Student Finance – Frequently Asked Questions

We understand that applying for student finance can be a confusing process, and that changing household circumstances might alter funding arrangements. So, here are a collection of frequently asked questions and answers to help you along the way.

What if?

My income drops, or I’m made redundant

Everyone is entitled to a Tuition Fee Loan and some help towards living costs. National Insurance numbers are used to verify family income. Financial evidence is taken from the prior tax year.

If your income is likely to be at least 15% lower within the current tax year, then SLC can assess your household income on that estimate and verify this with you at the end of the tax year. You will need to download a ‘Current year income assessment form’ found at www.studentfinanceengland.co.uk

I pay some, or all, of my young person’s tuition fees?

You will need to make arrangements with the university or college to pay tuition fees direct. Even if you choose to pay part of the tuition fees, your child can still take out a Tuition Fee Loan to cover the remaining costs.

We have other children – is this taken into account?

Yes – The Student Loan Company (SLC) ask you about this as part of the application. They will also ask you about your other children who’ll be at university or college at the same time, as this could also mean they’re eligible for a higher amount of financial support.

I am in the process of getting divorced?

Evidence will be required of the proceedings:
- Deed of separation
- Solicitors letter
- Council tax statement stating Single Adult Rebate
I am divorced but still living under the same roof

Living under the same roof but separately is legally possible and recognised by the courts, evidence of this will be required by the SLC. It is possible to divorce on the grounds of being apart for 2 years even though you have lived at the same address for the whole time. To be living separately but under the same roof means that you should be living completely apart e.g. cooking, eating, washing clothes splitting utility bills etc as 2 individuals.

I am divorced or no longer living together?

The SLC assess the household income of where the young person spends the majority of their time. This includes the income of the parent and their partner, if they have one.

My young person changes course or university?

Before the start of their course they can update their details by logging into their online account at any time and tell the SLC about the changes. They can then review what funding they’re entitled to without them having to resend evidence. Once they have started on their course, they should contact their university about any changes. Their university or college will notify SLC.

I need to submit further evidence?

The SLC will ask for the following evidence:

- A valid UK passport number, or an original ‘birth/adoption’ certificate or a valid non-UK passport and any original supporting letters from the UK border Agency.
- National Insurance numbers are used to verify income. Financial evidence is taken from the prior tax year.

In some cases, they may contact you directly to ask for further evidence of household income; this could include photocopies of your P60 or pay slips. Don’t worry if this happens — it forms part of their checks to make sure your young person gets the funding they’re entitled to. You should send any new evidence right away so they can finish the assessment and make their first payment on time.
My young person wants to get a mortgage or another loan in the future?

Student loans are unsecured lending from the government and are very different to credit cards or commercial loans. The loan repayments are based on earnings not the amount borrowed. They don’t go on credit files and don’t show up on credit checks.

My young person can’t afford to repay the loan, will I have to foot the bill?

Student loans are the sole responsibility of the student who takes them out. Liability for the loans cannot be transferred to their parents or anyone else.

My young person is 21 years old and has left home will they be classed as an independent student?

To be classed as an independent student, students have to fall into one of these categories supplying the necessary evidence:

- Aged 25 or over
- Has left the parental home and supported themselves financially for at least three years
- Is permanently estranged from their parents, or
- Has been in the care of their local authority

If my young person moves abroad they won’t have to repay their student loan

Part of the loan agreement your child makes when they take out a loan, is that they’ll make any repayments due. If they move abroad they must tell the Student Loans Company so they can make arrangements for them to continue paying off their loan. Visit www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk for more information on repayments.

Useful information and contacts

- www.gov.uk/studentfinance. You can also phone them on 0845 399 5090 (textphone: 0845 604 4434)
- www.studentfinanceengland.co.uk
- www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk