

Grants for Dependants and Grants for Travel

Higher Education Student Finance in England 2013/14 Academic Year

Aug 2014

Dear Colleague

HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT SUPPORT IN ENGLAND IN 2013/14: GRANTS FOR DEPENDANTS AND GRANTS FOR TRAVEL

Attached is the 2013/14 guidance on 'Grants for Dependants and Grants for Travel'.

This guidance is designed to assist with the interpretation of the Student Support Regulations as they stand at the time of publication. It does not cover every aspect of student support nor does it constitute legal advice. Whilst every endeavour has been made to ensure the information contained is correct at the time of publication, no liability is accepted with regard to the contents and the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 as amended by the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 remain the legal basis of the student support arrangements for the academic year 2013/14. In the event of anomalies between this guidance and the Regulations, the Regulations prevail. Please note the Regulations are subject to amendment.

Please note: some of the wording in paragraphs 84 and 91 of this guidance chapter have been updated to match current policy and processes.

New Paragraph 106 added for **Students on the ERASMUS Scheme Travel Grant**

Text has been added to paragraph 33 to clarify policy intent.

If you have any enquiries on this guidance, please contact:

Name	Telephone	E-mail
SLC Student Support Team, Darlington	0845 602 0583	ssin.queries@slc.co.uk

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Policy	4
General eligibility	4
Means-tested NHS bursaries	5
ITT courses	5
Sandwich courses and work placements	6
Students who become eligible during the course	6
Eligibility for grants for living and other costs where students withdraw or suspend study	7
Grants for dependants	7
Definitions for dependants' grants	7
Determining where financial dependence lies	9
Students aged 25 or over (or under 25 if they are married or in a civil partnership)	9
Students aged under 25 with a child and living with a partner (including a same sex partner)	9
Adult Dependants' Grant (Regulation 44)	9
Student's partner is an eligible student or holds a statutory award (Regulation 47(4))	10
Dependant ordinarily resident outside the United Kingdom	10
Childcare Grant (Regulation 45)	10
Qualifying childcare in England	12
Qualifying childcare in Wales	13
Qualifying childcare in Scotland	13
Qualifying childcare in Northern Ireland	14
Qualifying childcare outside the United Kingdom	14
Audit of Childcare Grant applications	15
Maximum Childcare Grant in the first and final week of the academic year	16
Childcare Grants and retainer fees paid to childcare providers	16
Assessing Childcare Grants where students' partner is an eligible student	16
Periods covered by the Childcare Grant	17
Childcare Grant for final year students	17
Childcare Grant, early years education and free childcare	17
Childcare Grant, Child Tax Credit and the Childcare Element of Working Tax credits	18
Parents' Learning Allowance (Regulation 46)	19
The dependants' grant income assessment	20
Assessment of dependants' income	20
Treatment of financial obligations incurred before the start of the course (Regulation 42(3)) – students who start a course BEFORE 1 August 2013 and are continuing in AY 2013/14	20
Treatment of financial obligations incurred before the start of the course (Regulation 42(3)) – students who start a course ON OR AFTER 1 August 2013	22
Payment of grants for dependants	25
The number of dependants changes in an academic year	25
Grants for Travel (Regulations 48-55)	26
Students attending courses in medicine and dentistry	26
Students attending an overseas institution	26
Students attending the University of London Institute in Paris	27
Students on the ERASMUS Scheme Travel Grant	27
Administration	29
Administering Childcare Grant applications	29
Processing Childcare Grant applications	29
Informing students of the breakdown of dependants' grants	30
Childcare Grant leaflets and forms	30
Form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'	30

Confirmation a childcare provider is registered or approved	30
Student does not return form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'	30
Students who return form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'	30
Confirmation of payments made to a childcare provider	31
Student does not send confirmation of registered or approved childcare	31
Student does not send confirmation of childcare payments	32
Finalising assessments in 2013/14	32
Students not in receipt of a Childcare Grant during their longest vacation	32
Students in receipt of a Childcare Grant during the longest vacation	32
Students who have not confirmed final childcare costs for 2012/13	32
Underpayments and overpayments of Childcare Grants	33
Annex 1	34
CHILD CARE GRANT TIMETABLE	34

Introduction

1. The Regulations referred to throughout this chapter are The Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011/1986) as amended by The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1653) (unless otherwise stated). This chapter explains the supplementary Grants for Dependants and Grants for Travel available to full time students under Part 5 of the Regulations (which covers grants for living and other costs). Refer also to section 16 of the LA Portal system user guide 'Managing Non-Loan Product Payments'
2. The following grants for living and other costs are payable under Part 5 of the Regulations:
 - Grants for dependants, consisting of Adult Dependants' Grant (ADG) (regulation 44), Childcare Grant (CCG) (regulation 45) and Parents' Learning Allowance (PLA) (regulation 46);
 - Grants for Travel (regulation 48 - 55);
 - Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) (regulations 40 & 41) which are covered in a separate guidance chapter 'Disabled Students' Allowances'; and
 - Maintenance Grant (regulations 56 to 60), Special Support Grant (regulations 61 to 65) and Higher Education Grant (regulations 66 to 67). 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.
4. Students who are personally eligible for student support under paragraph 9 of Schedule 1 (i.e. nationals of member states of the European Union) 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 it will not be possible 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 potentially 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 paragraph 35 onwards in respect of the Childcare Grant).

9. Full-time students who are prisoners and who commenced a course prior to 1st September 2012 should not generally be paid grants under Part 5 of the regulations with the exception, where applicable, of DSAs (regulation 109(8) & (9)). However, in exceptional circumstances SFE has discretion to award 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. Students who are prisoners for part of the academic year should generally have grants for living and other costs (except DSAs) calculated on a pro-rata basis to exclude any periods spent in prison.
10. No maintenance support (including grants for dependants) will be available to any prisoner (including an eligible prisoner) who starts a course on or after 1st September 2012. No Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) (including DSAs for postgraduate courses) will be available to any prisoner who starts a course on or after 1st September 2012. The responsibility to provide assistance for disabled prisoners will lie with the Prison Service.

Means-tested NHS bursaries

11. Under regulation 38(4)(a), students are not eligible for grants for living and other costs for any academic year during which they are eligible to apply 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 to apply for an NHS Bursary should be directed to the NHS Student Bursaries website at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/816.aspx 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

12. Students who began an ITT course before 1st September 2010 which:
 - is at least one academic year in length; and
 - involves periods of full-time attendance (including teaching practice) that are in aggregate six weeks or more in the academic year;are potentially eligible for grants for living and other costs. However, special rules apply to the Maintenance Grant and Special Support Grant (see the 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance chapter).
13. Students who began an ITT course before 1st September 2010 which:
 - is at least one academic year in length; and
 - involves periods of full-time attendance (including teaching practice) that are in aggregate less than six weeks in the academic year;are not eligible for grants for living and other costs (regulation 38(4)(b)), with the exception of DSAs (regulation 38(5)). There are separate rates

of DSAs for such students (regulation 41(4)). Students who do not qualify for a grant for living and other costs under regulation 38(4)(b) are eligible for a reduced rate maintenance loan which is not subject to income assessment (regulations 80(1)(b) & 80(2)(b)).

14. Where a student begins an ITT course on or after 1st September 2010, the student support package available will depend on whether the course is either full-time or part-time. Designated full-time first degree and postgraduate ITT courses of at least one academic year in length will attract the same support package as full-time non-ITT first degree courses. Designated part-time first degree and postgraduate ITT courses of at least one academic year in length will attract the same part-time support as non ITT first degree courses (see the guidance chapter for Part-time students) and DSAs as part-time non-ITT first degree courses.

Sandwich courses and work placements

15. 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 potentially eligible for grants for living and other costs, subject to income assessment.
16. Under regulation 38(6) 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(7)). Students who do not qualify for grants for living and other costs under regulation 38(6) are eligible for a reduced rate maintenance loan which is not subject to income assessment (regulation 80(1)(b) and 80(2)(b)).
17. Under regulation 38(7) students undertaking certain 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). See the 'Assessing Eligibility' guidance chapter.

Students who become eligible during the course

18. Under regulation 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.
19. In these circumstances the student will be potentially eligible for:
- Maintenance grant or Special Support Grant in any subsequent years of the course (and in the quarters following the acquisition of eligibility in the year the status was acquired, if the status was acquired within three months of the first day of the academic year).
 - Childcare Grant, Grants for Travel and DSA in any subsequent years of the course (and in all quarters following the acquisition of eligibility in the year the status was acquired).
 - Loans for living costs, Adult Dependants' Grant and Parents' Learning Allowance in any subsequent years of the course (and in the quarters following the acquisition of eligibility in the year the status was acquired, except the quarter in which the longest vacation falls);
20. However, such a student is not eligible retrospectively. That is, a student is not eligible for grants for living and other costs for quarters falling on or **before** the date eligibility is acquired due to an event listed above or for academic years of the course falling **before** the academic year in which he becomes eligible due to an event listed above. Also refer to the 'Assessing Eligibility' guidance.

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

21. Regulation 109(14) provides SFE 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 109(17) provides SFE 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.
22. If a student has withdrawn from their course, HEIs are expected to advise SFE of the withdrawal to allow for rescheduling of financial support and recovery of any overpayment.

Grants for dependants

23. The grants for dependants in 2013/14 under regulation 42-47 are:
- Adult Dependants' Grant;
 - Childcare Grant; and
 - Parents' Learning Allowance.

Definitions for dependants' grants

24. For the purposes of grants for dependants under regulations 42-47, 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 it is considered 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 it is considered 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.
25. 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).
26. The definition of 'dependant' means that an eligible student aged under 25 is not eligible for an Adult Dependants' 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 are no longer 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)(h)).
27. 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	
F/T Student	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)

28. The dependants' grant means test should be 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)

29. 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 (where applicable), 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)

30. In 2013/14, 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 24); or
 - an adult dependant of the student whose net income does not exceed **£3,796**.
31. The residual income of a partner (as determined by paragraph 6 of Schedule 4 of the Regulations), 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.

32. 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.

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

33. 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 and holds a statutory award. Regulation 42(1)(c) states that to be a dependant the student must: (a) not be an eligible student, and (b) not be in receipt of a statutory award. Both conditions must be satisfied. If one or the other are not satisfied then the student is not a dependant. So if a student is an eligible student, or the student is in receipt of a statutory award, or both, then the two criteria are not met. An eligible student who cannot apply for the ADG in respect of his or her partner because the partner is also an eligible student and 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 and 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

34. Where a student maintains a dependant who is ordinarily resident outside the United Kingdom, SFE 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)

35. 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. Details of qualifying childcare are set out in paragraphs 44 to 51. 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.

However, where the student does not provide details of a specific registered or approved childcare provider, the amount of childcare grant is limited to a maximum of £115 per week, or 85% of actual costs,

whichever is less (regulation 47(9)). Once a childcare provider has been identified and the student can provide estimates of the cost, the Childcare grant entitlement should be reassessed using the appropriate maximum amount for one or more children.

A student must apply separately for Childcare Grant. They should indicate on the PN1 or PR1 form that they wish to claim Childcare Grant and go on to complete a CCG1 within the appropriate time limits.

36. The Childcare Grant pays 85% of actual childcare costs, but the amount of weekly Childcare Grant paid cannot 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)

37. 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 WTC.
38. The childcare element of the WTC is payable in respect of registered or approved childcare. The types of childcare that can potentially attract the childcare element of WTC, and therefore also potentially attract the Childcare Grant, are set out at paragraphs 41 to 47.
39. The Childcare Grant also broadly mirrors the childcare element of WTC 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 53 to 55).
40. 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.
41. 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 (for definition of 'dependent' see paragraph 24); 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.
42. 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 local authority's area.
43. 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

44. Childcare providers who care for children aged under eight in England are registered under the Childcare Act 2006. Ofsted operates two registers; the Early Years Register (EYR), 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 General Childcare Register (GCR), which is compulsory for most childcare providers who care for children from the end of the foundation stage to age seven.
45. 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, they are able to apply to be registered on the voluntary part of the General Childcare Register. Childcare offered by a provider on the voluntary part of the General Childcare Register counts as qualifying childcare for the purposes of the Childcare Grant.
46. Registered childcare providers can 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. All 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

47. A student who incurs charges for the following types of childcare in England which are currently eligible for Working Tax Credit (WTC) purposes will also potentially be eligible for the Childcare Grant.
- Childcare that takes place on school premises or on other premises that may be inspected as part of an inspection of a school by Ofsted or by the equivalent inspection body appointed by the Secretary of State to inspect certain independent schools:

- Childcare provided for children aged under **five** 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" with the Care Quality Commission (under the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002).
- Care provided by an approved foster carer (the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer) who is also registered with Ofsted either on the EYR or the GCR. (Please note 'an approved foster carer' under the Fostering Services Regulations does not replace the requirement for foster carers who look after children, who are not their foster children, to register with Ofsted as a childcare provider on either the EYR or the GCR. This is in line with the tax credits legislation which provides support for childcare costs only in circumstances where the foster carer is registered with Ofsted.)

Qualifying childcare in Wales

48. 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 (under the Domiciliary Care Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2004).
 - Care provided by an approved foster carer, the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer. The foster carer must be registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales if the child is under the age of 8, or approved under the approval of Child Care Providers (Wales) Scheme, if the care is in the child's home and the child is under the age of 16.
 - 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

49. 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 Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS).
- Out-of-school hours clubs 'registered' by SCSWIS.
- Care provided by an approved foster carer or a kinship carer, but the childcare must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer. The foster carer must be registered with SCSWIS as a childminder or a daycare provider.
- Childcare provided in the child's own home by (or introduced through) childcare agencies, including sitter services and nanny agencies registered by SCSWIS.

Qualifying childcare in Northern Ireland

50. 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, - but the care must be for a child who is not being fostered by the foster carer. The foster carer must be registered with the Health and Social Services Trust if the child is under the age of 12, or approved under the Approval of Home Child Care Providers (Northern Ireland) Scheme, if the care is in the child's home and the child is under the age of 16.
 - 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

51. 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 the Ministry of Defence accreditation scheme, which is currently eligible for WTC purposes. The scheme approves providers who care for the children of personnel based overseas. Students requesting support for any other childcare provided abroad should be referred to their institution's Access to Learning Fund.

Where the childcare provider becomes registered or approved

52. 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

53. 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.

54. This broadly reflects the position of the childcare element of WTC 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 'childminder' 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. (Please note that tax credit legislation does not regulate whether someone is a 'childminder'. This is the remit of the Childcare Act 2006 and equivalent legislation in the devolved administrations. The WTC childcare regulations merely reflect the position of this legislation.)

Compulsory education charges

55. 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

56. Although there is presently no facility on the system to identify a selection of Childcare Grant applications for audit, a sample check of 10-15% of applications will be carried out using a manual list of applicants. The checks will involve the amount of care provided and the cost of the care. The process will 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'). Where there is any doubt about the veracity of an application for Childcare Grant, this will be investigated further.

57. When carrying out the sample check, it will be confirmed with the relevant body that the Childcare Provider (CCP) detailed on the forms 'Childcare Grant Application Form' and 'Confirmation of Childcare payments' is registered or approved. The local Family Information Services (FIS) should be contacted to confirm the registration status of a childcare provider. It should be noted that, under the Childcare Act 2006, new registration requirements were introduced for all childcare providers from September 2008. Ofsted supply FIS with updated information on childcare providers on a daily basis. This will enable FIS 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.

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

58. 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)).
59. This means that if the student's academic year starts in the autumn and they claim a Childcare Grant in respect of Sunday 1st September 2013, (1 day) the maximum grant payable is £21.25 for one child or £36.43 for two or more children. If the student claims a Childcare Grant in respect of the period from Monday 25th August to Saturday 30th August 2014, (6 days) the maximum grant payable is £127.50 for one child or £218.57 for two or more children.
60. 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. 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

61. 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

62. The amount of Childcare Grant is reduced by one half if the eligible student's partner is also an eligible student or holds a 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

63. The Childcare Grant 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 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 st September 2013 – 5 th July 2014	6 th July 2014 – 31 st August 2014 (long vacation)
85% of childcare costs for 44 weeks	85% of childcare costs for 8 weeks

64. The example above is based on a student claiming Childcare Grant for the long vacation and whose academic year begins on 1st September 2012. Childcare Grant entitlement starts from 1st September even though the first day of term one is 1st October 2013. The Childcare Grant in respect of the months of July and August 2014 is paid in advance with the third instalment of support. The grant for childcare costs incurred in September 2014 is paid in arrears with the first instalment of support in the following academic year.

Childcare Grant for final year students

65. 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 1st October 2013 and the final term of the course ends on 27th June 2014. The illustration assumes the student pays for childcare each week in the period given.

1 September 2013 – 27 June 2014
85% of weekly childcare costs for each week childcare is used

Childcare Grant, early years education and free childcare

66. Students cannot receive Childcare Grant for any childcare that is provided free of charge and should only include in their applications childcare for which they have to pay a childcare provider.
67. Additionally, all three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours a week of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year from 1 September, 1 January or 1 April following their 3rd birthday until they reach compulsory school age (the beginning of the school term following their 5th birthday).
68. Children can take up their free nursery education place in a variety of Early Years settings (maintained nursery schools and nursery classes, independent schools, playgroups, day nurseries, pre-schools and with registered or accredited childminders). In order to deliver free nursery education places early years providers must be registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register and deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.
69. Local Authorities provide funding to deliver free nursery education places for eligible children. Although the Childcare Grant cannot be paid for any period covered by a free nursery education place, parents may choose to

purchase additional hours of childcare either at the same provider where they access their free nursery education place or at a different provider. Childcare Grant can be paid to cover the cost of additional childcare purchased in addition to the free entitlement.

Childcare Grant, Child Tax Credit and the Childcare Element of Working Tax credits

70. Child Tax Credit (CTC) is administered by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and provides income-related support for families with children. If a student receives CTC, this does not affect their entitlement to the Childcare Grant.

Working Tax Credit (WTC) tops up the earnings of low paid working people whether or not they have children, and is made up of several elements, for example a disability element, a childcare element (i.e. the childcare element of Working Tax Credit) etc. A student cannot receive Childcare Grant at the same time as receiving the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. (Other elements of WTC do not preclude a student from claiming Childcare Grant.)

71. The childcare element of WTC can meet up to 70% of the cost of registered or approved childcare up to a maximum cost 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 amount of childcare element of WTC someone can receive is £122.50 a week for one child or £210 a week for two or more children, although the actual amount a family receives in childcare element of WTC will vary as it is subject to the family's gross income.
72. Students who satisfy the entitlement rules for the childcare element of the WTC can choose either to claim the childcare element of WTC or the Childcare Grant. Regulation 45(3) of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 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.
73. 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, evidence must be requested to confirm that the eligible student's (or their partner's) WTC award does not include the childcare element of WTC. The eligible student should be asked to produce a WTC award notification which should indicate whether the student or their partner is in receipt of the childcare element of WTC. This information should also help determine the start/termination dates for Childcare Grant payments.
74. 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 childcare element of WTC, 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 childcare element of WTC 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 payment of the childcare element of WTC 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 childcare element of WTC.

75. A declaration from the student confirming that the student or their spouse/partner is no longer in receipt of childcare support through WTC should be accepted in order to prevent unnecessary delays in payment of the Childcare Grant, but must be subsequently confirmed. Students may be assessed for a Childcare Grant from the first day after their last payment for childcare under the WTC.
76. 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).

Parents' Learning Allowance (Regulation 46)

77. A Parents' Learning Allowance (PLA) of up to **£1,508** is available to students with one or more dependent children regardless of the age of the children. It is income assessed and can be paid whether or not student parents use registered or approved childcare.
78. 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. PLA is not treated as income when students are assessed for income-related benefits, including Housing Benefit.
79. 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.
80. 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 potentially eligible for the Adult Dependants' Grant and/or the Childcare Grant but do not receive these grants because the income of their dependants is sufficiently high to offset them. After applying the dependants' income (as specified in paragraph 84 below) 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' income (as specified in per paragraph 84 below) is set against the PLA on a £ for £ basis after applying the applicable disregard (see paragraph 91).
81. If the aggregate amount of PLA determined is more than 1 pence but less than £50 then the student will be entitled to a minimum amount of PLA payable of £50 (regulation 47(6)).
82. 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

83. The system uses information provided by the student on their application to determine the amount of Adult Dependants' Grant and Parents' Learning Allowance due. The system also displays a message to the SFE assessor prompting them to check the system calculation and amend if necessary.
84. 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' income. From AY 2013/14, income of partners and adult dependants used in the dependants' grants income assessment is the gross taxable income from all sources for the prior financial year, minus certain allowable deductions, i.e. the residual income as defined in regulation 42 (1) (gd). For child dependants the net income in the prior financial year is used. Estimates of net income (regulation 42(2)) in the current academic year are no longer used in the dependants' grant income assessment. (However, they are still used where adult or child dependency is being established.) This change applies to all new and continuing students who apply for dependants' grants in AY 2013/14.
85. To ensure that students are not disadvantaged where income has fallen since the prior financial year partners and /or dependants whose income in the current financial year (i.e. the financial year which begins immediately before the start of the current academic year) has fallen by **15%** or more will be able to request that dependants' grants are assessed on an estimate of income for the current financial year instead.
86. 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.

Treatment of financial obligations incurred before the start of the course (Regulation 42(3)) – students who start a course BEFORE 1 August 2013 and are continuing in AY 2013/14

87. Regulation 42(3) allows recurrent payments made by the student or his partner in respect of obligations incurred by the student to be deducted from the partner's income, where the student is continuing in AY 2013/14 on a course which they started before 1 August 2013. These obligations must be classed as a recurrent payment made by the student or partner, be reasonably incurred and must have commenced before the start of the student's course. Each case must be individually assessed and be considered on its own merits. The following examples are not binding but are intended purely as a guideline as to what items might or might not be regarded as deductible.

Deductible items might include -

- Mortgage payments and mortgage endowments
- Rent payments
- Council tax payments
- Insurance policies (such as household insurance, contents insurance, medical insurance, life insurance and automotive insurance)
- Obligatory maintenance payments
- Private Pension Contributions and Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs)
- Subscriptions for which the recipient claims tax relief

SFE would ordinarily consider both Loan and HP agreements, with no maximum monetary limit, for the following:

- Travel, including; Automotive Transportation, primarily a car or motorcycle, with cases also being considered for business related automotive transportation. Other examples might be a bicycle, travel pass, mobility transportation or car repairs. Automotive insurance will also be considered where this involves recurrent payments. One-off payments will not be considered in this respect.
- Home improvements, specifically; essential home repairs, essential home improvements due to disability or impaired mobility.

SFE would **not** ordinarily consider Loan and HP agreements for the following:

- Holidays
- Furniture
- Electrical equipment/white goods
- Home conversions e.g. extensions
- Cosmetic surgery
- Debt consolidation
- Christmas costs

Utility bills, credit and store card payments will not count as deductible items.

In all cases where loan or HP repayments are being considered the applicant should be asked to state, in writing, the amount of the loan or HP, the start and end date for repayments, the amount of the repayments, the persons named in the loan or HP agreement and the reason for taking out the loan or HP. The applicant must also provide a copy of the original loan or HP agreement and evidence of the recurrent payments.

If it is considered that a lesser obligation could reasonably have been incurred in the circumstances, a correspondingly lesser sum may be deducted. 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 deducted.

Should an assessor conclude that the applicant's circumstances need to be considered further then the case should be escalated to an internal decision group.

The standard disregards based on family circumstances that are applied for all students applying for dependants' grants who started a course before 1 August 2013 are shown below:

DEPENDANTS	DISREGARDED INCOME
	Student is continuing a course which started before AY 2013/14
Student has no dependent child	£1,159
Student is not a lone parent and has one dependent child	£3,473
Student is not a lone parent and has more than one dependent child	£4,627
Student is a lone parent and has one dependent child	£4,627
Student is a lone parent and has more than one dependent child	£5,792

Treatment of financial obligations incurred before the start of the course (Regulation 42(3)) – students who start a course ON OR AFTER 1 August 2013

88. Students who start their course on 1 August 2013 or after will **not** have any previously incurred financial obligations taken into account when calculating the amount of support due to them. The standard disregards based on family circumstances that are applied for all students applying for dependants' grants have been increased for students starting a course on or after 1 August 2013. The new disregards are shown in the table below, and must only be used for students who start their course on or after 1 August 2013.

DEPENDANTS	DISREGARDED INCOME
	Student starts course in AY 2013/14
Student has no dependent child	£6,159

Student is not a lone parent and has one dependent child	£8,473
Student is not a lone parent and has more than one dependent child	£9,627
Student is a lone parent and has one dependent child	£9,627
Student is a lone parent and has more than one dependent child	£10,792

Applying the dependants' income

89. The dependants' aggregated income for the prior financial year less one of the applicable disregards shown in the table (regulation 47(7)) 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.
90. The dependants' aggregated income less the applicable disregard 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 income (less the relevant disregard 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)).
91. Regulation 47(6) provides that once the contribution has been applied, if the amount of PLA for which the student is eligible is £1 or more but less than £50 the student will be entitled to a PLA of £50.

Example 1

A student is continuing on a course which began before 1 August 2013. The student has a spouse/civil partner with residual income in the prior financial year of £6,000 and two children under 15 with net income in the prior financial year of £1,125 each. The student has reasonable and ongoing financial obligations of £2,000 in the current academic year. The childcare costs are £150 per week for the whole of the academic year.

Step 1: Establish dependants' aggregate income.

Dependants	Income
Spouse/Civil Partner	£6,000
Child 1	£1,125
Child 2	£1,125
A. Total dependants' income	£8,250

Step 2: Choose the disregard which applies to the student's circumstances (regulation 47(7)).

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

Step 3: Calculate the dependants' remaining income

A. Total dependants' income	£8,250
B. Financial obligations	£2,000
C. Applicable disregard	£4,627
Dependants' remaining income (A - B -C)	£1,623

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
Parents' Learning Allowance	£1,508
Total	£10,780

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

A. Total dependants' grants	£10,780
B. Dependants' remaining income	£1,623
Amount of dependants' grant to be paid (A - B)	£9,157

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

Grant	Amount
Adult Dependants' Grant (full grant reduced by contribution of £1,623)	£1,019
Childcare Grant (85% of actual costs - 52 x £127.50)	£6,630
PLA	£1,508
Total dependants' grant paid	£9,157

Example 2

A student starts a new course in AY 2013/14. The student has a spouse/civil partner with residual income in the prior financial year of **£11,017** and one child who has no income. The student uses registered or approved childcare for 40 weeks and the actual costs are £100 per week.

Step 1: Establish dependants' aggregate income.

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

Step 2: Choose the disregard which applies to the student's circumstances (regulation 47(7)).

Student's circumstances	Applicable disregard
B. 2 parents and 1 child	£8,473

Step 3: Calculate the dependants' remaining income.

A. Total dependants' income	£11,017
B. Applicable disregard	£8,473
Dependants' remaining income (A-B)	£2,544

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' remaining income	£2,544
Amount of dependants' grant to be paid (A - B)	£5,006

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

Grant	Amount
Adult Dependants' Grant	£98
Childcare Grant (85% of actual costs (40x£85))	£3,400
PLA	£1,508
Total dependants' grant paid	£5,006

92. The total of the dependants' grant under regulations 44-46 is subject to the main income assessment. This means that any 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 99 to 106).

Payment of grants for dependants

93. 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

94. The number of a student's dependants may change during an academic year. When this occurs, it is necessary to determine who the student's dependants are for each of the three quarters for which the grant is payable (regulation 47(9)).

95. 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)).

Grants for Travel (Regulations 48-55)

96. For 2013/14, a Grant for Travel 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.
97. Some students claiming a Grant for Travel may undertake their journey by car. For the purpose of deciding the cost of the journey by car, a rate of **28p per mile** should be used. This rate is based on the mid point range of AA motoring costs and includes an amount for wear and tear on the car.
98. SFE has discretion to pay the grant in advance of the student incurring the expenditure. The travel expenses which a student can claim for must be calculated manually and entered in the appropriate field on the Assessment Summary Screen. The system then applies the disregard to arrive at the amount to be paid.

Students attending courses in medicine and dentistry

99. 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

100. 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.
101. Account should be taken 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. SFE assessors must be satisfied that the method and class of travel are appropriate and that all costs are reasonably and necessarily incurred.
102. 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 Grants for Travel for up to three return journeys during the academic year.

103. 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 provides that such students shall be eligible for additional Grants for Travel 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. SFE assessors must be satisfied that the costs incurred for insurance are reasonable.
104. Such students may also have to meet the costs of items such as visas and medical costs (regulation 54 (b) & (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. Where vaccinations are strongly recommended (including high risk) by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office these would be eligible for payment. The amount payable in respect of insurance, visa and medical expenses should be entered in the appropriate field on the Assessment Summary Screen. The expenditures described in Regulation 54 are also subject to the calculation in regulation 53.

Students attending the University of London Institute in Paris

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

Students on the ERASMUS Scheme Travel Grant

106. Where ERASMUS students meet the eligibility criteria for travel grant under regulation 52, they shall be eligible for a grant equal to such reasonable expenditure which they are obliged to incur within or outside the United Kingdom for the purpose of attending, as part of their course, an overseas higher education institution or undertaking a work placement overseas or a combination of both. The travel grant is therefore available for all eligible ERASMUS students undertaking study, work or combined work and study periods overseas as part of their course. The first £303 of such expenditure is disregarded when determining the amount of travel grant due.

Case Studies: Grants for Travel

Student A

Student A is attending an overseas institution for the first 9 weeks of the first academic quarter (01/09/13 - 31/12/13). 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 Grant for Travel 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 (01/09/13 - 31/12/13). 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 Grant for Travel 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 (01/09/13 - 31/12/13). The first academic quarter is 17 weeks and 2 days in length. Student C is not eligible for a Grant for Travel 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 (01/09/13 - 31/12/13) and the first 7 weeks of the second academic quarter (01/01/14 - 31/03/14). 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 Grant for Travel 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 Grant for Travel 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 (01/09/13 - 31/12/13) and the first 5 weeks of the second academic quarter (01/01/14 - 31/03/14). 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 Grant for Travel 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 (01/09/13 - 31/12/13) and the first 6 weeks and 3 days of the second academic quarter (01/01/14 - 31/03/14). 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 Grant for Travel 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 Grant for Travel 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 (01/09/13 - 31/12/13) and the first 10 weeks of the second academic quarter (01/01/14 - 31/03/14). 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 Grant for Travel 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 Grant for Travel 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 (01/09/13 - 31/12/13) and the first 3 weeks of the second academic quarter (01/01/14 -31/03/14). 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 Grant for Travel 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 Grant for Travel 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 Grants for Travel (not subject to a disregard) to cover the cost of his medical insurance for that quarter. SFE assessors must be satisfied that the costs incurred for insurance are reasonable.

Administration

Administering Childcare Grant applications

107. Refer also 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.

Processing Childcare Grant applications

108. The system has the facility to calculate the amount of Childcare Grant to which a student is entitled. Using the information on the CCG1 form, the weekly childcare costs for term-time weeks and non term-time weeks should be entered, 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 in 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. There is a facility to override the automatic assessment of Childcare Grant should this be deemed appropriate. Any manual override of the automatic Childcare Grant assessment should be fully explained on the system Notes facility to assist other staff when dealing with student enquiries.
109. If the student receives a Childcare Grant the assessment should be provisional until all his childcare costs for the academic year have been confirmed 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.
110. It can be indicated that the assessment is provisional by selecting the Provisional flag on the Validate Evidence screen.

111. Annex 1 provides a summary 'Childcare Grant Timetable' showing what actions need to be taken during the course of the academic year.

Informing students of the breakdown of dependants' grants

112. The financial entitlement letter details the breakdown of the various elements of the grants for dependants'. Students should be advised to show the financial entitlement letter to their institutions when applying 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

113. The booklet entitled 'Childcare Grant and other support for full-time student parents in 2013/14' and the forms 'Childcare Grant Application Form' (CCG1) and 'Confirmation of childcare payments (CCG2)' can be downloaded from the 'Directgov' website. Where a student indicates on the PN1 / PR1 forms or online application that they want to apply for the Childcare Grant, a task will be raised - 'Send Information Pack' (see Annex 2). The information pack will then be sent to the student for them to complete and return.

Form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'

114. The student should apply for a Childcare Grant by completing a form 'Childcare Grant Application Form' (CCG1) and sending it to SFE. The applicant may provide an estimate of their likely childcare costs on their application form even if they do not know 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

115. Childcare providers are asked to complete Section 2 of the CCG1 confirming that they are registered or approved. 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. A student who does not name their childcare provider on the CCG1 will be subject to a lower childcare costs cap of £115 per week (see paragraph 35 above). Such students should provide details of their childcare provider as soon as possible or at the latest when they provide confirmation of the payments made to a childcare provider, using the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' (CCG2). On receipt of the CCG2, the applicants grant entitlement may need to be reassessed.

Student does not return form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'

116. If a student does not return the CCG1 but has a dependent child, the student's entitlement to the PLA can still be assessed. If the applicant subsequently sends a CCG1 no later than the end of the ninth month of the academic year in respect of which it is submitted a revised assessment must be carried out and issued.

Students who return form 'Childcare Grant Application Form'

117. Where a CCG1 is returned, the student's entitlement to the Childcare Grant should be based on the childcare costs the applicant has stated on

the application form, subject to the limits set out in the Student Support Regulations.

Confirmation of payments made to a childcare provider

118. 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 SLC by each of the following dates if the course started in September:
- **1 November 2013** – this form should confirm payments made each week between **1 September 2013 and 20 October 2013**
 - **31 January 2014** – this form should confirm payments made each week between **21 October 2013 and 19 January 2014**.
 - **12 September 2014** - this form should confirm payments made each week between **20 January 2014 and 31 August 2014**. 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 **18 July 2014**.

Applicants must send the separate CCG2 to SFE by each of the following dates if the course started in January:

- **14 March 2014** – this form should confirm payments made each week between **1 January 2014 and 2 March 2014**.
 - **13 June 2014** – this form should confirm payments made each week between **3 March 2014 and 1 June 2014**.
 - **16 January 2015** – this form should confirm payments made each week between **2 June 2014 and 31 December 2014**.
119. If the applicant indicates in Section 4 of the CCG2 that their weekly childcare costs will change during the rest of the year, their entitlement should be reassessed. Estimated childcare costs for the long vacation should be included 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, a reassessment to include the long holiday period should be carried out at a later date. If the reassessment is completed after the third instalment, an additional payment for the extra amount should be made to the applicant via BACS, automatically.

Student does not send confirmation of registered or approved childcare

120. Childcare Grant is only paid in respect of childcare provided by registered or approved childcare providers. Most students include details of their childcare provider when submitting the Childcare Grant application (CCG1). However, if the student does not include details of their childcare provider on their application (whether online or via CCG1 form) they will be subject to a lower costs cap and must supply this required information when confirming the details on the CCG2.

Student does not send confirmation of childcare payments

121. Students should send evidence of payments made to a childcare provider on form CCG2 by each of the dates in paragraph 117 above. Reminder letters would normally be sent to the student in advance of these dates. The dates for confirming childcare payments have been selected to allow 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 SFE.
122. If a student has not returned their CCG2 form by the required dates, a re – assessment of the Childcare Grant should happen. Arrangements should be made to recover any overpayment of 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. A notification of the new entitlement will be automatically sent followed by a system generated overpayment letter where applicable, If a student subsequently provides confirmation of their childcare costs, the Childcare Grant can be reinstated, depending on the student's reasons for failing to produce the evidence by the original deadline.

Finalising assessments in 2013/14

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

123. Once a student has confirmed their actual childcare costs for the final term of academic year 2013/14 and indicated they will not require a Childcare Grant for their longest vacation, the student should be reassessed and a revised support notification for 2013/14 to show that the assessment is now final.

Students in receipt of a Childcare Grant during the longest vacation

124. Most academic years begin on 1st 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.
125. If a student receives a Childcare Grant for the summer vacation they need to confirm their actual childcare costs by 13th September 2014, just after the start of the 2014/15 academic year.

Students who have not confirmed final childcare costs for 2012/13

126. Where a Childcare Grant application is received for 2013/14 and the student has not yet confirmed his/her childcare costs for the longest vacation in 2012/13, this should not delay or prevent assessments for 2013/14. In these circumstances the following action should be taken:
 - assess the student for a Childcare Grant in 2013/14 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 2012/13 showing the revised amount of dependants' grants.
127. The Support Notification for 2013/14 should include the amount of Childcare Grant for 2013/14 not taking into account any overpayment incurred during 2012/13.

Underpayments and overpayments of Childcare Grants

128. Any overpayment arising from the revised 2012/13 notifications will be deducted from 2013/14 grants, if the student is continuing on the same course. If the student is not continuing on the same course separate arrangements must be made for recovery of the overpayment. If the student has been underpaid Childcare Grant in 2012/13, the outstanding amount should be paid as quickly as possible and not added to the following year's grant.

Annex 1

CHILDCARE GRANT TIMETABLE

From March 2013 onwards	SFE to enclose the publications 'Childcare Grant and other support for full-time student parents in 2013/14 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 18 October 2013	Send a reminder letter to students. The letter will remind them they need to return the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' by 1 November 2013 .
By 8 November 2013	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 22 November 2013	SLC will need to reassess students as appropriate.
By 17 January 2014	Send a reminder letter to students. The letter will remind them they need to return the form 'Confirmation of childcare payments' by 31 January 2014 .
By 7 February 2014	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 21 February 2014	SLC will need to reassess students as appropriate.
By 4 July 2014 (or 22 August 2014 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 18 July 2014 (or 12 September 2014 if receiving a Childcare Grant in the long vacation).
By 18 July 2014 / 12 September 2014	Obtain confirmation of childcare costs for term 3 and the summer vacation. Finalise assessments for 2013/14 if a Childcare Grant was received.