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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 Wales 2016: 2015/16 payments, 2016/17 awards

Introduction

This statistical first release presents provisional figures on Higher Education (HE) student support to all students domiciled in Wales and those EU students studying in Wales in the academic year 2015/16 and final figures for the two previous academic years.

This release gives information on the number of loans, grants and allowances awarded / paid to full-time undergraduate applicants / students or their institutions.

It covers applicants and students domiciled in Wales taking a course in a Higher Education institution (HEI) in the UK as well as applicants and students domiciled in the EU studying in a HEI in Wales.

Figures also include postgraduate applicants and students taking their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) course on a full-time, part-time or flexible basis.

Key points

- The number of full-time student support scheme students receiving support in Wales for academic year 2015/16 was 62,500, which represents an increase of 4 per cent on the previous academic year 2014/15 which was 59,900 (Table 2).
- The final amount of full-time student support in total awarded for academic year 2015/16 was £797.5 million, which represents an increase of 7 per cent on the previous academic year 2014/15 for which £747.1 million was awarded (Table 2).
- Early figures show that, two months into the academic year 2016/17 (i.e. by mid November 2016) 61,300 full-time applicants had been awarded grants, allowances and/or loans. The amount awarded so far is £863.5 million (Table 6.2).

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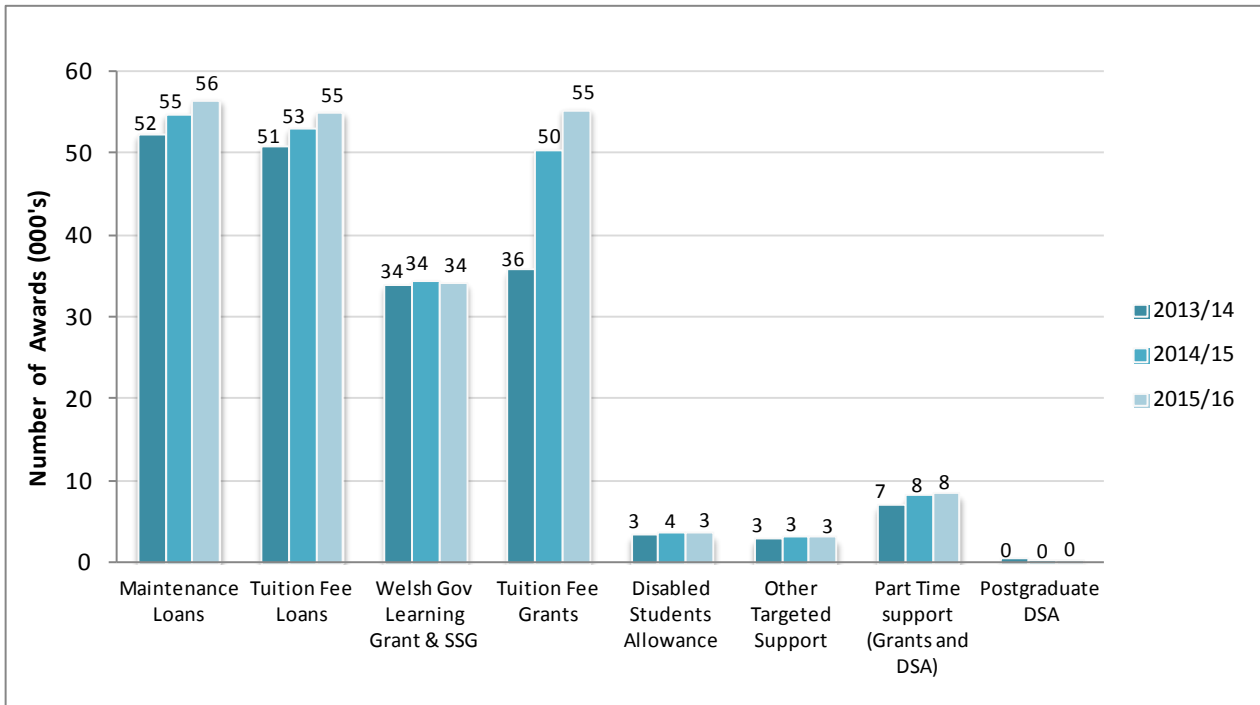
Definitions

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 Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) or from equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations; or does not receive direct recurrent public funding (for example, from a local authority, or from the Secretary of State for Education); 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 financial support. Not all applicants take up a place in a Higher Education Institution (HEI). Applicants become students once they take up a place and the SLC has received 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 Institution (HEI) at which point the applicant 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 Institution is located to which the applicant intends to / is studying at.
Domiciled	The country in which the applicant normally lives.
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 Welsh Government (WG). WG use data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency and other sources with the closest approximation of eligibility criteria available from those sources. Estimates are produced using a consistent method each year.
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, 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 HEFCE or from equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations; or in receipt of direct recurrent public funding (for example, from a local authority, or from the Secretary of State for Education); or is a further education college. Only providers with courses designated for student support are included in the statistics.
Paid Students	Once applicants who were awarded support have their attendance at an HEI confirmed and their first payment made, they are classified as paid students.
Provisional Figures	These are figures based on the status of applications processed by Mid-November (two months into the academic year).
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 not all 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 a Student Loan. Eligible students domiciled in Wales may apply for a Maintenance Loan and/or a Tuition Fee Loan. EU students studying in Wales may only apply for a Tuition Fee Loan.

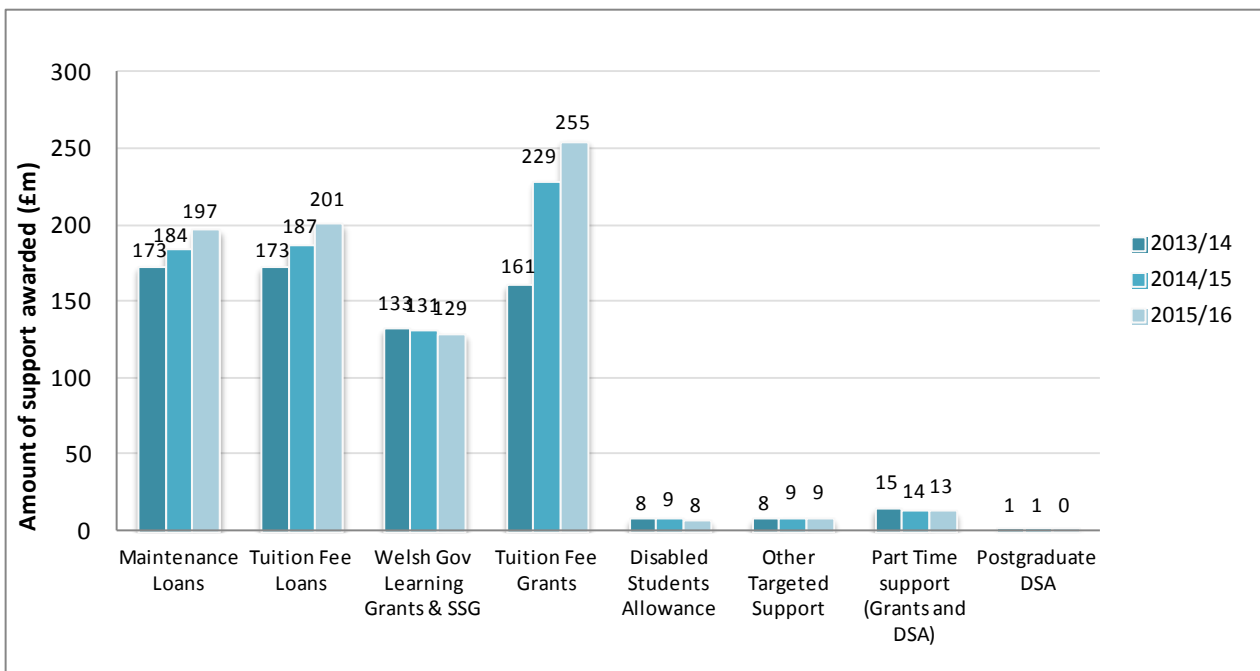
Statistical commentary

Chart 1: Number of awards (000's) to applicants domiciled in Wales (and to EU applicants studying in Wales awarded tuition fee support)



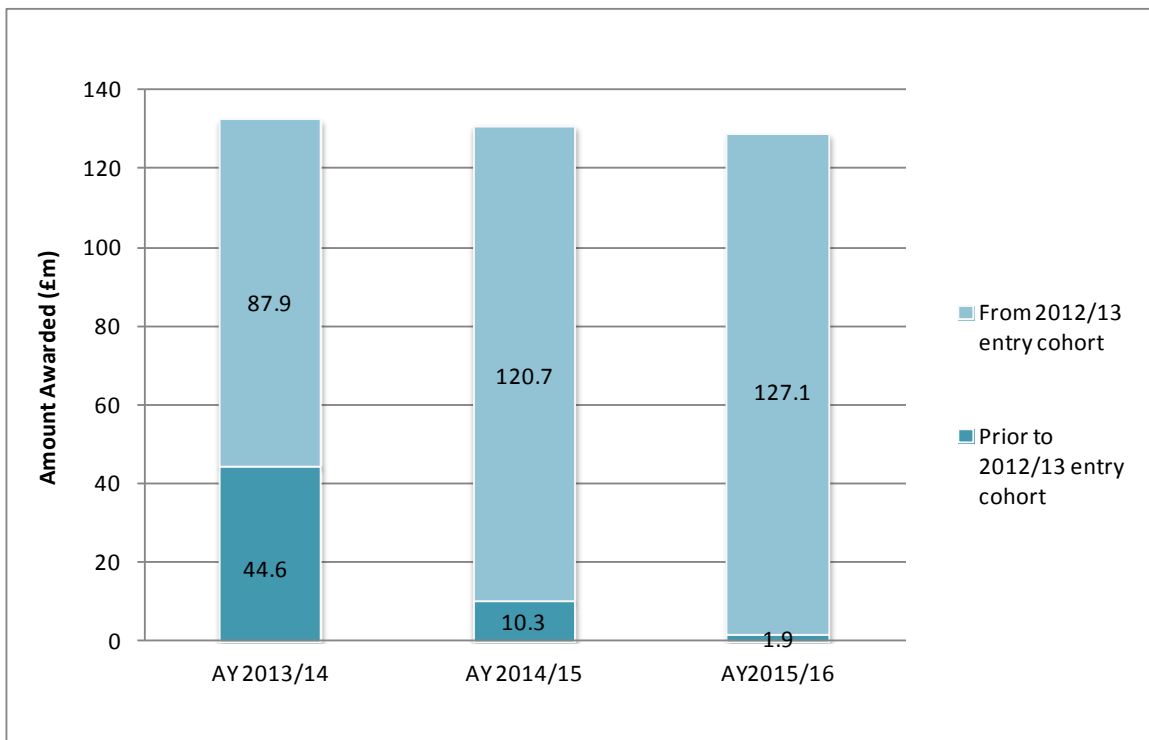
This chart shows the number of awards for all successful applications for Higher Education student finance from applicants domiciled in Wales and EU domiciles planning to study in Wales. See Table 2.

Chart 2: Amount of support awarded (£m) to applicants domiciled in Wales (and to EU applicants studying in Wales awarded tuition fee support) by product and academic year



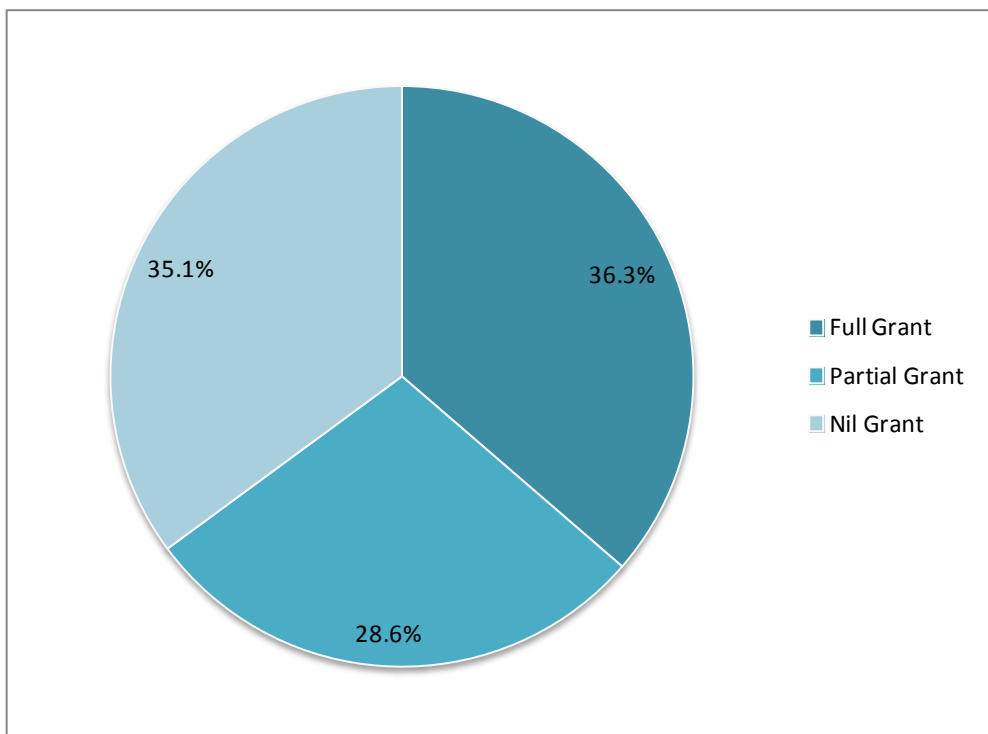
This chart highlights the increase in the amount of tuition fee grants awarded over the past 3 academic years which is a result of the shifting of the student body from the pre 2012/13 to the post 2012/13 fee system. See Table 2.

Chart 3: Welsh Government Learning Grant amount awarded (£m) to applicants domiciled in Wales by entry cohort and academic year



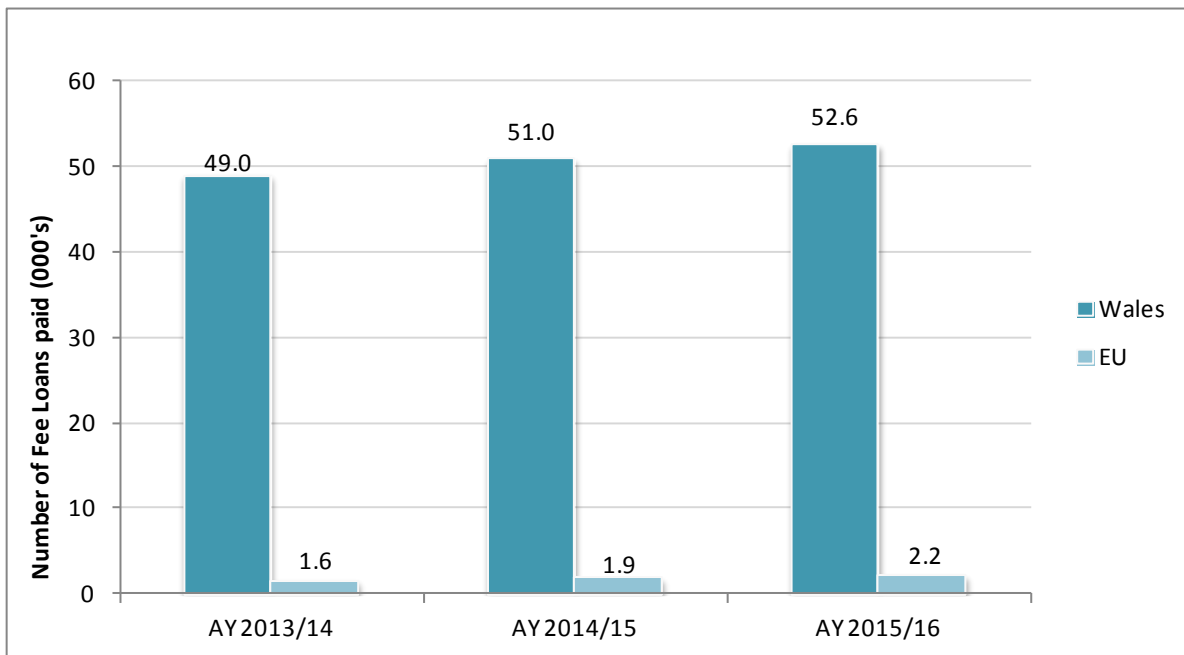
This chart shows that the amount of Welsh Government Learning Grant awarded has decreased slightly from academic over the three years, and the profile between the entry cohorts has changed. See Table 3B.

Chart 4: Welsh Government Learning Grant distribution by level of support – From 2012 entry cohort - academic year 2015/16



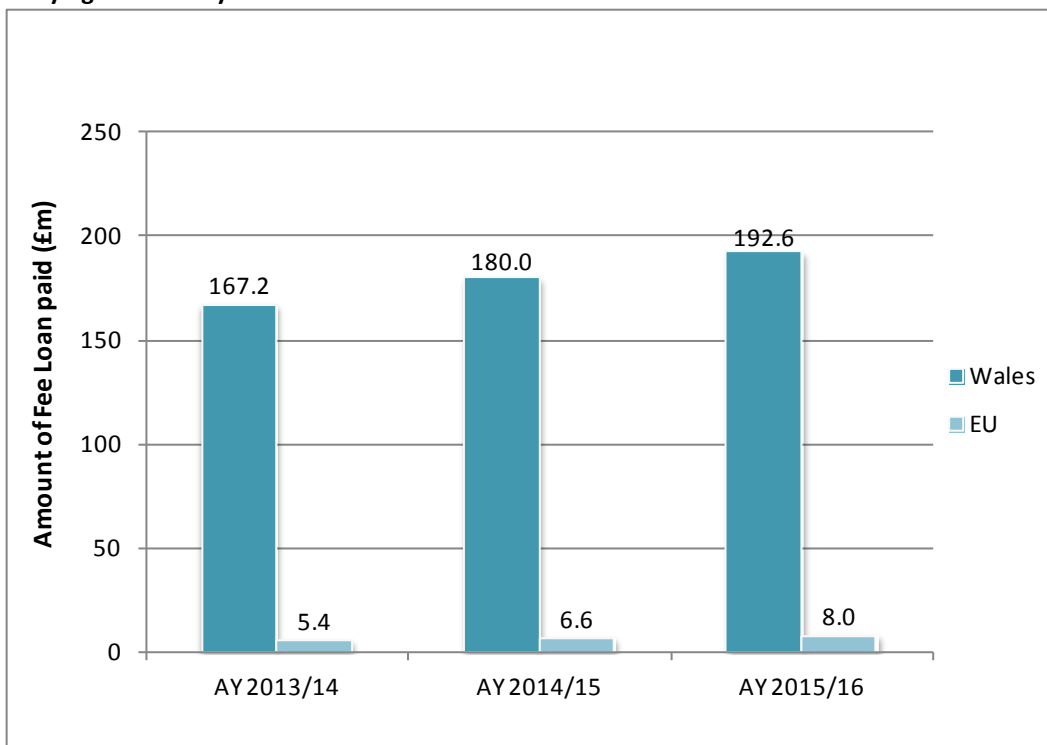
This chart shows the distribution of Welsh Government Learning Grant support split by full grant, partial grant and nil grant for the From 2012 entry cohort in 2015/16. See Table 3B.

Chart 5: Number of Tuition Fee Loans paid (000's) to students domiciled in Wales and EU domiciled students studying in Wales by academic year and domicile



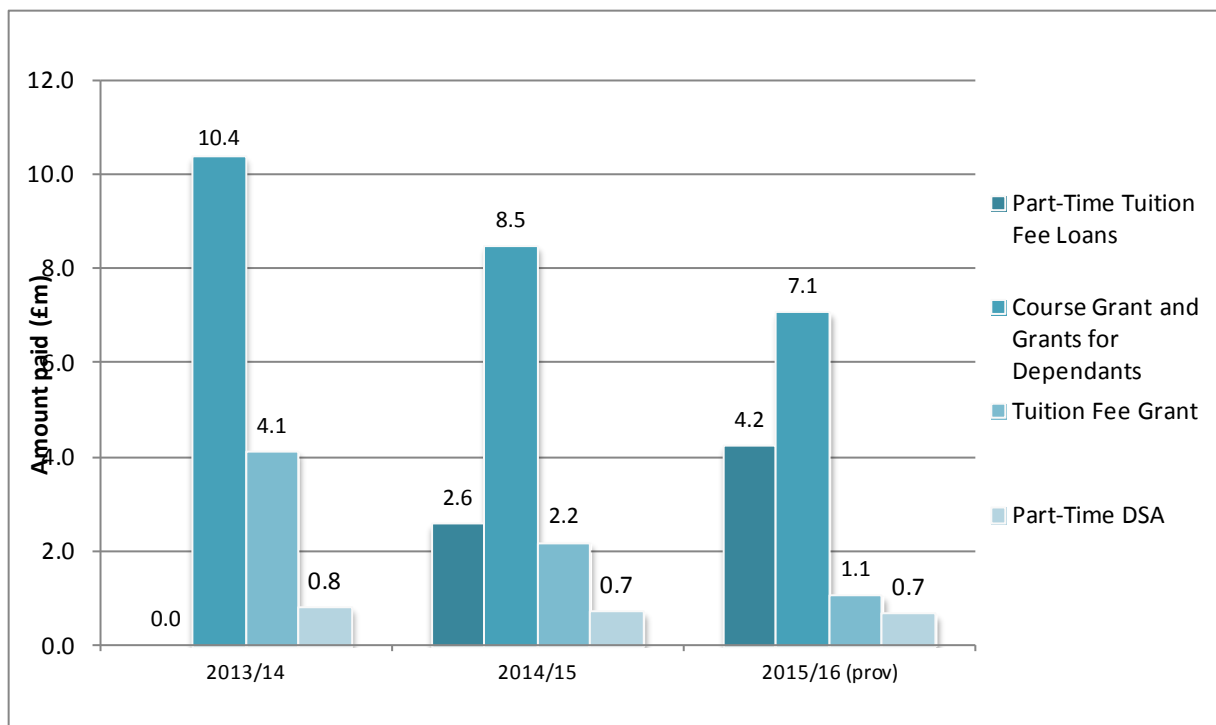
This chart shows that the number of tuition fees awarded to Welsh domiciled students increases slightly year on year as does the number of EU domiciled students awarded tuition fee loans.
See Table 4B

Chart 6: Amount of Tuition Fee Loan paid (£m) to students domiciled in Wales and EU domiciled students studying in Wales by Academic Year & Domicile



This chart shows that the amount of tuition fees awarded to Welsh domiciled students increases year on year as does the amount for EU domiciled students awarded tuition fee loans.
See Table 4B

Chart 7: Payments to part-time students (£m) domiciled in Wales and EU (Outside UK) domiciled students studying in Wales



This chart shows the transition from pre 2013 arrangements (part time course grant and part time fee grant) to the post 2013 arrangements (part time fee loan). The figures for 2015/16 are provisional and will be revised in November 2017. See table 5.

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 http://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 AND PROVISIONAL DATA

4. Revisions within the data are denoted with an [r]. Details about the Revisions Policy can be found by following the link below http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5449/slc_statistics_revisions_policy.pdf

5. This statistical first release contains early in-year awards figures for 2016/17. Students who have not yet been approved for support will not appear in these figures. Some eligible students may not have applied yet and others may have applied but not yet provided all requested evidence. Also, student circumstances can change and they may revise their support application. A significant number of students revise their initial support application from non means-tested support to means-tested support. Others withdraw from their courses after only one term's payment. Therefore, figures for 2016/17 are provisional and are expected to change during the academic year as further applications are received and re-assessments are submitted. Final figures will be published in November 2017.

6. Provisional data should be used with due caution. The scale of revisions may change from one year to another as application processes change. However, the table below gives an indication of the scale of revisions that occur:

	2014/15 provisional	2014/15 final
Number of full time applicants awarded (000s)	57.7	59.9
	2015/16 provisional	2015/16 final
Number of full time applicants awarded (000s)	59.9	62.5
	2015/16 provisional	2015/16 final
Number of maintenance loans (000s)	54.6 awards	56.3 payments
	2015/16 provisional	2015/16 final
Number of tuition fee grants (000s)	55.6 awards	55.2 payments

Policy context

Key policy changes from 2016/17

7. No significant changes have been made to the policy introduced for new entrants in 2012/13. Some of the thresholds have been upgraded and they affect equally the new entrants as well as those continuing after entry in 2012/13.

Key policy changes from 2014/15 and 2015/16

8. No significant changes have been made to the policy introduced for new entrants in 2012/13. Some of the thresholds have been upgraded and they affect equally the new entrants as well as those continuing after entry in 2012/13.

Key policy changes from 2012/13

2012/13 New Entrants

9. New entrants from 2012/13 who are subject to the existing variable tuition fees are entitled to a Tuition Fee Loan of up to £3,465. New entrants from 2012/13 who are domiciled in Wales studying in any UK territory, who are subject to the new higher fees amounts are also entitled to a new Tuition fee Grant up to a maximum of £5,535 to make up the difference in fee costs of up to a maximum of £9,000. Where a designated course is provided wholly by a private institution, students domiciled in Wales are eligible for a Tuition Fee Loan of up to £6,000 (no Fee Grant is available). Students domiciled in Wales who are studying in Wales and entered HE between 2006/07 and 2009/10 are also entitled to a Tuition Fee Grant which covers any fee they are charged above £1,380, up to a maximum grant of £2,256. New and continuing students domiciled in Wales in academic year 2012/13 courses may also receive targeted grants (for example, Childcare or Disabled Students' Allowance). New entrants in 2012/13 may be eligible for an Assembly Learning Grant of up to £5,000. The maximum amounts of Assembly Learning Grant in academic year 2012/13 are £5,600 for 2011/12 cohort students, £5,000 for 2010/11 cohort students and £2,906 for new system students who entered HE between 2006/07 and 2009/10.

Key policy changes from 2011/12

2011/12 New Entrants

10. For new entrants from academic year 2011/12, the Welsh National Bursary is integrated into the HE statutory support system as an integral part of the Assembly Learning Grant and Special Support Grants. The Welsh Government's statutory student support arrangements for living costs are for students domiciled in Wales only (namely students who are ordinarily resident in Wales). Institutions will no longer be required to pay a minimum National Bursary to new entrants from 2011/12 and can continue to make arrangements for their own institutional awards. As a result of this policy change the full Assembly Learning Grant for these entrants is higher at £5,600 instead of £5,000. The grant is fully replaced by Maintenance Loan at the same point i.e. where the residual income is £50,020. This is achieved via a faster Maintenance Loan substitution rate for residual incomes between £34,000 and £50,020 (see Charts 1 and 2 in Appendix B).

11. Variable tuition fees are capped at £3,375 in academic year 2011/12, and will apply to all students who entered from academic year 2006/07 who study at Welsh HEIs in 2011/12.

DISCRETIONARY AWARDS

12. Discretionary awards are available to students on designated HE courses who are personally ineligible to receive mandatory scheme or student support scheme support. LAs meet the cost of discretionary awards from their own resources. Hence, they are not included in this SFR. It is for authorities to choose which students and courses to support and how much to spend. Some authorities pay their discretionary awards at the rate for designated courses and others pay at a rate above or below that for courses designated for mandatory scheme or student support scheme support.

Related statistical publications

13. Statistics on loans and grants awarded to students in HE in Wales in academic year 2015/16 (provisional) were published in SLC SFR 06/2015 on 02 December 2015. These can be found at <http://www.slc.co.uk/official-statistics/full-catalogue-of-official-statistics/student-support-for-higher-education-in-wales.aspx>

14. Statistics on the repayment of loans in financial year 2015-16 were published on 16 Jun 2016 in SLC SFR 02/2016. These can be found at <http://www.slc.co.uk/official-statistics/full-catalogue-of-official-statistics/student-loans-debt-and-repayment.aspx>

NOTES FOR USERS

15. The figures in this first release were all compiled by the Student Loans Company Limited.

16. Figures marked as provisional are those where the base data has only recently become available and may be subject to change following further validation.

17. Details of the amounts of loans and grants available in 2016/17 are publicly available in the Student Finance Wales booklets '[Student Finance – New Full time students 2016/17](#)' and '[Student Finance – Continuing students 2016/17](#)'.

18. Student numbers have been rounded to the nearest hundred (with a * indicating a number less than 50 but not zero); expenditure figures to the nearest £100,000 (with a * indicating a number less than £50,000 but not zero); and average expenditure to the nearest £10.

19. Welsh students entering Higher Education (HE) from 2006/07 who are studying at a HE institute in Wales are eligible for the Tuition Fee Grant. Welsh students entering HE from 2012/13 and receiving the new Tuition Fee Grant can study anywhere in the UK, however EU students only receive this grant if they study in Wales. The maximum Tuition Fee Grant is £5,190 in 2015/16 payable where the HE institution charges the maximum fee of £9,000. The Tuition Fee Grant is not means tested. It is determined by the fee charged by the institution above £3,810.

20. A means-tested Maintenance Grant of £2,700 was introduced in 2006/07 (£5,161 to new entrants in 2016/17). Students in receipt of these grants are not eligible for the £1,000 HE Grants.

21. Tuition Fee Loans are payable to institutions on behalf of students normally domiciled in Wales who attend a HE course anywhere in the United Kingdom as well as to students from the European Union attending HE courses in Wales.

22. Assessments of eligibility for student support for those students who are ordinarily resident outside the United Kingdom but are ordinarily resident in the European Union and who attend designated HE courses in Wales are made by the SLC EU Customer Services team.

23. HE courses are those of a level higher than GCE A level or ONC/OND.

24. The Student Support Scheme does not apply to part-time HE students other than those on part-time postgraduate courses of initial teacher training. A support package for part-time HE students comprising a Course Grant and a Fee Grant was introduced in 2004/05.

25. The income used to determine the extent of the student finance entitlement that is income-assessed is “household residual income”. If a student is deemed to be dependent on their parents then the income taken into account is that of the student and their parents with deductions for costs such as pension contributions, other dependent children of the parent(s), and an allowance for the parent also being in study. If the student is deemed to be independent the parents’ income is not taken into account but that of a spouse or partner will be.

26. These statistics are used widely both within and outside the Welsh Government. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Officials in the Welsh Government;
- The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- advice to Ministers;
- to inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales;
- to forecast future expenditure of student support schemes for Welsh domiciled students;
- International benchmarking.

User consultations

27. 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 <http://www.slc.co.uk/official-statistics/guide-to-our-statistics/user-engagement.aspx>

28. 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 AND OFFICIAL STATISTICS

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

Table guide

Table 1A shows the maximum support available for maintenance in Wales through the Assembly Learning Grant and Maintenance Loans schemes for students in academic years 2012/13 to 2015/16.

Table 1B shows the support package for new entrants in academic year 2015/16.

Table 2 shows an overview of all the student support products in Wales. It details the number of awards and the total amount of support awarded to applicants domiciled in Wales, and tuition fee support awarded to EU domiciled applicants studying in Wales in academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Table 3A shows the distribution of the Tuition Fee Grant awarded to students domiciled in Wales and EU students studying in Wales in academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16 who entered HE in or after 2006/07.

Table 3B shows the distribution of the Assembly Learning Grant awarded to students domiciled in Wales who entered HE in or after 2006/07 and chose to study in the United Kingdom in academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Table 3C shows the distribution of Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) paid to students domiciled in Wales in academic years 2010/11 to 2015/16.

Table 3D shows the distribution of Other Targeted Support awarded to applicants domiciled in Wales between academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Table 4A shows the number of Maintenance Loans, the amount borrowed and the average loan for the student support scheme for all students domiciled in Wales in academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16. The Table also shows the take-up rate of Maintenance Loans in academic years 2012/13 to 2014/15.

Table 4B shows the number of Tuition Fee Loans, the amount borrowed and the average loan for the student support scheme for all students domiciled in Wales and for EU students studying in Wales, broken down by domicile in academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Table 4C shows the number of Tuition Fee Loans, the amount borrowed and the average loan for the student support scheme for all students domiciled in Wales and EU students studying in Wales, broken down by the country of the HEI attended in academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Table 4D shows the take-up rate of Tuition Fee Loans for all students domiciled in Wales and EU students studying in Wales, broken down by the domicile of the student, and by country of the HEI attended in academic years 2012/13 to 2014/15.

Table 4E shows the combined total of Maintenance Loans and Tuition Fee Loans paid for students domiciled in Wales in academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Table 5A shows the support given to part time students domiciled in Wales and EU (outside UK) students studying in Wales in academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Table 5B shows the DSA support to Post Graduate students in academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Table 6.2 shows the total awarded to full time applicants domiciled in Wales and EU domiciled applicants studying in Wales – early indicative awards academic years 2014/15 to 2016/17

Table 6.3A shows distribution of Tuition Fee Grants awarded to applicants domiciled in Wales and EU domiciled applicants studying in Wales – early indicative awards academic years 2014/15 to 2016/17

Table 6.3B shows distribution of Welsh Government Learning Grants awarded to applicants domiciled in Wales – early indicative awards academic years 2014/15 to 2016/17

Table 6.3C shows Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) - Full time students domiciled in Wales - early indicative awards academic years 2014/15 to 2016/17

Table 6.4A shows Maintenance Loans awarded to applicants domiciled in Wales - early indicative awards academic years 2014/15 to 2016/17

Table 6.4B shows Tuition Fee Loans awarded to applicants domiciled in Wales and EU domiciled applicants studying in Wales - early indicative awards academic years 2014/15 to 2016/17