

Grants for Dependants and Travel Grants

Higher Education Student Finance in England 2009/10 Academic Year

TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES
(For the attention of the Student Support Officer)

This October version has been revised to include the Higher Education Bursary in the list of income to be disregarded to establish a dependant's net income. (Paragraph 89)

October 2009

Dear Colleague

2009/10 STUDENT FINANCE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT: 'GRANTS FOR DEPENDANTS AND TRAVEL GRANTS'

Attached is guidance for key delivery partners in the 2009/10 student finance implementation project: **'Grants for Dependants and Travel Grants'**.

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Introduction

1. This chapter explains the supplementary Grants for Dependants and Travel Grants available to full time students under part 5 of the Regulations (which covers grants for living and other costs). Unless otherwise stated, the Regulations referred to throughout this chapter are the Education (Student Support) (No 2) Regulations 2008. Local authorities and the Student Loans Company (LAs/SLC) should also refer to section 16 of the LA Portal system user guide 'Managing Non-Loan Product Payments'.
2. The grants for living and other costs are:
 - Grants for dependants, consisting of Adult Dependants' Grant (ADG) (regulation 44), Childcare Grant (CCG) (regulation 45) and the Parents' Learning Allowance (PLA) (regulation 46);
 - Travel Grant (regulation 48 - 55);
 - Disabled Students' Allowances (regulation 40 & 41) which are covered in a separate guidance chapter 'Disabled Students' Allowances'; and
 - Maintenance Grant (regulation 56 & 57), Special Support Grant (regulation 59 & 61) and Higher Education Grant (regulation 62 & 63). Guidance on these grants is contained in the 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance.

Policy

General eligibility

3. The general eligibility criteria for full-time student support, including grants for living and other costs, can be found in the 'Assessing Eligibility Guidance' chapter.
4. Students who are personally eligible for student support under paragraph 9 of Schedule 1 (i.e. nationals of member states of the European Community) but not under any other paragraph of that Schedule, are not eligible for grants for living and other costs.
5. The only grants for living and other costs to which previous study rules apply are the Maintenance Grant, Special Support Grant and Higher Education Grant (see the 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance).
6. Grants for living and other costs are available to eligible students regardless of age.
7. A student can only receive support for a designated course. Where the eligible course **does not appear** on the HEI database the LA/SLC will not be able to fully process the application. Information on what action should be taken in this situation is covered in the 'General Eligibility and Financial Assessment Administration' guidance.
8. Students are eligible for grants for living and other costs whilst attending an overseas institution as part of their UK course, whether obligatory or optional (but see paragraphs 52 - 53 & 85 in respect of the Childcare Grant).
9. Full time students who are prisoners are not generally eligible for grants and living costs under part 5 of the regulations except DSAs (regulation 105 (8) & (9)). Students who have spent part of the academic year in prison are

potentially eligible for additional grants for living and other costs calculated on a pro-rata basis. In exceptional circumstances LAs may use their discretion to award, in addition to DSAs, other grants under Part 5 in respect of a period that the student is a prisoner. This might apply where stopping or reducing grants for living or other costs for periods spent in prison would cause the student financial hardship and prevent them from continuing their course. Such instances are however expected to be very few.

Means-tested NHS bursaries

10. Under regulation 38(3)(a), students are not eligible for grants for living and other costs for any academic year during which they are eligible for NHS means-tested bursaries or similar awards bestowed under section 63 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968, article 44 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 or sections 73(f) and 74(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (if the latter is granted in respect of a course leading to a qualification in a healthcare profession other than as a medical doctor or a dentist). Students who are eligible for an NHS Bursary should be directed to the NHS Student Bursaries website at www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk for information about the financial support available through the NHS Bursary Scheme. Or they can phone the NHS Student Bursaries Helpline on 0845 358 6655.

ITT courses

11. Students on ITT courses of a year or more in length who undertake in aggregate six or more weeks' full-time attendance (including teaching practice) in the academic year are eligible for grants for living and other costs. However, there are special rules for the Maintenance Grant and Special Support Grant (see 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance chapter).
12. Students on ITT courses of a year or more in length who undertake in aggregate *less than* six weeks of full-time attendance in the academic year are *not* eligible for grants for living and other costs (regulation 38(3)(b)), with the exception of Disabled Students' Allowances (regulation 38(4)). But they are eligible for the reduced rate (approximately 50%) maintenance loan, which is not subject to income assessment.

Sandwich courses

13. Students on part-year paid or unpaid placements where the periods of full-time study in the academic year are 10 weeks or more in aggregate are eligible to receive grants for living and other costs, subject to income assessment.
14. Under regulation 38(5) students are not eligible for grants for living and other costs in any academic year of a sandwich course in which the periods of full-time study are in aggregate less than 10 weeks (unless the period of work experience is an unpaid placement of a type specified in regulation 38(6)). Students who do not qualify for grants for living and other costs under regulation 38(5) are eligible for a reduced rate maintenance loan which is not subject to income assessment (regulation 72(1)(b) & 72(2)(b)).
15. Under regulation 38(6) students undertaking the following types of unpaid work experience in the public or voluntary sectors are potentially eligible for grants for living and other costs (even where the periods of full time-study in the academic year are less than 10 weeks in aggregate):

- unpaid service in a hospital or in a public health laboratory in the UK or with a primary care trust;
- unpaid service with a local authority in the UK acting in the exercise of their functions relating to health, welfare or the care of children and young persons or with a voluntary organisation providing facilities or carrying out activities of a like nature in the UK;
- unpaid service in the prison or probation and aftercare service in the UK;
- unpaid research in an institution in the UK or, in the case of a student attending an overseas institution as a necessary part of his course, in an overseas institution; (In the Department's view research in an institution must involve some activity within the institution but not all of the work or activity must take place within the institution's physical bounds. Some research work might require a student to undertake some research away from his institution but as long as his base is established at the institution, such work can be regarded as part of his work in the institution.)
- unpaid service with a Health Authority or a Strategic Health Authority, a Health Board or a Special Health Board in Scotland, or a Health and Social Services Board in Northern Ireland.

Students who become eligible during the course

16. Under regulation 38(7) & 38(8), a student may qualify for grants for living and other costs from, and including, the academic year during which:
 - his course becomes designated;
 - he, his spouse, his civil partner or his parent is recognised as a refugee or becomes a person with leave to enter or remain;
 - the state of which he is a national accedes to the European Community where the student has been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands throughout the three-year period immediately preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course;
 - he acquires the right of permanent residence;
 - his Turkish parent becomes a worker;
 - he becomes a person described in paragraph 6(1)(a) of Schedule 1;
 - his parent becomes a Swiss national.
17. In these circumstances the student is eligible for Adult Dependants' Grant and Parents' Learning Allowance only for the quarters after the events in paragraph 16 above occur. For example, course becomes designated during quarter 1. ADG and PLA are awarded from the beginning of quarter 2 and continue for the remainder of the course (except the quarter in which the longest vacation falls). He is also eligible for the other grants for living and other costs, i.e. HE Grant, Maintenance Grant, Special Support Grant, DSAs, Childcare Grant and Travel Grant, for the whole year of the course in which he becomes eligible and subsequent years of the course.
18. However, such a student is not eligible retrospectively. That is, a student is not eligible for grants for living and other costs for academic years of the

course falling **before** the academic year in which he becomes eligible in the circumstances mentioned above. Also refer to the 'Assessing Eligibility' guidance.

Eligibility for grants for living and other costs where students withdraw or suspend study

19. Regulation 105(14) provides LAs/SLC with the discretion to pay grants for living and other costs until the end of the term in which the student has withdrawn from a course. Regulation 105(17) provides LAs/SLC with the discretion to pay grants for living and other costs if a student is absent from their course. Further guidance on exercising this discretion is contained in the 'Change of circumstances and overpayments' guidance.
20. If a student has withdrawn from their course due to serving a prison sentence, SLC should be advised of the withdrawal assessment to allow for rescheduling of financial support and recovery of any overpayment.

Grants for dependants

21. The grants for dependants in 2009/10 under regulation 44-46 are:
 - Adult Dependants' Grant;
 - Childcare Grant; and
 - Parents' Learning Allowance.

Definitions for dependants' grants

22. For the purposes of grants for dependants under regulations 42-44, the following definitions apply (Regulation 42(1)):
 - 'Dependant' means, in relation to an eligible student, the student's partner, his/her dependent child or an adult dependant, who in each case is not an eligible student and does not hold a statutory award;
 - 'Partner' means any of the following:
 - i. the spouse or civil partner of an eligible student;
 - ii. the co-habiting opposite sex partner for a student who is aged 25 or over on the first day of the relevant year of a course that began on or after 1 September 2000 (excluding courses taken end-on to a course that started before 1 September 2000);
 - iii. the co-habiting same sex partner for a student who is aged 25 or over on the first day of the relevant year of a course that began on or after 1 September 2005 (excluding courses taken end-on to a course that started before 1 September 2005).

The definition of a partner does not include a partner of the student where the LA/SLC considers they have separated (in the case of a married student or a student in a civil partnership). This definition also does not include a partner who is ordinarily living outside the United Kingdom and is not maintained by the student.

- 'Adult dependant' means, in relation to an eligible student, an adult person who is dependent on the student, other than the student's

child, partner (including a spouse or civil partner from whom the LA/SLC considers the student is separated) or former partner;

- 'Child', in relation to an eligible student, includes any child of the student's partner who is dependent on the student and any child for whom the student has parental responsibility and is dependent on the student;
- 'Dependent' means wholly or mainly financially dependent;
- 'Dependent child' means, in relation to an eligible student, a child dependent on the student.

23. A child or adult person can be considered to be "dependent" on an eligible student if:

(a) he is wholly or mainly financially dependent on the eligible student alone; or

(b) he is wholly or mainly financially dependent on the eligible student and his partner together (i.e. where the child or adult person is equally financially dependent on the eligible student and his partner who together are providing all or most of his financial support).

24. The definition of 'dependant' means that an eligible student aged under 25 is not eligible for an Adult Dependents' Grant in respect of a co-habiting partner. Since 2005/06, a student's same sex partner has fallen within the definition of a 'partner' rather than adult dependant. Full-time students under 25 with a dependent same sex partner will no longer be eligible for a dependants' grant for that partner. This brings the treatment of same sex partners of students aged under 25 into line with opposite sex partners of students under 25 (regulation 42(1)(i)).

25. The following table summarises when the cohabiting same sex partner or civil partner of a student is a dependant.

	Students who started their course before September 2005		Students who started their course in September 2005 or after	
	Cohabiting same sex partner (not in a civil partnership)	Civil partner	Cohabiting same sex partner (not in a civil partnership)	Civil Partner
Under 25 years old	X	✓	X	✓
Aged 25 years or over	X	✓	✓	✓

Determining where financial dependence lies

Students aged 25 or over (or under 25 if they are married or in a civil partnership)

26. The Department recommends that the dependants' grant means test is applied in all such cases to determine where financial dependency lies.

Students aged under 25 with a child and living with a partner (including a same sex partner)

27. Where a student is under 25 and living with a partner, the partner is not a dependant of the student under regulation 42(1)(h). Therefore the partner's income should not then be used to assess the grants for dependants under regulation 47. However, the income of the partner of a student under 25 should be considered for the purpose of deciding whether a child is mainly financially dependent on the student or the student and his partner together. This should be decided by comparing the estimated income that a student might have – maximum potential student support for living costs: maintenance loan, Adult Dependants' Grant, Parents' Learning Allowance, the maximum applicable rate of Childcare Grant, plus any income from other sources – with the net income of the student's partner, except for any child tax credit. Any child tax credit received either by the student or their partner should be added to the student's estimated income.

Adult Dependants' Grant (Regulation 44)

28. In 2009/10, the amount of Adult Dependants' Grant (ADG) under regulation 44 is **£2,642** for one only of:
- an eligible student's partner (as defined in paragraph 22); or
 - an adult dependant of the student whose net income does not exceed **£3,796**.
29. The net income of a partner, whatever the amount, is always included in the dependants' grant income assessment because there is no maximum amount specified in regulation 44(2)(a) for a partner. A student is not eligible for a grant in respect of an adult dependant whose net income exceeds the maximum amount applicable and such dependants are not included in the dependants' grant income assessment. The income of a partner, a dependent child or an adult dependant any of whom is also an eligible student or who holds a statutory award is not included in the income assessment.
30. There is no requirement for a student to apply separately for the ADG. Provided they have indicated on the PN1 or PR1 forms that they have an adult dependant, there is no requirement for them to make any separate request to receive this grant (see also paragraph 88).

Student's partner is an eligible student or holds a statutory award (Regulation 47(4))

31. An eligible student may not claim the ADG in respect of his or her partner, or for another adult dependant, if that partner or adult dependant is also an eligible student or holds a statutory award. An eligible student who cannot apply for the ADG in respect of his or her partner because the partner is also an eligible student or holds a statutory award can still apply for the ADG in respect of another adult dependant instead. Where an amount of ADG is being calculated in respect of another adult dependant it is to be reduced by one half if the eligible student's partner is also an eligible student or holds a statutory award, and account is taken of the partner's dependants in calculating the amount of support for which that partner qualifies or the payment to which that partner is entitled to under his or her statutory award.

Dependant ordinarily resident outside the United Kingdom

32. Where a student maintains a dependant who is ordinarily resident outside the United Kingdom, the LA/SLC has discretion to determine the basic amount of ADG payable, if any, to a maximum of £2,642 (regulation 44(3)(b)).

Childcare Grant (Regulation 45)

33. The Childcare Grant broadly mirrors the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit (WTC) administered by HM Revenue & Customs. The Childcare Grant is available to students with dependent children (subject to income assessment) who incur "prescribed childcare charges". Prescribed childcare charges means childcare charges of a description prescribed for the purposes of section 12 of the Tax Credits Act 2002. In other words a charge incurred is a prescribed childcare charge if it is one that potentially attracts the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit (WTC).
34. The childcare element of the WTC is payable in respect of registered or approved childcare. The types of childcare that can potentially attract the WTC childcare element, and therefore also potentially attract the Childcare Grant, are set out at paragraphs 40-47.
35. The Childcare Grant also broadly mirrors the WTC childcare element in circumstances where the registered or approved childcare provider is a relative of the child or the childcare is considered to be compulsory education (see paragraphs 49-51).
36. Students who are potentially eligible for the Childcare Grant are:
- lone parents;
 - student couples with children; and
 - student parents with a partner on a low income.
 - The Childcare Grant is available in respect of an academic year in which the student incurs prescribed childcare charges for:
 - a dependent child who is under the age of 15 immediately before the beginning of the academic year; or
 - a dependent child who has special educational needs within the meaning of section 312 of the Education Act 1996 and is under the age of 17 immediately before the beginning of the academic year.
37. A child with special educational needs within the meaning of the Education Act 1996 is a child who has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him. A learning difficulty is defined in the Act as a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age or a disability that prevents or hinders a child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of his age in schools within the LA's area.
38. The definition of dependants' given at paragraph 22 (regulation 42(1)) also applies to the Childcare Grant.
39. The Childcare Grant is not counted as income by Jobcentre Plus or local authority Housing Benefit sections, when assessing a student's entitlement to income related benefits.

Qualifying childcare in England

Ofsted registered childcare

40. From September 2008, childcare providers who care for children aged under eight in England are no longer registered under the Children Act 1989, but are instead registered under the Childcare Act 2006. Ofsted operates two registers; the Early Years Register, which is compulsory for most childcare providers who care for children up to the end of the foundation stage (31st August after the child's fifth birthday) and the Ofsted Childcare Register, which is compulsory for most childcare providers who care for children from the end of the foundation stage to age seven.
41. Childcare providers who care for children aged eight and over, or who provide activity based care, or care in the child's own home for children of any age, are not required to be registered by Ofsted. However, since April 2007, they have been able to apply to be registered on the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register. Childcare offered by a provider on the voluntary Ofsted Childcare Register counts as qualifying childcare for the purposes of the Childcare Grant.
42. Registered childcare providers include registered childminders, nurseries, play groups, children's centres, holiday play schemes, sports, arts or language clubs and nannies. Registration requires providers to demonstrate that the premises, people and provision are all suitable for the delivery of childcare. Childcare providers registered by Ofsted have a registration number and are required to display their registration certificate on the premises.

Additional qualifying childcare in England

43. A student who incurs charges for the following types of childcare in England that are currently eligible for WTC purposes will also potentially be eligible for the Childcare Grant.
 - Childcare a school's governing body (or equivalent body) provides on school premises or on premises that are covered by the Ofsted inspection of the school (for example, a village hall), but the following rules apply to childcare provided by schools:
 - Childcare provided for children aged under three must be on the Ofsted Early Years Register.
 - Childcare provided for children aged five or over must be out of school hours.
 - If the child's school uses an external childcare provider, they must be on the Ofsted register appropriate to the child's age.
 - Childcare provided in the child's own home by a domiciliary care worker or nurse from an agency "registered" by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.
 - Care provided by an approved foster carer (the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer).

Qualifying childcare in Wales

44. An English-domiciled student who incurs charges for the following types of childcare in Wales is potentially eligible for the Childcare Grant.

- Care provided by childminders, nurseries and play schemes registered by the National Assembly for Wales through the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.
- Out-of-school hours clubs provided by a school on school premises or by a local authority.
- Childcare provided in the child's own home by a domiciliary care worker or nurse from an agency registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.
- Care provided by an approved foster carer (the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer).
- Childcare provided in the child's own home or if several children are being looked after, in one of the children's homes by a child carer approved under the Approval of Child Care Providers (Wales) 2007 Scheme.

Qualifying childcare in Scotland

45. An English-domiciled student who incurs charges for the following type of childcare in Scotland which is currently eligible for WTC purposes, will also potentially be eligible for the Childcare Grant.
- Care provided by childminders, nurseries and play schemes registered by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care.
 - Out-of-school hours clubs 'registered' by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care.
 - Care provided by an approved foster carer (the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer).
 - Childcare provided in the child's own home by (or introduced through) childcare agencies, including sitter services and nanny agencies registered by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care.

Qualifying childcare in Northern Ireland

46. An English-domiciled student who incurs charges for the following type of childcare in Northern Ireland which is currently eligible for WTC purposes, will also potentially be eligible for the Childcare Grant.
- Care provided by childminders, nurseries and play schemes registered by a Health and Social Services Trust.
 - Out-of-school hours clubs provided by a school on the school premises or by an Education and Library Board or 'registered' by the Health and Social Services Trust.
 - Care provided by an approved foster carer (the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer).
 - Childcare provided in the child's own home by a child carer approved under the Approval of Home Child Care Providers (Northern Ireland) 2006 Scheme.

Qualifying childcare outside the United Kingdom

47. An English-domiciled student who incurs charges for childcare provided under a Ministry of Defence accreditation scheme abroad which is currently eligible for WTC purposes, will also potentially be eligible for the Childcare Grant.

Where the childcare provider becomes registered or approved

48. Some students may use a childcare provider who is not registered or approved but then becomes registered or approved at some stage during the academic year. In such instances, the Childcare Grant may only be paid from the point at which the provider's application for registration or approval has been successful and their registration or approval confirmed.

Where the registered or approved childcare provider is the student's partner or a relative of the child

49. Childcare charges in respect of which an eligible student may qualify for the Childcare Grant will not include:
- charges incurred in respect of childcare provided by a relative of the child wholly or mainly in the child's home even if the relative is registered or approved;
 - charges incurred in respect of childcare provided by a relative of the child approved under the Approval of Child Care Providers Scheme in Wales or the Approval of Home Child Care Providers Scheme in Northern Ireland wholly or mainly in the relative's home where the care is usually provided solely or mainly in respect of one or more child to whom the provider is a parent or relative;
 - charges paid by the student to his partner in respect of childcare for his child or a child of his partner home even if the partner is registered or approved.

A relative of the child means a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister whether by blood, half-blood, marriage or affinity. Affinity means a person with a strong relationship to the child, for example someone in a parental position regarding their partner's children and includes step parents.

50. This broadly reflects the Working Tax Credit (WTC) position that a person who is the parent or relative of a child, or who has parental responsibility for a child, is not generally acting as a child minder when looking after that child. The Childcare Grant is not intended to pay for care that any parent or relative of a child might be expected to provide.

Compulsory education charges

51. Childcare charges in respect of which an eligible student may qualify for the Childcare Grant will not include charges that are considered to be compulsory education charges. The Childcare Grant is not intended to pay for costs related to compulsory education (school fees, for example) which again reflects the WTC position.

Audit of Childcare Grant applications

52. There is no facility on the single system for LAs/SLC to identify a selection of Childcare Grant applications for audit. LAs/SLC should consider a sample

check of applications, using a manual list of applications, to confirm that the childcare provider is registered or approved. It would be advisable to conduct such checks after the grant has been paid to avoid delaying any payment of Childcare Grant. However, if there are doubts or concerns about a provider, it is recommended that such checks are carried out prior to payment. The number of applications selected for audit will depend on the number of applications received, but a sample check of 10-15% of applications would be appropriate. The checks should involve confirming that the provider is registered or approved, the student's child is being cared for by that provider, the amount of care provided and the cost of the care. The process should also include checking that childcare has been provided for the whole period for which the student has received a Childcare Grant and that the student has not received a Childcare Grant for a period when they have not paid for childcare or for a period covered by a free early learning place (refer to the form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'). The Department expects LAs/SLC to pursue any application upon which there is a doubt about its veracity.

53. In carrying out the sample check, LAs/SLC will wish to confirm with the relevant body that the childcare provider detailed on the forms 'Childcare Grant Application Form' and 'Confirmation of childcare payments' is registered or approved. Ofsted took over the registration of new providers and the regulation of existing providers from 1 September 2001. In carrying out their sample checks, LAs/SLC should contact their local Children's Information Services (CIS) in the first instance to check the registration status of a childcare provider. Ofsted supply CIS with updated information on childcare providers on a daily basis. This will enable CIS to maintain an up-to-date list of registered childcare providers and their registration status, i.e. whether their registration status is current, cancelled or suspended.
54. When information is not easily forthcoming from CIS, or where there is concern or doubt about a provider's registration that the CIS cannot answer, LAs/SLC could contact the relevant Ofsted regional centre by calling the national help line on 0845 640 4040. The call will be automatically diverted to the closest regional centre.

Amounts of Childcare Grant

55. The Childcare Grant pays 85% of the actual cost of registered or approved childcare throughout the academic year, i.e. during term time, short vacations and the longest vacation. The maximum amounts of Childcare Grant payable are as follows.
 - For one dependent child, 85% of the actual cost of registered or approved childcare, paying up to a maximum grant of £148.75 per week (i.e. a maximum of 85% of £175 actual childcare costs). The maximum annual Childcare Grant for a student with one dependent child using childcare for the whole year is £7,735.
 - For two or more dependent children, 85% of the actual cost of registered or approved childcare, paying up to a maximum grant of £255 per week (i.e. a maximum of 85% of £300 actual childcare costs). The maximum annual Childcare Grant for a student with two or more dependent children using childcare for the whole year is £13,260.
56. The Childcare Grant pays 85% of actual childcare costs, but the amount of weekly Childcare Grant paid should not exceed £148.75 per week for one child or £255 per week for two or more children. For example:

Number of children in registered or approved childcare	Total weekly cost of childcare	Total amount of Childcare Grant per week
Student A – 1 child	£90	£76.50 (85% of actual childcare costs)
Student B – 1 child	£200	£148.75 (as the Childcare Grant pays 85% of actual costs of up to £175 per week)
Student C – 2 children	£120	£102 (85% of the actual childcare costs)
Student D – 2 children	£350	£255 (as the Childcare Grant pays 85% of actual costs of up to £300 per week)

Maximum Childcare Grant in the first and final week of the academic year

57. A student's entitlement to Childcare Grant is calculated on a weekly basis. A week begins on a Monday and ends on a Sunday. This reflects the requirements of regulation 45(6)(a). If a student claims a Childcare Grant in respect of a week that falls partly within and partly outside an academic year, the maximum grant payable is calculated by multiplying the weekly cap (£148.75 or £255 as appropriate) by the number of days of that week falling within the academic year and dividing by seven (regulation 45(6)(b)).
58. This means that if the student's academic year starts in the autumn and they claim a Childcare Grant in respect of the period from Tuesday 1 September to Sunday 6 September 2009, the maximum grant payable is £127.50 for one child or £218.57 for two or more children. If the student claims a Childcare Grant in respect of the period from Monday 30 August to Tuesday 31 August 2010, the maximum grant payable is £42.50 for one child or £72.86 for two or more children.
59. Students continue to receive 85% of their actual childcare costs during the first and final week of the academic year - to the maximum amounts stated above. LAs/SLC should note that there is no requirement to pro rata the maximum Childcare Grant payable in other weeks of the academic year even if a student uses childcare for part of a week.

Childcare Grants and retainer fees paid to childcare providers

60. Some childcare providers request a retainer fee to be paid by the student to retain a childcare place for the following term or academic year, even if the student is not using childcare for the period. As a retainer fee is part of childcare costs, the Childcare Grant may be used to pay for retainer fees charged by childcare providers. Childcare providers usually include the cost of meals they provide in their overall childcare cost. If a childcare provider makes a separate charge for the meals they provide during the periods of childcare, these may be paid as part of the Childcare Grant.

Assessing Childcare Grants where students' partner is an eligible student

61. The amount of Childcare Grant is reduced by one half if the eligible student's partner is also an eligible student (qualifies for support for a designated course) or holds a statutory award (see definition of statutory award) and account has been taken of the partner's dependants when calculating the partner's support or statutory award (regulation 47(5)).

Periods covered by the Childcare Grant

62. The grant for childcare costs can be paid from the first day of the academic year, provided that the student, whether a first year student or a continuing student, incurs childcare costs for the period from the beginning of the academic year. An illustrative example of the payments of the Childcare Grant over the academic year is shown in the following table. In this example the first day of term is taken to be 1st October and assumes the student pays for childcare every week during the academic year.

1 September 2009 – 4 July 2010	5 July 2010 – 31 August 2010 (long vacation)
85% of childcare costs for 44 weeks	85% of childcare costs for 8 weeks

63. The example above is based on a student claiming Childcare Grant for the long vacation and whose academic year begins on 1 September 2009. The Childcare Grant payments start on 1 September even though the first day of term one is 1 October 2009. The Childcare Grant in respect of the months of July and August 2010 is paid in advance with the third instalment of support. The grant for childcare costs incurred in September 2010 is paid in arrears with the first instalment of support in the following academic year.

Childcare Grant for final year students

64. The Childcare Grant is not payable to final year students for the period between the end of the course and the end of the academic year in which the course ends (regulation 45(5)). An illustrative example of the Childcare Grant payments to final year students over the academic year is shown in the table below. In this example the first day of term is taken to be 1 October 2009 and the final term of the course ends on 2 July 2010. The illustration assumes the student pays for childcare each week in the period given.

1 September 2009 – 2 July 2010
85% of weekly childcare costs for each week childcare is used

Students who have a partner with income

65. Some students with a partner in receipt of income may still receive a Childcare Grant but this depends upon the number of dependent children, the cost of the childcare, and the number of weeks that the childcare is used, as well as the level of the income of the partner (if treated as a dependant under regulation 42(1)).
66. The following table gives the income threshold under the dependants' grant means test for receiving £1 of Childcare Grant for students with a partner who has an income. The calculation is based on the assumption that the student is incurring the maximum childcare costs and using registered or approved childcare for 52 weeks. For students with lower childcare costs, and those using childcare for part of the year, a separate calculation should be carried out.

Number of dependent children	Maximum level of partner's income
One child	£13,849 per annum
Two children	£20,528 per annum

It should be noted that the maximum levels of income given above would in both cases pay £1 of Childcare Grant and the full PLA of £1,508. Income that exceeds the maximum levels given above reduces the amount of PLA £ for £.

Childcare Grant and early years education

67. All three and four year olds have been able to access a free, part-time early learning place since April 2004. Data from the January 2007 census confirmed that around 96% of three year olds and virtually all four year olds are now benefiting from some form of free provision. The free minimum entitlement consists of twelve and a half hours per week of early learning over 38 weeks a year. From September 2010 the free entitlement will be increased to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, and access made more flexible. Parents may arrange the early learning place entitlement to suit the needs of their children depending on the ability of the provider to deliver.
68. Local Authorities will provide funding to the early learning providers to enable them to make free places available to eligible children. Therefore, our advice is that the higher education Childcare Grant cannot be paid for a period covered by a free early learning place. The Code of Practice on the provision of free nursery education places for three and four year olds makes clear that early learning place providers should not charge parents up-front for an early learning place to be refunded at a later date.
69. However, providers can charge for services provided outside of the free entitlement – this is a private matter between parents and providers. These services usually take place before and/or after the early learning place and is sometimes referred to as wrap around or out of school care. The Childcare Grant may be paid to cover the cost of childcare charged to the student as long as the provider is registered or approved. Students should only include in their applications childcare for which they have to pay a childcare provider. If they include a free early learning place in their application, providers will be unable to confirm that the student has made payments.

Childcare Grant and Tax credits

70. Child Tax Credit (CTC) administered by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) provides income-related support for families with children. Students with children are entitled to make a claim. It is paid directly into the bank account of the person in the family who is mainly responsible for looking after the children. A person does not have to be in paid work to receive CTC. As long as they are 16 or over and responsible for one or more children, or a young person under age 20 in relevant education or approved training, they may be able to claim CTC. A person may qualify for a higher rate if they have a child under one or a child with a disability. If a student receives CTC, this does not affect their entitlement to the Childcare Grant.
71. Working Tax Credit (WTC) tops up the earnings of low paid working people whether or not they have children. To be eligible for WTC a person must usually:
- be aged 25 or over and work 30 hours or more a week
 - be aged 16 or over, have responsibility for a child or young person and work 16 hours or more a week; or

- be aged 16 or over, have a disability which puts them at a disadvantage in getting a job, satisfies either the 'qualifying benefit' test or 'fast track' rules, and works 16 hours or more a week.
72. WTC is made up of several elements, including:
- a disability element for working households where the worker has a disability; and
 - a childcare element, to help those with childcare costs.
73. The WTC childcare element can meet up to 80% of the cost of registered or approved childcare up to a maximum of £175 a week for families who pay childcare for one child and £300 a week for families who pay childcare for two children or more. The maximum WTC childcare element someone can receive is £140 a week for one child or £240 a week for two or more children, although the actual amount a family receives in WTC childcare element is subject to the family's gross income, (ensuring that the most help will go to people who need it most).
74. To qualify for WTC childcare element a lone parent must work at least 16 hours a week and, for couples, both members must work at least 16 hours a week (or one member of the couple must work at least 16 hours a week and the other member is incapacitated, an in-patient in hospital or in prison). Students who satisfy the entitlement rules for the childcare element of the WTC can choose either to claim the WTC childcare element or the Childcare Grant. They cannot claim the WTC childcare element if they or their partner are also receiving the Childcare Grant.
75. Similarly, regulation 45(3) of the Education (Student Support) (No 2) Regulations 2008 provides that an eligible student shall not be eligible for a Childcare Grant if the eligible student or their partner has elected to receive the childcare element of the WTC. This provision reflects the policy intention that an eligible student should not receive childcare support from the Childcare Grant and the WTC childcare element at the same time.
76. If a student indicates that they or their spouse/partner are in receipt of an award from the WTC and applies for a Childcare Grant under the Student Support Regulations, LAs/SLC may also consider using their powers under Schedule 3 to request evidence to confirm that the eligible student's or their partner's WTC award does not include the WTC childcare element. This should involve requesting that the eligible student produces a WTC award notification that should indicate if the student or their partner is in receipt of the WTC childcare element. If the student or partner is not in receipt of the WTC childcare element there will be no mention of it in the WTC award notice. This information should also help LAs/SLC determine the start/termination dates for Childcare Grant payments.
77. It is possible that a student or their partner's circumstances may change resulting in a request to receive the Childcare Grant instead of the WTC childcare element, or vice versa. There is no statutory bar within the Student Support Regulations or the Tax Credit Act preventing a student from changing the source of their childcare support. If they are receiving the WTC childcare element and they wish to change over to the Childcare Grant they should notify the Tax Credit Office and give the date when they want the WTC childcare element to cease. This should be the day before the Childcare Grant comes into payment. Parents will be issued with a new awards notice which can be used as evidence that the WTC award no longer includes the WTC childcare element.

78. LAs/SLC are asked to accept a self assessment from the student confirming that the student or their spouse/partner is no longer in receipt of childcare support through WTC in order to prevent unnecessary delays in payment of the Childcare Grant. Students may be assessed for a Childcare Grant from the first day after their last payment for childcare under the WTC.
79. For more information on tax credits:
- visit <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/tmatax-credits.shtml>;
 - call the Tax Credits Helpline (telephone 0845 300 3900); or
 - call the nearest HMRC Enquiry Centre (listed under 'HM Revenue & Customs' in the telephone directory).

Childcare Grants and students on work placements

80. Students are generally not eligible for a Childcare Grant in any academic year in which the periods of full-time study are in aggregate less than 10 weeks and where they are on a paid/unpaid placement for the rest of the year (regulation 38(5)). Some exceptions, set out in regulation 38(6), may apply. Students on work placements whose periods of full-time study in the academic year are 10 weeks or more may receive a Childcare Grant.

Childcare Grant applications from students studying at an overseas institution

81. Students attending an overseas institution as part of their courses will not generally be eligible for a Childcare Grant to cover childcare costs incurred abroad. The only qualifying overseas childcare providers are those approved under a Ministry of Defence accreditation scheme to approve providers who care for the children of personnel based overseas. Students requesting support for childcare provided abroad should be referred to their institution's Access to Learning Fund.

Parents' Learning Allowance (Regulation 46)

82. A Parents' Learning Allowance (PLA) of up to **£1,508**, subject to income assessment is available to students with one or more dependent children regardless of the age of the children. It can be paid whether or not student parents use registered or approved childcare.
83. The PLA is intended to cover some of the additional costs incurred by students with dependent children, such as higher travel costs, and books and equipment needed for the course. Students do not have to be using registered or approved childcare to be eligible for the Parents' Learning Allowance. PLA is not treated as income when students are assessed for income-related benefits, including Housing Benefit.
84. There is no requirement for a student to apply separately for the PLA. Provided they have indicated on the PN1 or PR1 forms that they have dependent children, there is no requirement for them to make any separate request to receive this grant (see also paragraph 88)
85. Subject to an assessment of income, the PLA will be paid to:
- a) Full-time students with dependent children who are assessed to receive at least £1 of Childcare Grant and/or £1 of Adult Dependants' Grant. Such students are entitled to receive the full amount of PLA (**£1,508**);

- b) Full-time students with dependent children who are eligible in principle for the Adult Dependants' Grant and/or the Childcare Grant but are not entitled to receive any payments of those grants because the income of their dependants is sufficiently high to offset them. After applying the dependants' net income against the Adult Dependants' Grant and the Childcare Grant, any remaining income is set against the PLA on a £ for £ basis;
 - c) Full-time students with dependent children who have no adult dependants and are not eligible for the Childcare Grant because they are not using registered or approved childcare. Dependants' net income is set against the PLA on a £ for £ basis after applying the applicable threshold (see paragraph 92).
86. If the aggregate amount of PLA determined is between £1 and £49 then the student will be entitled to a minimum amount of PLA payable of £50 (regulation 47(6)).
87. Where the eligible student has a partner who is also an eligible student and a dependent child who is wholly or mainly financially dependent on him and his partner together, the student and the partner may each receive the amount of PLA due after the application of the dependants' grant income assessment. The PLA entitlement should not be divided between the eligible students.

The dependants' grant income assessment

Assessment of dependants' income

88. The rules engine within the single system uses information provided by the student on PR1 and PN1 forms to determine the amount of Adult Dependants' Grant and PLA due. The system also displays a message to the LA/SLC assessor prompting them to check the system calculation and amend if necessary.
89. To determine a student's eligibility for dependants' grants (Adult Dependants' Grant, Childcare Grant and Parents Learning Allowance) it is necessary to calculate the dependants' net income, including income from the Working Tax Credit. Regulation 42(2) provides that a dependant's net income is his income from all sources for the academic year after income tax and social security contributions have been deducted. The following sources of income are disregarded under regulation 42(2):
- Any pension, allowance or other benefit paid by reason of a disability or incapacity to which the dependant is subject;
 - Child benefit payable under Part IX of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992;
 - Any financial support payable to a dependant by a local authority in accordance with regulations made under sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002;
 - Any guardian's allowance to which the dependant is entitled under section 77 of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992;
 - In the case of a dependant with whom a child being looked after by a local authority is boarded out, any payment made to that dependant in pursuance of section 23 of the Children Act 1989;

- Any payments made to the dependant under section 15 of and Schedule 1 to the Children Act 1989 in respect of a person who is not the dependant's child or any assistance given by a local authority pursuant to section 24 of that Act (such payments are commonly known as a residence order allowance);
 - Any child tax credit to which the dependant is entitled under Part I of the Tax Credits Act 2002.
 - **Higher Education Bursary**
90. Where the student receives maintenance payments under an agreement that expressly or implicitly requires that these payments are to be applied for the benefit of the student's child, this income should be treated as the child's income and taken into account in the dependants' grant income assessment. This might include maintenance payments received by the student under a court order, through the CSA or by way of a voluntary agreement.

Financial obligations incurred before the start of the course (Regulation 42(3))

91. Regulation 42(3) allows recurrent payments made by the student or his partner in respect of obligations incurred by the student before the start of the course to be deducted from the partner's net income where such obligations were reasonably incurred, which is for LAs/SLC to decide. They might include payments made under insurance policies, such as household insurance, contents insurance, medical insurance and life insurance, payments under a mortgage agreement (mortgage payments and mortgage endowments), council tax payments, rent payments, payments under a maintenance loan agreement, such as a Building Society home improvement loans and obligatory maintenance payments. However, LAs/SLC have the discretion to decide which types of recurrent payment to deduct, and this list is not binding but intended purely as a guideline as to what might be regarded as permissible items. If an LA/SLC considers that a lesser obligation could reasonably have been incurred in the circumstances, a correspondingly lesser sum may be disregarded. Where a partner is making payments in respect of an obligation for which payments are shared by the partner and the student, the full obligation (i.e. the amount being incurred by the student and the amount being incurred by the partner) should be taken into account.

Applying the dependants' income

92. The dependants' aggregated net income for the academic year less one of the following applicable thresholds (regulation 47(7)):
- **£1,159** for a student with no dependent children;
 - **£3,473** for a couple with one child;
 - **£4,627** for a couple with two or more children;
 - **£4,627** for a lone parent with one child;
 - **£5,792** for a lone parent with two or more children;
- reduces the student's entitlement to dependants' grants where applicable £ for £ in the following order (regulation 47(1)):
1. Adult Dependants' Grant;
 2. Childcare Grant; and
 3. Parents' Learning Allowance.

93. The dependants' aggregated net income less the applicable threshold is first applied to the Adult Dependants' Grant (if applicable). Any remaining income is then applied to the Childcare Grant (if applicable) and any remaining income is then applied to the PLA (if applicable). If the net income (less the relevant threshold applied) exceeds or equals the aggregate of the basic amounts of the grants for dependants, the amount payable for grants for dependants is nil (regulation 47(3)).
94. Regulation 47(6) provides that once the contribution has been applied, if the amount of PLA for which the student is eligible is between £1 and £49 the student will be entitled to a PLA of £50.

Example 1

A student has a spouse/civil partner with net income of £3,070 and two children under 15 with net income of £1,125 each. The childcare costs are £150 per week for the whole of the academic year.

Step 1: Establish dependants' net income.

Dependants	Income
Spouse/Civil Partner	£3,070
Child 1	£1,125
Child 2	£1,125
A. Total dependants' income	£5,320

Step 2: Choose the threshold which applies to the student's circumstances (regulation 45(7)).

Student's circumstances	Applicable threshold
B. 2 parents and 2 children	£4,627

Step 3: Calculate the dependants' residual income

A. Total dependants' income	£5,320
B. Applicable threshold	£4,627
Dependants' residual income (A - B)	£693

Step 4: Add together all the dependants' grants the student may be eligible to receive.

Grant	Amount
Adult Dependants' Grant	£2,642
Childcare Grant (85% of actual costs - 52 x £127.50)	£6,630
PLA	£1,508
Total	£10,780

Step 5: Calculate the amounts of dependants' grants to be paid

A. Total dependants' grants	£10,780
B. Dependants' residual income	£693
Amount of dependants' grant to be paid (A - B)	£10,087

Step 6: Breakdown of individual dependants' grants to be paid.

Grant	Amount
Adult Dependants' Grant (full grant reduced by contribution of £693)	£1,949
Childcare Grant (85% of actual costs - 52 x £127.50)	£6,630
PLA	£1,508
Total dependants' grant paid	£10,087

Example 2

A student has a spouse/civil partner with net income of **£11,017** and one child. The student uses registered or approved childcare for 40 weeks and the actual costs are £100 per week.

Step 1: Establish dependants' net income.

Dependants	Income
Spouse/Civil Partner	£11,017
A. Total dependants' income	£11,017

Step 2: Choose the threshold which applies to the student's circumstances (regulation 45(7)).

Student's circumstances	Applicable threshold
B. 2 parents and 1 child	£3,473

Step 3: Calculate the dependants' residual income.

A. Total dependants' income	£11,017
B. Applicable threshold	£3,473
Dependants' residual income (A - B)	£7,544

Step 4: Add together all the dependants' grants the student may be eligible to receive.

Grant	Amount
Adult Dependants' Grant	£2,642
Childcare Grant (85% of actual costs - 40 x £85)	£3,400
PLA	£1,508
Total	£7,550

Step 5: Calculate the amounts of dependants' grants to be paid.

A. Total dependants' grants	£7,550
B. Dependants' residual income	£7,544
Amount of dependants' grant to be paid (A - B)	£6

Step 6: Breakdown of individual dependants' grants to be paid.

Grant	Amount
Adult Dependants' Grant	Nil
Childcare Grant (85% of actual costs (52 x £127.50))	Nil
PLA	£6*
Total dependants' grant paid	£50*

*As the amount of PLA is between £1- £50, the amount of PLA to be paid is £50.

95. The total of the dependants' grant under regulations 44-46 is subject to the main income assessment. This means that any student contribution or household contribution is applied to the dependants' grants after being first applied, in the case of old system students, to any tuition fee support in the main income assessment (regulation 98 to 100).

Payment of grants for dependants

96. Regulation 105 provides for payments of grant for living and other costs to be made for periods of the year other than quarters. This function will not however be transferred to LAs in 2009/10, and so the guidance in the following paragraph stands.
97. Dependants' grants are paid in three instalments, each instalment being paid in the three quarters of the academic year that do not include the longest vacation. Where the first instalment of grant is paid in the first quarter of an academic year, the grant is payable in three instalments of 33% for the first quarter, 33% for the second quarter and 34% for the third quarter. Where the first instalment of grant is paid in the second quarter, it is paid in two instalments of 66% and 34% and where the first instalment is paid in the third quarter, the whole amount of grant for the academic year is paid in one instalment.

The number of dependants changes in an academic year

98. The number of a student's dependants may change during an academic year. When this occurs, the LA/SLC is responsible for determining who the student's dependants are for each of the three quarters for which the grant is payable (regulation 47(9)). The dependants' grants should be reassessed on a pro rata basis from the date the number of dependants changes.
99. The amount of grant for each quarter so determined is one third of the grant for the academic year, bearing in mind the 33%, 33%, 34% split described above. The amount of dependants' grant for the academic year is the aggregate of the amount of grant calculated for each of the three quarters (regulation 47(10)).

Travel Grants (Regulations 48-55)

100. For 2009/10, Travel Grants payable under regulation 48 in respect of expenditure incurred on travel expenses **during that academic year** is equivalent to the amount remaining after the first **£303** of that expenditure has been disregarded and subject to income assessment.
101. Some students claiming Travel Grants may undertake their journey by car. For the purpose of deciding the cost of the journey by car, it is recommended that LAs/SLC calculate the cost of the journey at the rate of **21p per mile**. This rate is based on the mid point range of AA motoring costs and includes an amount for wear and tear on the car. Some continuing students using their own car for travel may already be receiving a Travel Grant based on a higher mileage rate. In such cases, it is recommended that LAs/SLC pay that rate until the end of the course.
102. LAs/SLC have discretion to pay the grant in advance of the student incurring the expenditure. Information on processing Travel Grants on the single system can be found in the LA/SLC User Guide, Section 16. LAs/SLC are

required to manually calculate the amount of travel a student is entitled to claim for re-imburement and enter this in the appropriate field on the Assessment Summary Screen. The rules engine then applies the disregard to arrive at the amount to be paid.

Students attending courses in medicine and dentistry

103. Students attending courses in medicine and dentistry who are not eligible for means-tested bursaries or awards from the Department of Health are entitled to a grant to meet the costs of travel associated with their clinical training, where they have to attend at a hospital or other premises in the UK. This does not cover any attendance involving residential study.

Students attending an overseas institution

104. Students attending an overseas institution as part of their UK course during a qualifying quarter (whether obligatory or optional) are eligible for the grant to meet the costs of travel within and outside the UK for the purpose of attending the overseas institution, including necessary daily travel costs while abroad. A qualifying quarter is an academic quarter during which the student attends the overseas institution for at least 50% of that quarter. It would be reasonable to allow for three return journeys between the UK and the overseas institution during the academic year in such cases.
105. LAs/SLC should take account of the aggregate amount of eligible travel expenditure which a student is obliged to incur in order to attend his course, excluding any expenditure in respect of which a grant is payable under regulation 40. In this respect LAs/SLC should satisfy themselves that the method and class of travel are appropriate and that all costs are reasonably and necessarily incurred.
106. There may be cases where single parents who are on courses that involve study overseas have to take their child (or children) abroad with them. In such cases, the cost of the child's/children's fare from the UK to the overseas country may also be covered by the Travel Grant for up to three return journeys during the academic year.
107. Students attending an overseas institution as part of their course for at least 50% of any academic quarter may need to insure themselves against liability for the costs of medical treatment provided outside the United Kingdom. Regulation 53(a) provides that such students shall be eligible for additional Travel Grant equal to the amount incurred. This expenditure is NOT subject to the £303 disregard. For example, if a student claimed grant on a total expenditure of £320, comprising travel costs of £250 and medical insurance costs of £70, he would be eligible for a grant of £70. The £53 balance from the £303 disregard should not be used to reduce the grant for the medical insurance costs. LAs/SLC should satisfy themselves that the costs incurred for insurance are reasonable.
108. Such students may also have to meet the costs of items such as visas and medical costs (regulation 54 (c)). Where these are a mandatory condition of entry into the host country, they are legitimate costs incurred in order to attend the course and they can also attract grant. The amount payable in respect of insurance, visa and medical expenses should be entered in the appropriate field on the Assessment Summary Screen.

Students attending the University of London Institute in Paris

109. Students attending the University of London Institute in Paris (formerly known as the British Institute in Paris) are eligible for Travel Grants as if they were attending an overseas institution.

Case Studies: Travel Grant

Student A

Student A is attending an overseas institution for the first 9 weeks of the first academic quarter (01/09/09 - 31/12/09). The first academic quarter is 17 weeks and 2 days in length. Student A is therefore attending the overseas institution for more than 50% of the quarter. Student A is eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses which is subject to a £303 disregard.

Student B

Student B is attending an overseas institution in the first academic quarter (01/09/09 - 31/12/09). The first academic quarter is 17 weeks and 2 days in length. Student B attends the first 4 weeks overseas, the next 2 weeks in the UK and the following 5 weeks overseas. Student B is therefore attending the overseas institution for 9 weeks in total - more than 50% of the quarter. Student B is eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses which is subject to a £303 disregard.

Student C

Student C is attending an overseas institution for the first 7 weeks of the first academic quarter (01/09/09 - 31/12/09). The first academic quarter is 17 weeks and 2 days in length. Student C is not eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses as he is not attending the overseas institution for 50% or more of the academic quarter.

Student D

Student D is attending an overseas institution for the first 8 weeks of the first academic quarter (01/09/09 - 31/12/09) and the first 7 weeks of the second academic quarter (01/01/10 - 31/03/10). The first academic quarter is 17 weeks and 2 days in length and the second academic quarter is 12 weeks and 6 days in length. Student D is not eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses for the first academic quarter because he is not attending the overseas institution for 50% or more of the first quarter. However, he is eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses for the second academic quarter (subject to a £303 disregard) because he is attending the overseas institution for more than 50% of the second academic quarter.

Student E

Student E is attending an overseas institution for the last 5 weeks of the first academic quarter (01/09/09 - 31/12/09) and the first 5 weeks of the second academic quarter (01/01/10 - 31/03/10). The first academic quarter is 17 weeks and 2 days in length and the second academic quarter is 12 weeks and 6 days in length. Student E is not eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses for either the first academic quarter or the second academic quarter, as he is not attending the overseas institution in either quarter for 50% or more of the respective quarter.

Student F

Student F is attending an overseas institution for the first 8 weeks of the first academic quarter (01/09/09 - 31/12/09) and the first 6 weeks and 3 days of the second academic quarter (01/01/10 - 31/03/10). The first academic quarter is 17 weeks and 2 days in length and the second academic quarter is 12 weeks and 6 days in length. Student F is not eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses for the first academic quarter because he is not attending the overseas institution for 50% or more of the first quarter. However, he is eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses for the second academic quarter (subject to a £303 disregard) because he is attending the overseas institution for 50% of the second quarter.

Student G

Student G is attending an overseas institution for the first 10 weeks of the first academic quarter (01/09/09 - 31/12/09) and the first 10 weeks of the second academic quarter (01/01/10 - 31/03/10). The first academic quarter is 17 weeks and 2 days in length and the second academic quarter is 12 weeks and 6 days in length. Student G is eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses for both academic quarters because he is attending the overseas institution for more than 50% of the respective quarters. His Travel Grant award in respect of travel expenses will be subject to a single disregard of £303 for the academic year.

Student H

Student H is attending the University of London Institute in Paris for the last 10 weeks of the first academic quarter (01/09/09 - 31/12/09) and the first 3 weeks of the second academic quarter (01/01/10 - 31/03/10). The first academic quarter is 17 weeks and 2 days in length and the second academic quarter is 12 weeks and 6 days in length. Student H is eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses for the first academic quarter because he is attending the University of London Institute in Paris for more than 50% of the first academic quarter. However, student H will not be eligible for a Travel Grant in respect of travel expenses for the second academic quarter because he is not attending the University of London Institute in Paris for 50% or more of the second academic quarter. Student H has also taken out medical insurance to cover his period of study abroad. As he is attending an overseas institution for more than 50% of the first academic quarter, student H will be eligible for additional Travel Grant (not subject to a disregard) to cover the cost of his medical insurance for that quarter. LA's/SLC should satisfy themselves that the costs incurred for insurance are reasonable.

Administration

Administering Childcare Grant applications

110. LAs/SLC should also refer to the guidance on 'General Eligibility and Financial Assessment Administration' and the guidance chapter 'Change of Circumstances' which provides guidance on reassessments and stopping payments.
111. LAs/SLC need to assess an applicant's eligibility and entitlement to the Childcare Grant. The Childcare Grant and the PLA are paid to the most vulnerable students and therefore assessments should be carried out as

early as possible to ensure that support is paid to the student on the first day of term.

Processing Childcare Grant applications on the single system

112. The single system now has the facility to calculate the amount of Childcare Grant to which a student is entitled. Using the information on the CCG1 form, the LA/SLC enters the weekly childcare costs for term-time weeks and non term-time weeks, along with any exceptions to these standard amounts on the Childcare Estimates screen. The system will first apply a pro-rata to any amounts falling in non Monday to Sunday weeks (normally this will be for the first and last weeks of the academic year). Where amounts are entered in the 'Exceptions' section, no pro rata is applied. The system will then apply the 85% calculation. The LA/SLC still has the facility to override the automatic assessment of Childcare Grant if it is deemed appropriate.
113. If the student receives a Childcare Grant the assessment should be provisional until all his childcare costs for the academic year have been evidenced and his entitlement checked accordingly. At that point the entitlement may be finalised. This may only be possible at the start of the next academic year if childcare is required for the long vacation.
114. LAs/SLC should also consult the guidance chapter 'Change of Circumstances'. LA/SLC assessors should indicate that the assessment is provisional in one of two ways:
 - by selecting the Provisional flag on the Validate Evidence screen; or
 - in SFA or SC cases, by selecting the Childcare Grant drop-down menu at the bottom of the screen and selecting the 'provisional' option.
115. Where the LA/SLC assessor chooses to enter a manual override of the Childcare Grant he should use the system Notes facility to detail the basis of the calculation or reasons for the override. This should assist other LA/SLC staff and SLC Customer Services Officers when dealing with any student enquiries.
116. Annex 1 includes a summary timetable showing what actions LAs/SLC should take during the course of the academic year.

Informing students of the breakdown of dependants' grants

117. The financial notification letter produced under the single system details the breakdown of the various elements of the grants for dependants'. Students should be advised to show the financial notification letter to their institutions when apply for discretionary support from the Access to Learning Fund and to Jobcentre Plus and/or the local authority Housing Benefit section if applying for income related benefits.

Childcare Grant leaflets and forms

118. LAs/SLC will be sent supplies of the new booklet entitled 'Childcare Grant and other support for full-time student parents in 2009/2010' and the forms 'Childcare Grant Application Form' (CCG1) and 'Confirmation of childcare payments (CCG2). Where a student indicates on the PN1 or PR1 forms that they would like information on receiving the Childcare Grant, the LA/SLC user should raise a task 'Send Information Pack' see Annex 2. This task is to

be dealt with by the LA/SLC. The information pack should be sent to the student for them to complete and return to the LA/SLC.

Form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'

119. The student should apply for a Childcare Grant by completing a form 'Childcare Grant Application Form' (CCG1) and sending it to their LA/SLC. The applicant may provide an estimate of their likely childcare costs on their application form given that they are unlikely to be aware of their childcare requirements at the time of application. The applicant should be assessed on the basis of the estimated childcare costs provided on the CCG1.

Confirmation a childcare provider is registered or approved

120. Childcare providers are asked to complete Section 2 of the CCG1 confirming they are either a registered or approved provider. However, if a student has not found a childcare provider at the time of their application, Section 2 of the CCG1 may be left blank and a Childcare Grant may still be paid. The student will need to provide confirmation they are using a registered or approved childcare provider when they provide confirmation of their payments made to a childcare provider in the middle of term 1, using the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' (CCG2). On receipt of this form, the LA/SLC will need to assess whether they need to complete a reassessment of grant for the applicant.

Student does not return form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'

121. If a student does not return the CCG1, but has a dependent child, the LA/SLC should assess the student's entitlement to the PLA. If the applicant subsequently sends a CCG1 at least three months before the end of the academic year the LA/SLC will need to carry out and send a revised assessment.

Students who return form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'

122. LAs/SLC assessors who receive a CCG1 should consider the student's entitlement for the PLA and Childcare Grant. The LAs/SLC should base their assessments on the amounts the applicant has stated on the childcare application form, subject to the limits set out in the Student Support Regulations.

Confirmation of payments made to a childcare provider

123. Students are requested to provide evidence of payments made to their childcare provider on a termly basis, using form CCG2. Students are required to complete Section 1 of the form and then arrange for their childcare provider to complete Sections 2 and 3, confirming the payments received from the student each week during the period. Applicants must send a separate CCG2 to their LA/SLC by each of the following dates:
- **6 November 2009** – this form should confirm payments made each week between **1 September 2009 and 25 October 2009**.
 - **5 February 2010** – this form should confirm payments made each week between **26 October 2009 and 24 January 2010**.
 - **10 September 2010** - this form should confirm payments made each week between **25 January 2010 and 31 August 2010**. It is recommended that students in the final year of their courses and

students not using childcare during their long vacations are requested to return their CCG2 by **23 July 2010**.

124. If the applicant indicates in Section 4 of the CCG2 that their weekly childcare costs will change during the rest of the year, the LA/SLC should reassess the applicant's entitlement, and include the estimated childcare costs for the long vacation in the third instalment of grant. The applicant will need to confirm these costs at the beginning of the following academic year. If the applicant is uncertain whether they will need childcare for the long vacation, the LA/SLC can carry out a reassessment to include the long holiday period at a later date. If the reassessment is completed after the third instalment, the SLC will make an additional payment for the extra amount to the applicant via BACS, automatically.

Monitoring returns of 'Confirmation of childcare costs' forms

125. Currently, there is no facility (other than Notes) on the single system to indicate that the Childcare Grant is provisional pending receipt of a completed (CCG2) for Term 1, Term 2 and Term 3 and the long vacation. The system is able to provide a list of students in receipt of Childcare Grants. LAs/SLC should use the Notes facility on the single system to record when reminders are sent out. This will assist LAs and SLC Customer Service Officers when dealing with student enquiries. There is also no suite of Childcare Grant letters on the single system although this is being reviewed for future years. Instead LAs/SLC should continue to produce locally prepared letters, updating student support system records to show where this has been done. Suggested text is provided at Annex 2.

Student does not send confirmation of registered or approved childcare

126. Most students include details of their childcare provider at the time of their Childcare Grant application. However, if the student does not include details of their childcare provider on their application form and then does not provide confirmation he is using registered or approved childcare on the CCG2 form confirming childcare payments for his first term, the LA/SLC should send a reminder letter to the applicant. If the LA/SLC does not receive confirmation, the LA/SLC should reassess the applicant's entitlement to support as necessary, removing the Childcare Grant (payment of the PLA should continue). If the LA/SLC cannot complete this reassessment by the middle of December then they should stop all future payments of grant. The LA/SLC should then carry out a revised financial assessment showing the amount of maintenance loan and grant that the LA/SLC knows that the applicant is entitled to and send this to the applicant and the SLC. This reassessment should be completed as soon as possible so that the student continues to receive any other payment of grant he is entitled to. The SLC will then deduct the amount of grant the applicant has already received from the amount of grant shown on the latest assessment and pay the outstanding amount in two payments. If a student then provides confirmation of their childcare provision, LAs/SLC have the discretion to reinstate the Childcare Grant, depending on the student's reasons for failing to produce the evidence by the original deadline.

Student does not send confirmation of childcare payments

127. Students should send evidence of payments made to a childcare provider on form CCG2 by each of the dates in paragraph 123 above. LAs/SLC should consider sending reminder letters to student in advance of these dates (see Annex 2 and Annex 3). The dates for confirming childcare payments have

been selected to allow LAs/SLC time to make any adjustments to the next Childcare Grant instalment if the student has under or overestimated their childcare costs at the beginning of the year. There is also a greater incentive for students to return their form by the required dates given that their next Childcare Grant instalment will not be paid unless a completed CCG2 has been returned to the LA/SLC.

128. If a student has not returned their form CCG2 by the required dates, LAs/SLC should send a reminder letter advising that if the form is not received the student will lose their Childcare Grant and arrangements will be made to recover the Childcare Grant monies already paid (see Annex 2). If the applicant fails to confirm their childcare payments, the LA/SLC should reassess their entitlement to support as necessary, removing the Childcare Grant. However, payment of ADG and PLA may continue, once the Childcare Grant has been removed. (Any contribution previously applied to the Childcare Grant will now reduce the PLA.) A revised and finalised assessment should be sent as soon as possible so that the student can continue to receive any other payments of grant they are entitled to receive. LAs/SLC should take account of specific applicants' circumstances in deciding whether to remove the Childcare Grant entitlement if evidence is not received. If a student then provides confirmation of their childcare costs, LAs/SLC have the discretion to reinstate the Childcare Grant, depending on the student's reasons for failing to produce the evidence by the original deadline.

Finalising assessments in 2009/2010

Students not in receipt of a Childcare Grant during their longest vacation

129. Once a student has confirmed their actual childcare costs for the final term of academic year 2009/2010 and indicated they will not require a Childcare Grant for their longest vacation, the student should be reassessed and a revised support notification for 2009/2010 to show that the assessment is now final.

Students in receipt of a Childcare Grant during the longest vacation

130. Most academic years begin on 1 September and the longest vacation is the summer vacation. Childcare Grants for the summer vacation are paid up until 31 August, the payment covering the months of July and August. Childcare Grants in respect of September are paid with the first instalment of the following academic year's Childcare Grant.
131. If a student receives a Childcare Grant for the summer vacation they need to confirm their actual childcare costs by 10 September 2010, just after the start of the 2010/2011 academic year.

Students who have not confirmed final childcare costs for 2008/09

132. Where an LA/SLC receives a Childcare Grant application for 2009/10 and the student has not yet confirmed his/her childcare costs for the longest vacation in 2008/09, this should not delay or prevent assessments for 2009/10. Therefore, LAs/SLC are advised not to wait for confirmation of the long vacation childcare costs for 2008/09 before assessing Childcare Grant applications for 2009/10 but are advised to:
- assess the student for a Childcare Grant in 2009/10 and issue a Support Notification; and

- reassess the support on receipt of confirmed childcare costs for the longest vacation and issue a final Support Notification for 2008/09 showing the revised amount of dependants' grants.
133. The Support Notification for 2009/10 should include the amount of Childcare Grant for 2009/10 not taking into account any overpayment incurred during 2008/09.

Underpayments and overpayments of Childcare Grants

134. SLC will identify any overpayments from the revised 2008/09 notifications and deduct the overpayment from the 2009/10 grants, if the student is continuing on the same course. If the student is not continuing on the same course SLC will make separate arrangement for collection of the overpayment. If a student's Childcare Grant has been underpaid in 2008/09, the SLC will pay the outstanding amount. If the SLC receive a reassessment after the third instalment has been paid, the balance will be made to the student as opposed to adding the outstanding balance onto the following year's grant.

Annex 1

TIMETABLE FOR LAs/SLC

From March 2009 onwards	LAs/SLC to enclose the publications 'Childcare Grant and other support for full-time student parents in 2009/10 and the forms 'Childcare Grant Application Form' (CCG1) and 'Confirmation of childcare payments (CCG2) to students who have indicated they will incur childcare costs.
By 19 October 2009	Send a reminder letter to students. The letter will remind them they need to return the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' by 6 November 2009 .
By 9 November 2009	Send a 2nd reminder letter to students. The letter will remind them they need to return the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' or they will lose their Childcare Grant.
By 27 November 2009	LAs/SLC will need to reassess students as appropriate.
By 18 January 2010	Send a reminder letter to students. The letter will remind them they need to return the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' by 5 February 2010 .
By 8 February 2010	Send a 2nd reminder letter to students. The letter will remind them they need to return the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' or they will lose their Childcare Grant.
By 26 February 2010	LAs/SLC will need to reassess students as appropriate including childcare costs for the summer vacation.
By 5 July 2010 (or 16 August 2010 if receiving a Childcare Grant in the long vacation)	Send a reminder letter to students. The letter will remind them that they need to return the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' by 23 July 2010 (or 10 September 2010 if receiving a Childcare Grant in the long vacation).
By 23 July 2010 / 10 September 2010	Obtain confirmation of childcare costs for term 3 and the summer vacation. Finalise assessments for 2009/2010 if a Childcare Grant was received.

Annex 2

LETTERS FOR STUDENTS

Suggested text for letters to accompany the form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'

Thank you for your recent request for further information on the extra support available for parents who incur childcare costs. I am enclosing the publications 'Childcare Grant and other support for full-time student parents in 2009/10', together with an application form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'.

If after reading the enclosed publications, you wish to apply for the Childcare Grant, you should arrange for the form 'Childcare Grant Application Form' to be completed as soon as possible. You need to complete Section 1 and ask your childcare provider to complete Section 2 before returning the form to this office.

If you do not know your actual childcare costs, you may still apply by providing an estimate of your weekly costs on your application form. We will use your estimates to calculate your Childcare Grant payments but you will need to confirm your actual payments to a childcare provider on a separate form 'Confirmation of childcare payments'. If the amounts you actually pay are different to the estimates provided on your application form, your next payment of Childcare Grant will be adjusted. If you have not yet found a childcare provider, you may still make your application, leaving Section 2 of your application form blank. However, we will require confirmation on the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' that you are using a registered or approved childcare provider.

Suggested text requesting confirmation of payments to a childcare provider

Please could you arrange for the completion of the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments'. You need to complete Section 1 of the form and then ask your childcare provider to provide details of childcare payments received each week from **[insert the period for which evidence of childcare costs are required]**. If the amounts you actually paid are different to the amounts provided on your application form, your next payment of Childcare Grant will be adjusted. You should also complete Section 4 of the form if the weekly childcare costs provided in your application form 'Childcare Grant Application Form' will change in the remainder of your academic year.

You need to return the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' to this office by {insert applicable date}. Your next Childcare Grant payment will not be made unless you have returned a completed form. If your form is returned after this date, your next Childcare Grant payment may be delayed or, if you do not return your form, you will lose your Childcare Grant and any monies already received for childcare will be recovered.

Suggested text for letters reminding students of the need to confirm their childcare payments on the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments'

You may recall that I wrote to you on (insert date) asking you to confirm the payments made to your childcare provider between {insert dates} and {insert dates} on the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' which should have been returned to us by {insert date}. Our records show that we have not yet received confirmation of your childcare payments for this period. If you have not returned the enclosed form by (insert date) we will reassess your entitlement to support. This means that you will lose your Childcare Grant and any monies already paid to you for childcare will be recovered.