

## **EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO THE EDUCATION (STUDENT SUPPORT) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2018**

The Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Higher Education Division and is laid before the National Assembly for Wales under Standing Order 27.1.

### **Cabinet Secretary's declaration**

In my view this Explanatory Memorandum gives a fair and reasonable view of the expected impact of the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018. I am satisfied that the benefits justify the likely costs.

Kirsty Williams AM  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

16 February 2018

## **Description**

The Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 ('the Regulations') provide the basis for the system of financial support for students who are ordinarily resident in Wales (subject to exceptions) taking designated higher education courses in respect of academic years beginning on or after 1 August 2018. Support includes tuition fee loans, maintenance grants and maintenance loans.

## **Matters of special interest to the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee**

None.

## **Legislative background**

Section 22 of the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 ('the 1998 Act') provides the Welsh Ministers with the power to make regulations authorising or requiring the payment of financial support to students studying courses of higher or further education designated by or under those regulations. In particular, this power enables the Welsh Ministers to prescribe amounts of financial support (grant or loan) and categories of attendance on higher education courses. This provision, together with sections 42(6) and 43(1) of the 1998 Act, provide the Welsh Ministers with the power to make the Regulations.

Section 44 of the Higher Education Act 2004 ('the 2004 Act') provided for the transfer to the National Assembly for Wales of the functions of the Secretary of State under section 22 of the 1998 Act (except insofar as they relate to the making of any provision authorised by subsections (2)(a), (c), (j) or (k), (3)(e) or (f) or (5) of section 22). Section 44 of the 2004 Act also provided for the functions of the Secretary of State in section 22(2)(a), (c) and (k) to be exercisable concurrently with the National Assembly for Wales.

The functions of the Secretary of State under sections 42(6) and 43(1) of the 1998 Act were transferred, so far as exercisable in relation to Wales, to the National Assembly for Wales by the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/672).

The functions of the National Assembly for Wales were transferred to the Welsh Ministers by virtue of section 162 of, and paragraph 30 of Schedule 11 to, the Government of Wales Act 2006 (c.32).

Each year, a number of functions of the Welsh Ministers in regulations made under section 22 of the 1998 Act are delegated to the Student Loans Company under section 23 of the 1998 Act.

This instrument is made by the negative resolution procedure.

### **Purpose and intended effect of the legislation**

The Welsh Ministers make regulations annually to provide the basis for the system of financial support for students who are ordinarily resident in Wales and taking designated courses of higher education. The Regulations apply to courses beginning on or after 1 August 2018 and introduce a number of changes to student support, as set out below.

### **Changes to the principal student support package**

#### *Tuition fee support*

Since the introduction of a maximum fee level of £9,000 in 2012, students ordinarily resident in Wales have had access to financial support to cover the cost of the tuition fees charged by providers of higher education. This means students do not have to meet tuition fees upfront. This has comprised a tuition fee grant and a tuition fee loan.

The Regulations modify fee support arrangements for eligible full-time and part-time undergraduate students, including those on distance learning courses. The Regulations make provision for:

- the current tuition fee grant for full-time students ordinarily resident in Wales to be replaced with an additional subsidised<sup>1</sup> student loan, up to the maximum fee level applicable in 2018/19. This will be available wherever students study in the UK; and
- tuition fee loans to continue to be available for those part-time students ordinarily resident in Wales, studying at an intensity of at least 25%.

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<sup>1</sup> The tuition fee loan is considered to be subsidised as the provision of student loans carries a significant public cost, as not all loans will be paid back, and the interest payable by the borrower is generally lower than the interest the government has to pay on its debt.

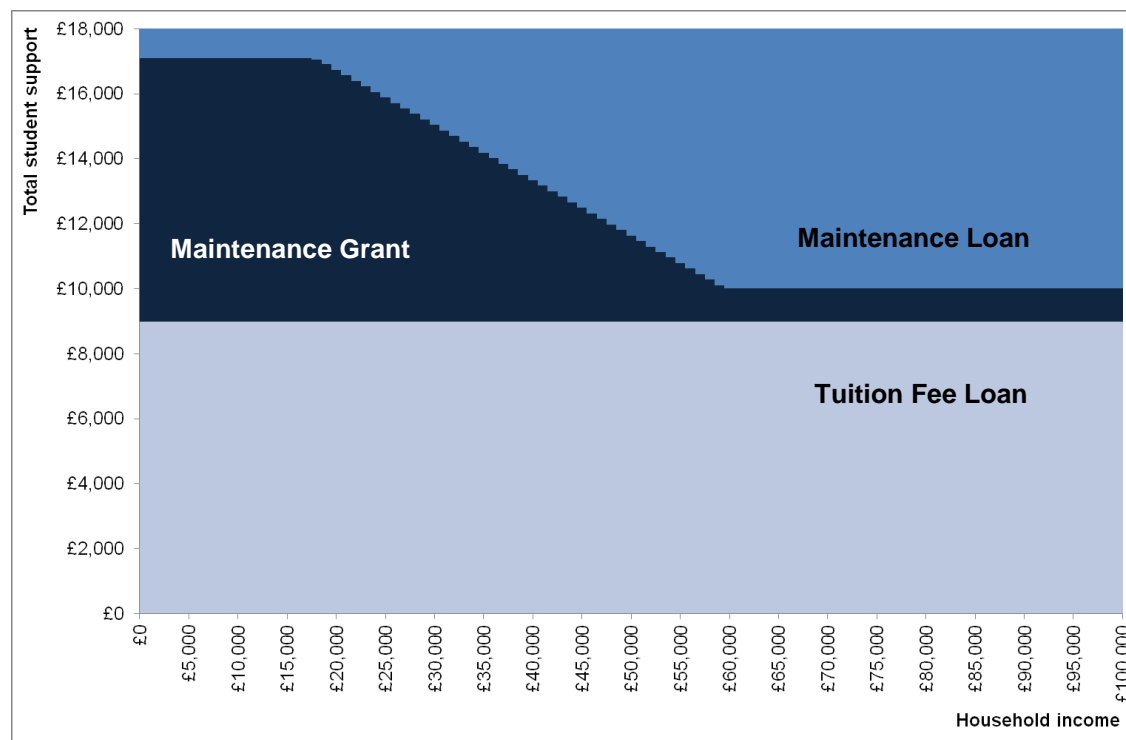
### *Maintenance support*

The Regulations make provision for the following maintenance support for students (including those undertaking full-time and part-time distance learning courses):

- A £1,000 non-means-tested grant (the 'base grant') will be available to eligible students ordinarily resident in Wales (subject to exceptions). This will be pro rated for part-time students (e.g. students studying at 50% intensity will receive £500).
- An additional means-tested maintenance grant will be available to support living and study costs. The amount of maintenance grant payable to full-time students will be determined by reference to where the student lives, their household income and whether they are a care leaver, with more available to students from the lowest income backgrounds and a gradual taper to a £59,200 threshold at which point a student will receive no means-tested grant.
- Full-time students with a household income up to £18,370 will receive the maximum grant (of £6,685 if living with parents, £10,124 if living away from parental home and studying in London, and £8,100 if living away from parental home and studying elsewhere).
- A maintenance loan will also be available to eligible students with the intention of ensuring that students receive adequate overall maintenance support. A non-means-tested loan will be available to make up the difference between the maximum level of total maintenance support and the amount of maintenance grant to which a student is entitled. The overall amount of maintenance support is based on the UK National Living Wage.
- Part-time students will receive the maintenance support available to full-time undergraduate students but on a pro rata basis. The amount of maintenance grant payable to part-time students is determined by reference to household income, whether they are a care leaver and the intensity of their study (i.e. a proportion of the £1,000 non-means-tested base grant up to a maximum based on £6,000 full-time equivalent, but with the maximum grant available up to a household income of £25,000).
- Targeted grants, namely the Childcare Grant, Adult Dependents Grant, Parents' Learning Grant and Disabled Students' Grant and Grant for Travel are also provided for by the Regulations.

### Full-time undergraduate student support by household income

The following provides an illustration of support by household income levels for tuition fees and maintenance support from 2018/19 for a student living away from home, outside London.

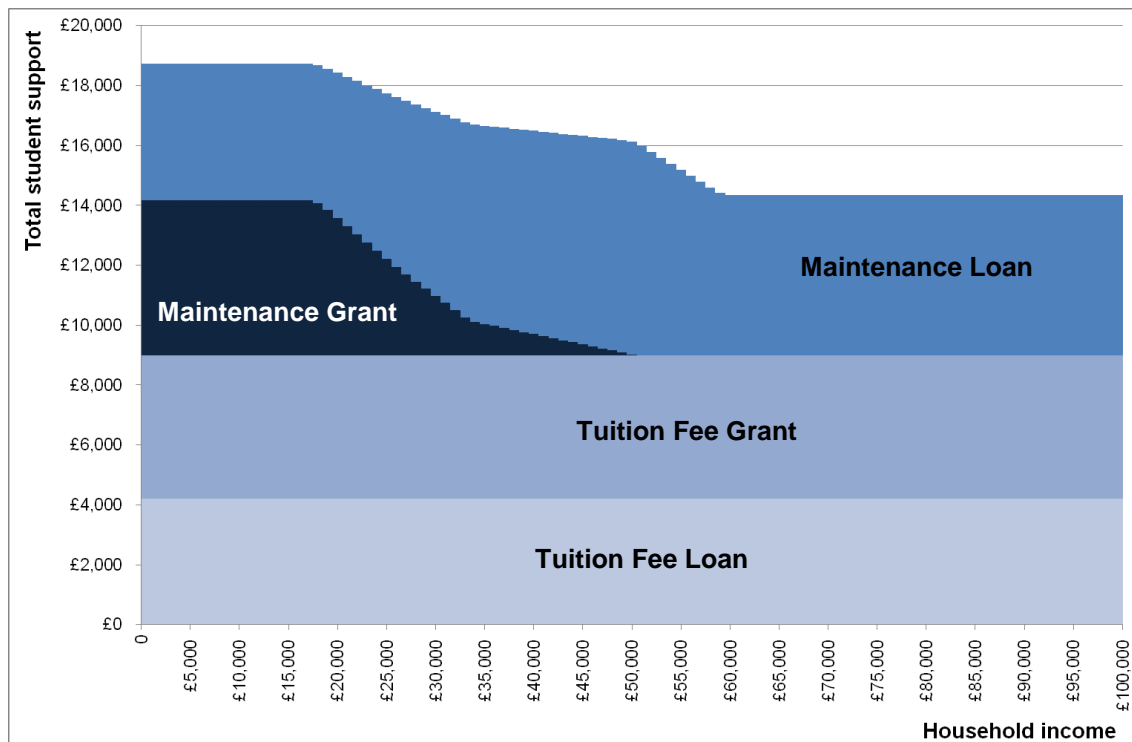


Household income	Tuition Fee Loan*	Maintenance support	
		Grant†	Loan
<£18,370	£9,000	£8,100	£900
£25,000	£9,000	£6,947	£2,053
£35,000	£9,000	£5,208	£3,792
£50,000	£9,000	£2,600	£6,400
>£60,000	£9,000	£1,000	£8,000

\* Fee loan amounts based on a £9,000 fee; institutions outside Wales may be able to charge more and the tuition fee loan increases accordingly to a maximum of £9,250.

† Includes the base grant of £1,000.

For comparative purposes, the following provides an illustration of the support that will be available to full-time undergraduates continuing under the current system, in 2018/19.



Household income	Tuition fee support*		Maintenance support	
	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan
<£18,370	£4,800	£4,200	£5,161	£4,563
£25,000	£4,800	£4,200	£3,347	£5,470
£34,000	£4,800	£4,200	£1,142	£6,572
£50,020	£4,800	£4,200	£50	£7,118
>£60,000	£4,800	£4,200	£0	£5,357

\* Fee loan amounts based on a £9,000 fee; institutions outside Wales may be able to charge more and the tuition fee loan increases accordingly to a maximum of £9,250.

### Additional policy changes

In addition to the key elements of student support described above, a number of other policy changes are provided for by the Regulations.

#### *Removal of the overseas rate*

Analysis indicates that the 'living away from home (outside London)' category of the maintenance support in the Regulations should provide sufficient funds for living costs in the vast majority of potential global study destinations. The

Regulations do not make provision for a separate category of support for those studying overseas, and eligible students studying at institutions abroad will receive support at the same rate as those 'living away from home (outside London)'.

Comparative price levels, based on purchasing power parities, provide measures of the differences in prices between countries<sup>2</sup>. In 2009, the UK was ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in the OECD comparative price levels, only marginally above the OECD average. Between 2009 and 2015, the UK has moved up to 7<sup>th</sup> place and is notably higher than the OECD average. Over the same period, the average index level for the Euro area has decreased, from 9 places above the OECD average to below 5 places below it.

These figures indicate that the cost of living in the UK is relatively high among the countries of the OECD. In addition, UK living costs appear to have risen relatively more rapidly than the average for countries of the OECD and Euro zone, in recent years. Given the link between the new maintenance support package and the UK National Living Wage, as well as the continued availability of a Travel Grant, it was concluded that the rationale that once existed for a distinct maintenance loan rate for students studying overseas no longer applies.

#### *Part-time study intensity*

The Regulations provide:

- a student's period of eligibility in respect of a part-time course will be limited to the time taken to complete the course unless terminated early;
- a student will not receive support for years when they study at below 25% intensity and credits studied in those years will not be counted when determining support;
- for how the intensity of study is to be calculated and may change each year;
- a student will be paid support subject to a limit, based on their intensity of study; and
- overall, a student should not be funded for more credits than it would take to complete the course on a full-time basis.

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<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.oecd.org/std/prices-ppp/purchasingpowerparitiespppsdata.htm>

### *Special Support Payment*

The Regulations make provision to continue with the Special Support Grant (renamed the Special Support Payment) as part of the support package for students studying full-time (including those on distance learning courses), with the maximum level being maintained at £5,161, which includes the non-means-tested base grant. The Special Support Payment is intended to cover costs associated with for example studying, books, course equipment and travel. The SSP replaces some or all of the Base Grant and Maintenance Grant for eligible students. The amounts, tapers and thresholds for the Special Support Payment are the same as those that apply to the maintenance grant. However, unlike the maintenance grant, the Special Support Payment does not serve to reduce the amount of maintenance loan to which students are entitled.

The Regulations also provide for eligible part-time students (including those on distance learning courses) to be able to apply for a Special Support Payment for the first time on the basis that this helps to deliver equal access to support. The non-means-tested element will be pro rated for part time students.

### *Grants for Dependants*

Eligible students with adult or child dependants can receive help with certain extra costs. The Regulations introduce new rules to clarify and simplify the calculation of the grant for dependants for students enrolling from 2018/19 onwards.

### *Support for care leavers*

The Regulations make provision for eligible students who are “care leavers”, to receive the maximum maintenance grant, regardless of income and of any other financial support to which they are entitled.

The definition of care leavers in the Regulations is as set out in section 104 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. In order to be eligible for support an individual must have been in care for a total period of 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and the first day of the first academic year of their course, and must be aged under 25 at the start of their course. The part-time package will be pro rated, as it is for other students, based on the level of intensity of study.



Care leavers who are accommodated outside Wales under arrangements made by a Welsh local authority, will be treated as ordinarily resident in Wales for the purpose of the Regulations.

#### *Removal of assessed contributions*

Assessed contributions formed the basis for means-tested deductions against the maintenance loan and targeted grants (Adult Dependents Grant, Parental Learning Allowance, Childcare Grant and Travel Grant) previously. Provision in respect of assessed contributions has not been made in the Regulations as the maintenance support provided for is not subject to deductions based on income.

#### *Removal of split parental contributions in multiple student households*

Under current student support provisions, where the same household income is used to assess the entitlement for all students of the household, the assessed contribution payable in respect of an eligible student is divided by the number of all eligible students in the household. This ensures that parents with more than one child in higher education do not have to contribute more overall compared to parents with only one child in higher education.

Assessed contributions will be removed in respect of students studying from 2018/19, as a student's entitlement to overall maintenance support will not be subject to deductions based on income. The removal of assessed contributions will benefit all students that would in previous years have been subject to them, whether from a single or multiple student household.

#### *Armed forces personnel undertaking distance learning courses*

Currently, eligible students will qualify for fee loans and, where applicable, disabled student allowances for their full or part-time distance learning course where they meet the necessary qualifying conditions. However, to be eligible for support in respect of a distance learning course, a student must be present in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course.

These Regulations make provision for eligible students to qualify for fee loans, base grants, maintenance grants, maintenance loans and disabled student allowances for their full-time or part-time distance learning course where they meet the necessary qualifying conditions. However, the requirement for the student to be present in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the distance learning course will not apply where the student or their close relative

is a member of the armed forces and the student is not in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course by reason of the fact that they, or their close relative, is serving as a member of the armed forces outside Wales. This recognises the reality of military service, and increases the accessibility of support in respect of distance learning courses to students where they, or their close family relatives, are serving as members of the armed forces. This change is consistent with the underlying principle of the Armed Forces Covenant. The Armed Forces Covenant sets out the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Regulations provide the basis for the implementation of the Welsh Ministers' policy for student support for the 2018/19 academic year, enable the Welsh Government's delivery partner (the Student Loans Company) to implement system changes, and allow applications for support to commence in 2018.

## **CONSULTATION**

Details of consultation are included in the Regulatory Impact Assessment section below.

## **REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The policy underpinning the Regulations has been developed as a direct response to the *Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements*. That process considered a wide range of options for student support, settling on a set of recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary for Education, recommendations that were largely accepted. With the Regulations, these changes are implemented, without, the existing regime for student support would continue.

### **Student support**

To offset the increase in tuition fees in Wales in 2012 and a similar rise in England, the Welsh Government introduced new support arrangements. From 2012/13, new entrant full-time undergraduate students ordinarily resident in Wales became eligible to receive a tuition fee grant to cover any increase in fees (up to the £9,000 maximum) beyond the level set in 2011/12, regardless of where in the UK they wished to study. EU students studying in Wales also became eligible for the grant if studying at Welsh higher education institutions

('HEIs'). Other changes included raising the income threshold for student loan repayments from £15,000 to £21,000.

Maintenance support for living costs, in the form of grants and loans, continued to be made available. With only minor changes, support has continued on this basis until now. From 2013/14, part-time students were given access to a tuition fee loan of up to £2,625 (depending on the level of intensity of their course). Alongside this, the institutional learning and teaching grant paid by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to universities was retained in respect of part-time students, in order to compensate for the lower fees charged. Maintenance support has not previously been available for part-time undergraduates.

### **Participation in higher education**

For 2016/17, data from the Higher Education Statistics Authority shows that there were 97,095 Welsh domiciled higher education enrolments at UK HEIs, showing a decrease of less than 1% from the previous year. This reflects a continued decline in enrolments by part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students. For undergraduate Welsh domiciled students, part-time enrolments at UK HEIs decreased by 7% in 2016/17 to 22,000. This is 44% below the peak of 39,280 in 2004/05. Enrolments by Welsh domiciled postgraduate students decreased by less than 1% in 2016/17. This is 7% below the peak of 16,460 in 2010/11. In contrast to the trends for postgraduates and part-time undergraduates, full-time undergraduate enrolments (59,745) continued to increase, up 2% between 2015/16 and 2016/17. UCAS data on full-time undergraduate applications for 2018/19 (as at 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018) show that the Welsh domiciled 18 year-old application rate was up 1% on the same point in the 2017/18 application cycle. This includes a modest increase in application rates from the most disadvantaged group of 18 year olds.

### **The Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements**

The *Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements*, led by Professor Sir Ian Diamond ('the Diamond review'), concluded in September 2016. Professor Diamond and a panel of expert members were asked to conduct a wide ranging review of the funding of higher education and student finance. The Diamond review was tasked to provide clear advice and recommendations for the future funding of the sector

and student finance arrangements in Wales, against a backdrop of concerns about the sustainability of student support. It was to focus on, amongst other things:

- the promotion of social mobility and widening access to higher education;
- student finance arrangements, including maintenance support, with an emphasis on supporting learners from the lowest income backgrounds and most deprived communities in Wales; and
- student debt.

These objectives were reflected in the Welsh Government's priorities for the review:

- widening access – ensuring that any future system has widening access as its core objective, is progressive and equitable;
- supporting the skill needs of Wales;
- strengthening part-time and postgraduate provision in Wales; and
- long term financial sustainability.

Professor Diamond made a number of recommendations that were largely accepted by the Welsh Government. These included:

- The focus of undergraduate support should move towards improved maintenance support arrangements for all full-time and part-time undergraduate students, with the highest level of grant support covering the full cost of maintenance for those who are most in need, together with loans to cover tuition fees.
- The current tuition fee grant for full-time undergraduate students is replaced with an additional student loan, up to a maximum fee level of £9,000.
- A £1,000 “base” grant available to all eligible Welsh domiciled students.
- Additional means-tested grant to cover living costs.
- Maintenance loans to be available (subject to eligibility) for those students who are not eligible for grant.

- The top rate of maintenance grant and/or loan support, for a student living away from home outside London, should be equivalent to the National Living Wage.
- A maximum total grant of 25% more (£10,125) to be available for a student living away from home in London and 15% less (£6,885) for students living at home (based on current differentials in maintenance support).
- The means testing taper for maintenance grant support should be flatter than the current taper.

These recommendations were accepted and the Regulations make provision for them to be the basis for student support in the 2018/19 academic year.

Comprehensive evidence and analysis was produced and is available at <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/highereducation/reviews/review-of-the-funding-and-student-finance-arrangements/?lang=en>.

## **Options**

### **Option 1: Do nothing**

In the event of the Regulations not being made the principal implication is that the existing policy for student support would continue and the recommendations made as a result of *Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements* would not be implemented.

At the heart of the recommendations is a re-working of the student support package to move towards a simple system that recognises the holistic costs of higher education study to students, namely fees and maintenance. This would mean important changes to support would not be implemented including:

- improvements to maintenance support as an important driver of student participation; and
- bringing support for part-time and distance learning students largely in line with that for full-time to reverse the trend of declining participation.

In the event of do nothing, the long term financial sustainability of student support is not assured.

### **Option 2: Do minimum – make the Regulations**

Making the Regulations ensures that the recommendations are implemented and that student support is sustainable. In turn, it is anticipated this will contribute to maintaining or improving participation levels in higher education. In particular, the Diamond Review recommendation for the provision of maintenance support for part-time undergraduates aims to halt the significant decline in this mode of study. The Regulations ensure that student support is put on a financially sound basis and will cost less than the do nothing option.

## **Costs and benefits**

### **Option 1: Do nothing**

Leaving the previous regulations (the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017) in place would mean no additional costs are incurred via the student support system. However, this would leave the recommendations on student support made as a result of the Diamond review unimplemented.

## **Option 2: Do minimum – make the Regulations**

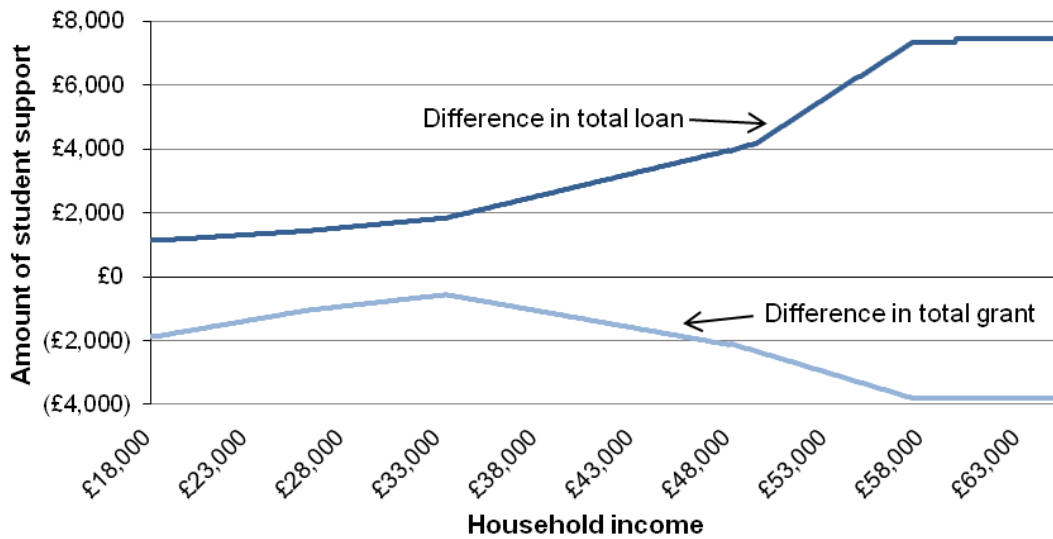
By making the Regulations the Welsh Ministers ensure that the new provisions for the Welsh student support system has an appropriate underpinning legal framework and helps to ensure that policy commitments to higher education and students can be met. The Regulations will reflect policy developed as a result of the *Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements*. Students who are ordinarily resident in Wales will benefit from the changes to support outlined above. The benefits of a higher education to the individual, to the economy and to society are well known.

### **Distributional impact and student debt**

As a result of the Regulations, all eligible full-time undergraduate students will have some level of additional student loan (either for tuition fees or both tuition fees and living costs) available to them, compared with a student continuing under the existing regulations. The scale of this difference depends on the household income of the student, ranging from an additional loan of around £1,100 for those with the lowest income, to around £7,400 for those with income above the upper threshold for means testing. This is illustrated in the chart below. The difference in loan available for students under the Regulations results from a combination of the removal of the tuition fee grant and the provision of additional maintenance support, to ensure that all students, subject to eligibility, are able to access a similar level of support.

Any additional loan taken out by a student will not affect the amount of their monthly repayments, if and when they begin repaying. Only relatively high-earning graduates, that would have fully repaid their loan entitlement under the current system, will end up repaying more under the new system. This will be achieved by making repayments for longer, rather than repaying higher amounts. With the student loan repayment threshold due to rise from £21,000 to £25,000 from April 2018 (to be uplifted annually thereafter), all graduates that do not fully repay will repay less in total (irrespective of any additional loan debt) than they would under current repayment arrangements.

## Difference in support for a new student in 2018/19, by household income



Source: Higher Education Division internal analysis, Welsh Government.

Note: Difference reflects a comparison between arrangements for a new student and a continuing full-time undergraduate in 2018/19, where the student is living away from home (but not in London).

All new full-time undergraduate students will have less grant available to them in total when compared to a student continuing under the existing regulations. This reduction will be up to around £2,000 for students from relatively low and middle income (up to around £50,000) households, rising to £3,800 for students with household income above the upper threshold for means-testing. The difference in grant for new students results from the removal of the tuition fee grant balanced by the enhancement of maintenance grants, to varying extents, at all income levels.

In line with the recommendations of the Diamond Review, the changes outlined above enable funding that is currently used for the tuition fee grant to be re-directed to fund enhanced maintenance grants for full-time undergraduates and the introduction of maintenance grants for part-time undergraduates. This will help to ensure all eligible students are able to access support equivalent to the National Living Wage whilst they are studying.

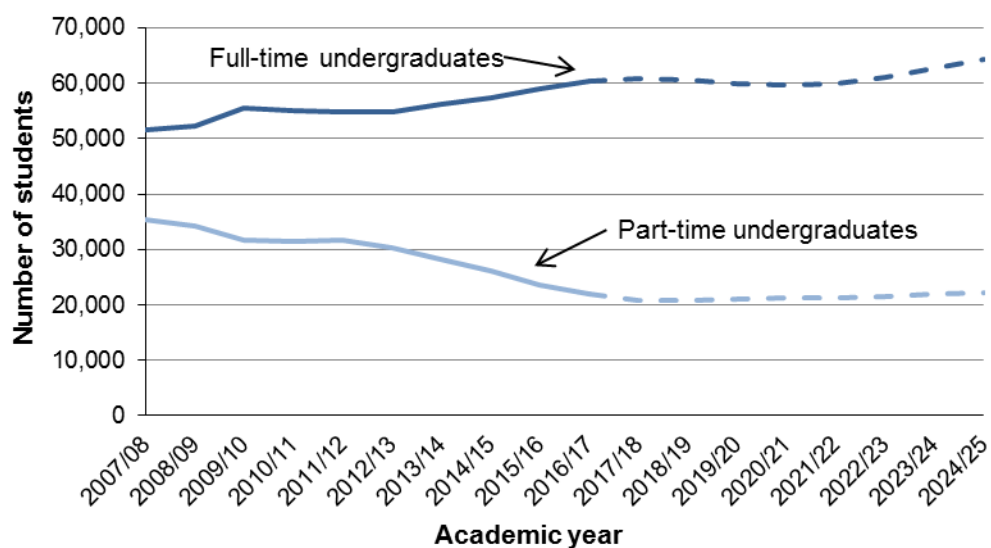
## Participation

The influences on participation in higher education are myriad. Student support is a key but not sole driver. It is anticipated that the new package of student support will at least maintain current participation in full-time undergraduate study as well as reversing the significant decline in



participation in part-time undergraduate study. The chart below illustrates recent and projected Welsh domiciled students on full-time and part-time undergraduate courses. Projections for full-time undergraduates assume a constant participation rate, with overall numbers following forecasts for the 18–19- year old population cohort in Wales. As noted previously, provisional data on applications to full-time higher education courses show an increase in the Welsh domiciled 18 year old application rate for 2018/19.

### Recent and projected students from Wales at UK universities



Source: HESA; Higher Education Division internal analysis, Welsh Government  
 Note: solid lines are historic figures (HESA) for Welsh-domiciled undergraduate students at UK universities; dashed lines are projections.

### Students studying overseas

In 2015/16, there were around 420 Welsh domiciled students receiving the overseas maintenance package administered by the Student Loans Company. Of these, approximately 20% were eligible for the maximum level of maintenance support and 40% were non-means-tested for student support, and hence received a loan for living costs, at the minimum level. Making Regulations will mean that the maximum level of maintenance support available to Welsh domiciled students will be non-means-tested, linked to the UK National Living Wage. As a consequence of this major policy change, approximately 80% of Welsh domiciled students studying overseas will have access to a higher level of maintenance support (markedly so in the majority of cases). As described previously, since the cost of living in the UK is relatively high among the countries of the OECD, the new maintenance support package being set by reference to the current UK National Living Wage, as well as the continued availability of a Travel Grant, will help to

ensure that students studying overseas will have access to sufficient support for living costs and travel.

## Cost

The proposed changes to tuition fee and maintenance loan support for academic year 2018/19 will require the provision of additional support for loans from Her Majesty's Treasury. The estimated cost of the additional loan support is around £100m. Overall expenditure on tuition fee and maintenance grants is estimated to be around £20m less than the 'do nothing' option. The preliminary financial implications for the first three academic years under the Regulations are shown in the table below.

### Provisional financial implications of the regulations

<i>Academic year difference</i>	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Provision of student grants	-£20m	-£40m	-£70m
Provision of student loans	£100m	£180m	£270m
Student loan RAB	£60m	£80m	£110m

Source: Higher Education Division internal analysis, Welsh Government

Notes: Figures are derived from a comparison of forecasts for the proposed and 'do nothing' options, rounded to the nearest £10m. Preliminary estimates are based on several inputs and forecasting assumptions, which are subject to continual review based on latest information.

In addition, as shown, the Government subsidy on the provision of loans (Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB) charge, or non-cash) will increase by around £60m. (The RAB charge is the estimated cost to Government of borrowing to support the student finance system. It is based on future loan write-offs and interest subsidies in net present value terms.) The RAB charge for the 2018/19 full-time undergraduate cohort is expected to be around 40%, approximately 10 percentage points higher than for the current cohort ('do nothing'). This is a consequence of greater loan balances for borrowers, in particular those from higher income backgrounds. The additional loan and Government subsidy requirements estimated above imply a greater RAB than is the reality. This is a consequence of the combined effect of both increased provision of loans and an increased RAB rate applicable to the total loans provided. The RAB charge is expected to remain lower than that in England.

## CONSULTATION

There is no statutory requirement to consult on the Regulations. The Regulations have been developed as a response to the *Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements*. This included a wide-ranging and sustained programme of engagement with stakeholders over more than two years which substantially shaped both the policy for student support and its implementation, both of which underpin the Regulations.

The panel which supported Professor Sir Ian Diamond in his review comprised members drawn from the National Union of Students Wales, universities, the further education sector, and the private sector.

A call for evidence was made during 2014 and ran until February 2015. It attracted 166 responses, a very large number for a consultation on higher education in Wales. A summary is available at <https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/support-funding-for-students-resident-in-wales>.

Focus group discussions were also undertaken with five target stakeholder groups during early 2015 to further inform the evidence base. A summary of findings is available at <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/highereducation/reviews/review-of-the-funding-and-student-finance-arrangements/?lang=en>.

A consultation was undertaken during 2016 and into 2017 (*Student support funding for students ordinarily resident in Wales*, WG30133). A summary of responses is available at <https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/support-funding-for-students-resident-in-wales>.

Finally, in line with usual practice, engagement was undertaken late in 2017, in the form of a Student Finance Wales Information Notice.

A brief summary of stakeholders invited to respond to the consultations is at annex A. Details can be found in the various reports and summaries of each exercise.

## **COMPETITION ASSESSMENT**

The making of these Regulations has no impact on the competitiveness of businesses, charities or the voluntary sector.

## **POST IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT**

The main regulations governing the student support system are revised annually and are continually subject to detailed review, both by policy officials and delivery partners in their practical implementation of the regulations. An evaluation plan (the Diamond Analytical Plan) for the Welsh Government Response to the Diamond Review has been developed. This will monitor, among other things, numbers, participation and retention of higher education students.

## **SUMMARY**

The making of these Regulations is necessary to establish the basis for, and update aspects of, the higher education student support system for students ordinarily resident in Wales and EU students studying in Wales in the 2018/19 academic year.

## **Annex A**

### **Summary list of consultees**

Higher education institutions  
Universities Wales  
Further education colleges in Wales  
Colegau Cymru/College Wales  
National Union of Students Wales  
Student Loans Company  
The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)  
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)  
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)  
National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA)  
Charities with an interest in higher education  
Trade unions with an interest in higher education  
The general public