

## [A step closer to student funding reform? How students will be supported from 2018/19.](#)

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How students ordinarily resident in Wales (**Welsh Students**) get supported through university is about to **undergo a major overhaul**. The Welsh Government has consulted on its **proposals to change [Support funding for students resident in Wales](#)** from November 2016 to February 2017. Now the results of that consultation, as well as what student support will be available in 2018/19, **[are due to be announced in Plenary](#)** on 11 July 2017. With that announcement the next steps on the reform journey are likely to become clearer.

The changes outlined in the consultation are largely based on **[The Final Report of the Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements](#)** (the Diamond Review), which was published on 27 September 2016. The **[Executive Summary](#)** (PDF 270KB) released



alongside the report, summarises **the main recommendations of the Diamond Review**. The changes will apply to all Welsh students wherever they study in the UK.

In November 2016, the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams, published the **[Welsh Government's response to the Review's](#)** (PDF 340KB) recommendations alongside a corresponding **[consultation document](#)** (PDF 445KB) which highlighted the Welsh Government's implementation proposals.

### Support for students from 2018/19

The Welsh Government, supported by evidence from the Diamond Review, has argued that support for **day to day costs of being a student**, such as accommodation, food, transport and books etc, **are a bigger deterrent to potential students**, rather than concern over tuition fee debt.



As a result the Welsh Government is going to replace the [current Tuition Fee Grant](#) for full-time undergraduate students (worth £4,954 in 2017/18) with a student loan, up to the current maximum fee level applicable in 2018/19, (currently £9,000 in Wales, and £9,250 in the rest of the UK).

Instead of the Tuition Fee Grant, there will be a **£1,000 non-means-tested universal maintenance grant for all Welsh students**. There will also be an **additional means-tested grant** available to cover living costs. Those from households earning over £59,200 will only be eligible for the universal grant and a Maintenance Loan (outlined below).

The **top rate of means-tested Maintenance Grant** for a student living away from home outside London, will be **£8,100 in 2018/19**. A 25% supplement to be available for a student living away from home in London (£10,125) and there will be a 15% deduction for students living at home (£6,885).

**A non-means tested Maintenance Loans will be available** for Welsh students who are not eligible for the full grant. The amount of loan available will be equal to the maximum level of total maintenance support, less any means-tested grant.

The Welsh Government has said that what it is offering from 2018/19 constitutes the [‘most generous student finance support package in the UK’](#).

### Support for postgraduate students

From 2018/19 the Welsh Government will also **provide support of up to £17,000** for Welsh students **undertaking a taught masters course**. This £17,000 ‘contribution towards costs’ would **comprise of a grant** at the same level as for full-time undergraduate students living at home and **an additional loan**. This funding will be un-hypothecated, so students will be able to decide how they choose to spend it.

### What the Welsh Government consulted on

Through the support funding for students resident in Wales consultation, the Welsh Government sought views on how it could:

- Move towards paying maintenance support to students on a monthly basis;



- Move to a fully regulated part-time system by 2021, whereby part-time courses would have to be approved by HEFCW in order for students of that course to be eligible for maintenance support from Welsh Government;
- continue to encourage and fund students who wish to study at an intensity of below 25% of a full time and students who have an Equivalent Level Qualification to the one they wish to study;
- provide additional support for students with experience of being in a care setting receive, as it has already committed to ensuring that these students will receive the maximum level of maintenance grant available; and
- best support a pilot scheme for students who wish to study outside the UK and EU.

To find out more, watch the [announcement live on Senedd.tv](#) on Tuesday 11 July or check the Assembly's [Record of Proceedings](#) a day or so later.

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