidence from the applicant and/or their sponsor(s)
- Currently with Student Finance England for assessment

For the applications prepared for payment, it shows a breakdown into the following categories

- Full entitlement
- Basic maintenance loan entitlement

Table 2 shows the status of core student support applications that have been prepared for payment as at 30 September 2011. It shows how far they have moved through the attendance confirmation and payment stages.

Table 3 shows the status of student support applications for Disabled Students' Allowance submitted by 30 September 2011 to Student Finance England (SFE) for academic year 2011/12. It shows the number of applications that are still live and a breakdown into the following categories:

- Prepared for payment
- Awaiting further information from applicant or assessment centre
- Currently with Student Finance England

Appendix A contains footnotes.

Appendix B contains definitions for terms used for core applications in this publication.

Appendix C contains definitions for terms used for Disabled Students' Allowance applications in this publication.

Appendix D contains notes for editors.

RELATED STATISTICAL PUBLICATIONS

These official statistics cover applications for which the resultant student support awards are analysed as part of National Statistics published by the Student Loans Company called 'Student Support for Higher Education in England'. That National Statistics publication provides statistics on English domiciled and EU domiciled applicants studying in England, who have been awarded student support by academic year of application. The first publication for 2011/12 will be in November 2011.

Publications can be found on SLC Web site: http://www.slc.co.uk/statistics/national_statistics.html

Table 1 : Student Support Applications [1] for Higher Education in England as at 30 September 2011
English domiciled applicants [2]
Full time regulations [3] core applications [4]

Application Status [5]	Number of applications for academic year 2011/12 Thousands [6] 30/09/2011	% of applications for academic year 2011/12 [7] 30/09/2011
Pre-approved applications awaiting signature from returning students	20	
Applications submitted	1,016	
Live applications	989	100%
Applications prepared for payment	867	88%
Awaiting signature from applicant	58	6%
Awaiting further details or evidence from applicant and/or their sponsor(s)	32	3%
Currently with Student Finance England for assessment	31	3%
Further breakdown of applications prepared for payment	Number of applications for academic year 2011/12 Thousands [6] 30/09/2011	% of applications for academic year 2011/12 [7] 30/09/2011
Applications prepared for payment	867	100%
... of which full entitlement	840	97%
... of which basic maintenance loan entitlement until required financial evidence is provided	28	3%

All eligible students are entitled to a basic maintenance loan without means testing. This is worth up to 72% of the possible maximum amount of maintenance loan. Eligible applicants applying for the additional means tested support who apply close to or after the term start date without the required financial evidence will receive the basic non means tested maintenance portion of their support and confirmation that their fees will be paid. Thereafter, where evidence is provided it will be fully assessed and any balance paid as soon as possible after the start of term. Those who apply earlier but who do not arrange the return of requested financial evidence within the timescales specified in reminders will also be approved for this basic non means tested entitlement until the required evidence is provided.

Footnotes - See Appendix A
 Definitions - See Appendix B

Table 2 : Student Support Applications [1] for Higher Education in England as at 30 September 2011
English domiciled applicants [2]
Maintenance loans and grants payment status
Full time regulations [3] core applications [4]

Application Status [5]	Number of applications for academic year 2011/12 Thousands [6] 30/09/2011	% of applications prepared for payment for academic year 2011/12 [7] 30/09/2011
Applications prepared for payment	867	
Applications prepared for payment with maintenance support entitlement	833	100%
... of which first payment made to those studying away from the institution (medical course, placement etc.)	15	2%
... of which attendance confirmed and first payment made	576	69%
... of which attendance confirmed and first payment will be made at term start date or is currently being processed through the banking system	127	15%
... of which awaiting confirmation of attendance from the institution	111	13%
... of which attendance confirmed but first payment withheld	4	1%

- = negligible

Once the term is about to start the institutions will identify attendees and inform SLC, thereby releasing the first instalment of maintenance support as soon as the term start date is reached.

Footnotes - See Appendix A
 Definitions - See Appendix B

Table 3 : Student Support Applications [1] for Higher Education in England as at 30 September 2011
English domiciled applicants [2]
Applications for Disabled Students' Allowance [8]

Application Status [9]	Number of applications for academic year 2011/12 Thousands [6] 30/09/2011	% of applications for academic year 2011/12 [7] 30/09/2011
Applications for Disabled Students' Allowance submitted	22	
Live applications for Disabled Students' Allowance	22	100%
Applications prepared for payment	10	47%
Awaiting further information from applicant or assessment centre	11	48%
Currently with Student Finance England	1	5%

Applications for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) are separate to core applications and follow a different process. The majority of DSA applications are expected after the term starts as many students do not become aware that they are entitled to DSA support until they have started their course. The DSA process involves an assessment by a Needs Assessment Centre (NAC) which must be set up by the applicant once their eligibility for DSA has been confirmed. Once the applicant has attended the NAC and has been assessed, the NAC must send a report to Student Finance England for approval. Applications processed for DSA in general take longer than core applications.

Footnotes - See Appendix A
 Definitions - See Appendix C

Appendix A

FOOTNOTES

[1] Applications for student support come from higher education students continuing a course of study or from applicants aspiring to enter a higher education course this year.

[2] This publication covers English domiciled applicants only. It excludes those EU domiciled applicants who attend/ desire to attend English institutions for which they can receive Tuition Fee Loan support from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) payable by the Student Loans Company directly to the institutions.

[3] The core applications in this publication are for full time student support only. Applications for course grants and tuition fee grants for part time study are not covered by this publication.

[4] This table covers applications for core support only. Some of the applicants will also apply for “targeted support” such as Disabled Students’ Allowance, childcare grant etc.

[5] For an explanation of the Application status of core applications see the definitions in Appendix B.

[6] All numbers of applications are rounded to the nearest 1,000. Totals are calculated from un-rounded numbers and, therefore, totals may not add due to rounding.

[7] Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Percentages are calculated from un-rounded numbers and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

[8] This table shows applications for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) made to the Student Loans Company only, not to the Open University.

[9] For an explanation of the Application status of Disabled Students’ Allowance applications see the definitions in Appendix C.

Appendix B

DEFINITIONS FOR CORE APPLICATIONS

Core applications	Core applications are applications from English domiciled applicants for core student support under full time regulations. Core student support comprises maintenance support (grants and loans) and tuition fee support. Other support which is not “core” is called “targeted support” and includes Disabled Students’ Allowance, Childcare Grant and Dependants’ Grants. If an applicant is seeking targeted support only they still need a core application to which the targeted support application can be attached.
Pre-approved applications awaiting signature from returning students	In the case where a student received non means tested support in the previous year and is on a course that continues this year, a pre-approved application record is set up and the student simply needs to sign a declaration form to complete their application for this year. Once they return their declaration form their application will become submitted and prepared for payment. This process is new in academic year 2011/12. In previous years the returning student would have had to fill in an application form themselves and if they did so online they would also have had to sign a declaration form later on.
Applications submitted	Applications for full time support that have been submitted online or received on paper.
Live applications	Applications for Student Finance England to take forward after removing those found to be ineligible or those applications cancelled by the applicant before they were prepared for payment.
Prepared for payment	Applications assessed by Student Finance England and prepared for payment. The applicant has signed their declaration form. Where a maintenance grant and/or maintenance loan is due it will be paid once attendance on the course has been confirmed by the institution and, in the case of the loan, once the National Insurance Number (NINO) has been verified. NINO verifications are only required in the first year when a loan is requested.
Awaiting signature from applicant	The application has been received online and has been assessed and approved and just requires a signed declaration form from the applicant. For new loan applicants the National Insurance Number verification process cannot begin until this signature is received. The pre-approved applications awaiting signature from returning students are not included in this group.
Awaiting further details or evidence from	Applications that cannot be progressed until the applicant and/or their sponsor(s) have provided additional information to Student Finance England. This may include evidence of eligibility or

applicant and/or their sponsor(s)	household income
Currently with Student Finance England for assessment	Applications with Student Finance England (in academic year 2011/12 this means the Student Loans Company only) for assessment.
Prepared for payment – full entitlement	Applications prepared for payment where the applicant has requested non means tested support only or they have requested means tested support and have supplied the required financial evidence to allow the means tested support to be calculated and included.
Prepared for payment – basic maintenance loan entitlement	Basic maintenance loan entitlement is triggered where the applicant has requested means tested support but has not yet supplied financial evidence or has applied close to the start of term. In these cases, applicants will be assessed to receive the non means tested portion of the maintenance loan (72% of the maximum loan amount). They will be assessed for means tested support once the financial evidence is received and processed.
Prepared for payment with maintenance support entitlement	Most applications for student support involve a request for a maintenance loan and/or entitlement to a maintenance grant. Some applications do not involve either of these maintenance entitlements such as those requesting tuition fee loans only. These are not included in this category. Tuition fee loan payments are not made until February and May.
Studying away from the institution	Some students are studying away from the institution and, hence, attendance at the institution is not the trigger for the release of student support. Applicants who fall in this category include medical students working away from their “home” institution, students on a work placement and students where the current year of their course is overseas. The first payment date for these students is often earlier than September.
Attendance confirmed and first payment made	Attendance has been confirmed by the institution and the first payment has been made. In a small number of cases a requested loan will not have been paid because the NINO has not yet been verified but the grant will have been paid.
Attendance confirmed and first payment will be made at term start date	Applications where attendance has been confirmed by the institution and first payment will be made at term start date (which has yet to be reached).
Term start date	Student support is not released to applicants confirmed in attendance at the institution until the term start date is reached.
First payment currently being processed through the banking	Payment has been initiated so it will reach the student's bank account in the following 1-3 days. The attendance has been confirmed at the very end of the reporting period or attendance was previously confirmed but the application has only just been approved at the very end of the reporting period.

system	
Awaiting confirmation of attendance from the institution	Payment of maintenance entitlement cannot be released to the applicant until the institution has confirmed that the applicant has attended the institution and the term start date has been reached.
Payments withheld	Payments are withheld in exceptional cases for example where the bank details provided by the applicant have been found to be invalid or where the NINO has not yet been validated with the Department for Work and Pensions. Where a grant has been paid but the loan has been withheld awaiting NINO validation the applicant will not be reported here. Instead they will be reported in "Attendance confirmed and first payment made".

Appendix C

DEFINITIONS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCE (DSA) APPLICATIONS

DSA Applications submitted	Applications for Disabled Students' Allowance made to Student Finance England and, hence, assessed by the Student Loans Company (SLC). Most of the applicants are applying for full time support so also have a core application. However, there are also DSA applications from those on part time courses and also from those on postgraduate courses. Excludes those applications for Disabled Students' Allowance being processed by the Open University.
Live DSA applications	Applications for Disabled Students' Allowance to take forward after removing those found to be ineligible or those cancelled by the applicant before they were prepared for payment.
Applications prepared for payment	The application has been fully assessed and the applicant has been notified of their entitlement. Invoices for purchases and services can now be received on their behalf.
Awaiting further information from applicant or assessment centre	Applications for Disabled Students' Allowance that cannot be progressed until the applicant has provided additional information to Student Finance England or has arranged for a needs assessment to be carried out at a Needs Assessment Centre (NAC) and forwarded to Student Finance England.
Currently with SLC	Applications for Disabled Students' Allowance currently with Student Finance England. This covers those applications being checked for eligibility before being sent to a Needs Assessment Centre as well as those that have been received back where the resultant entitlement is being calculated and checked for approval for communication to the applicant.

Appendix D

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The statistics were compiled by the Student Loans Company (SLC).
2. This publication was produced by SLC in collaboration with statisticians in the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS).
3. Student Finance England is the service name under which applications for student support from English domiciled applicants have been assessed since 2008. In 2008/09 English Local Authorities were responsible for assessing the majority of new applicants and continuing students within Student Finance England. Responsibility for the assessments was transferred to SLC over a three year period starting with new applicants in 2009/10 and ending with all applicants in 2011/12.