

When should my child apply and how long will it take?

If they apply for a university or college place through UCAS, we will email them when the student finance application system is open in early 2012.

They can apply for student finance even if they don't have a guaranteed place at university or college. It's important that they apply as early as possible to make sure their funding is in place before they start their course. The application deadline for new students starting their course in 2012/13 is 31 May 2012.

Once we receive their application, along with any evidence, it normally takes 6 weeks for it to be processed.

Does my child have to make separate applications for the different grants and loans?

They only need to make one application for us to assess their entitlement to the Tuition Fee Loan, Maintenance Grant, Maintenance Loan, Parent's Learning Allowance or the Adult Dependents' Grant.

If they're entitled to other support, like the Disabled Students' Allowance, or help with Childcare costs, then they tell us on their initial application and we'll send them a separate application form for these elements.

If their course is funded by the NHS, they need to complete the NHS bursary application form. More information on this is available at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students).

Individual universities and colleges may have extra support like bursaries and scholarships and you should ask them about how to apply.

I'm concerned about submitting evidence. What do I have to do?

There are two types of evidence that we need for every new application, proof of identity and proof of household income.

When your child applies they tell us their UK passport number and we use this to confirm their identity - they don't need to send us their original passport.

If they don't have a valid UK passport then they need to send us their birth or adoption certificate or valid non-UK passport - these must be the original documents.

Some student finance, like the Maintenance Loan, depends on your household income. As well as completing the questions about your family income, we also ask for your National Insurance Number, this lets us check your income with HM Revenue and Customs and speeds-up the application process.

In some cases, we may contact you directly to ask for further evidence of household income; this could include your P60 or pay slips. Don't worry if this happens - it's part of our checks to make sure your child gets the funding that their entitled to. You should send any new evidence to us right away so that we can finish the assessment and make the first payment on time.

<p>We have other children - is this taken into account?</p>	<p>Yes - we'll ask you about this as part of the application. We'll also ask you about your other children who will be at university or college at the same time, as this could also mean that they're eligible for a higher amount of financial support.</p>
<p>How is household income assessed if the parents are no longer together?</p>	<p>We assess the household income of where the child spends the majority of their time. This includes the income of the parent and their partner, if they have one.</p>
<p>When will my child be told how much they're going to get?</p>	<p>We will send them a Financial Entitlement Letter to confirm what they're entitled to. They can also track their application by logging into their online account at any time.</p>
<p>When will my child get their first loan / grant payments?</p>	<p>There are two things they must do before the first installment is paid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sign and return the declaration that is sent with the Financial Entitlement Letter telling them what they're entitled to, and</li> <li>- register on their course so that the university or college can tell us they are attending.</li> </ul> <p>We will then release the first payment into their bank account and pay the Tuition Fee Loan to the university or college.</p> <p>This payment is usually made 3 to 4 days after we are told they're attending.</p>
<p>Can I pay some, or all, of my child's tuition fees?</p>	<p>You'll need to make arrangements with the university or college to pay any tuition fees.</p> <p>Even if you choose to pay part of the tuition fees, your child can still take out a Tuition Fee Loan to cover the remaining costs.</p>
<p>What happens if my income drops, or I'm made redundant?</p>	<p>Everyone is entitled to a Tuition Fee Loan and at least some help towards living costs. We base our assessments for the Maintenance Loan on your household income for the 2010/2011 tax year.</p> <p>If your income in 2012/13 is likely to be at least 15% lower than that, then we can assess your household income on that estimate and verify this with you at the end of the tax year. You'll need to download and complete a 'Current year income assessment form' - these can be found at <a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance">www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance</a></p>
<p>What happens if my child changes course or university?</p>	<p>They can update their details by logging into their online account at any time and tell us about the changes. We can review what funding they're entitled to without them having to resend evidence.</p>
<p>Does my child have to apply again next year?</p>	<p>Yes. We'll contact them each year when it's time to make their application.</p>

<p>When do repayments start?</p>	<p>Students going to university or college in 2012/13 won't have to make any repayments until at least 2016, even if they earn above the £21,000 repayment threshold before then.</p> <p>Once the student enters repayment, the amount they repay is based on how much they earn, not how much they owe. When they are earning over £21,000 they will pay 9% of what they earn over this amount.</p> <p>Repayments will be collected automatically by HMRC along with their regular taxes.</p>
<p>How does interest work?</p>	<p>Interest is added to the loans as soon as the first payment is made or the first installment of the Tuition Fee Loan is paid to the university or college.</p> <p>Interest is charged at RPI plus 3% while studying. From the April after they leave or finish, then they will enter the repayment terms shown below.</p> <p>When in repayment, the student will pay interest based on their income:</p> <p>£21,000 or less - RPI</p> <p>Between £21,000 and £41,000 - RPI + up to 3%, depending on income</p> <p>£41,000 and over - RPI + 3%</p>
<p>Can I or my child pay off some or all of the loans early?</p>	<p>The government is consulting on early repayment.</p>

More information can be found at [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)