

Tuition Fee Loans for Postgraduate Students

The Department for the Economy is to extend its student support package from the beginning of the 2017/18 Academic Year, with tuition fee loans being made available for postgraduate study*.

The main features of the new loan are as follows:

- It is a non-means-tested tuition fee loan of up to £5,500 per course;
- It is available in respect of Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, and taught and research Masters courses commencing during the 2017/18 Academic Year;
- It is available for Northern Ireland-domiciled students studying at authority/ publicly funded institutions in the United Kingdom, and EU students studying at authority/ publicly funded institutions in Northern Ireland;
- Courses may be studied on a full-time or part-time 'in attendance', or a full-time or part-time 'distance learning' basis;
- Courses must be completed in three academic years or less; and
- Students can avail of the loan even if they hold an equivalent or higher qualification – however, students will be entitled to one postgraduate tuition fee loan only.

Loans will be paid directly to Higher Education Providers on behalf of students.

The same residency criteria as for undergraduate student support will apply.

Please note that students will become eligible to make loan repayments from the beginning of the tax year (April 6th) following their completion of, or withdrawal from, the course – subject to their income exceeding the minimum repayment threshold (for Academic Year 2017/18 this is £17,775 per year, £1,481 per month, or £341 per week before tax and National Insurance). The Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan will be added to the balance of any undergraduate student loan that the student may have, and a repayment rate of 9% of any earnings over the minimum income threshold will apply to the total loan balance.

*The loan will not be available in respect of PhD, Integrated Masters, or Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses.

Guidance on the Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan will be available from this website in the coming weeks, and application forms will be available, both this website and from the Student Finance NI Postgraduate office from June 2017.