

Covid-19 Impact on Students Funding and Assessments Factsheet

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Further Education (up to and including SCQF Level 6)

Student bursaries and grants

The Scottish Funding Council have advised colleges to continue to pay student financial support as normal, except for travel costs if students are self-isolating. Bursaries and grants will continue to be paid until the end of the academic year and may be extended if necessary. The following is extracted from an SFC FAQ factsheet, please check the [SFC website](#) regularly for updates as well as following your college's own social media accounts for further information.

Q: Who should students contact if they have COVID-19 related questions about their student support?

In relation to any COVID-19 related health concerns, individuals must engage directly with the health authorities (see [NHS Inform](#)). If students have questions about their FE student support, they should contact the college's own student advice service.

Q: Will colleges be allowed to fund students beyond 43 weeks if it is necessary to extend a course?

Yes, colleges will be allowed to fund students beyond 43 weeks if required for COVID-19 reasons, where that is necessary to allow students to complete their course and achieve their qualification, and if funding is available.

Q: Will student support funding be available in the event colleges need to extend their courses into June and/or July to allow students to finish the course and achieve their qualification?

There is currently no rule that prohibits student support being provided in any particular month. Colleges will be allowed to fund students beyond 43 weeks if that is required for COVID-19 reasons, where that is necessary to allow students to complete their course and achieve their qualification, and if funding is available.

Q: Should colleges still be paying out student support funding if the student is not meeting the usual attendance criteria?

Yes, if the reason for non-attendance is reported to be due to self-isolation or diagnosis (in accordance with NHS Scotland COVID-19 guidance), colleges should continue to pay out all student support funding (except travel costs, see below). These absences should be considered as out with the college's usual student absence / sickness absence allowances. If the reason for non-attendance is not related to COVID-19, then this should be treated by the college in the usual way.

Q: Will students continue to be paid if they advise the college that they are self-isolating? If yes, how long can this continue for?

Yes, students should continue to receive all student support funding (except travel costs, see below), when they are self-isolating in accordance with NHS Scotland COVID-19 guidance. When the NHS Scotland COVID-19 self-isolation guidance ceases to apply to the student, the student should return to college (unless there is another reason for them to be absent, which should be handled under the college's usual sickness absence policy).

Q: Do colleges require evidence students have been advised to self-isolate because they are experiencing some symptoms?

No.

Q: Do colleges require evidence of diagnosis if a student has COVID-19?

Given the nature of the measures required, it may not be possible for a student to provide evidence to their college at the time of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis. Colleges should therefore continue paying student support (except travel costs) but wait until the student is able to return to college before seeking evidence of the positive COVID-19 diagnosis.

Q: Do students still have to show engagement in their studies?

Yes, if they are self-isolating with no symptoms, and have the access to be able to engage remotely/ digitally. If they have symptoms that make them too unwell to study, or indeed receive a positive diagnosis for COVID-19, then they would not be expected to show engagement throughout the duration of their illness.

Q: Should colleges continue to pay travel costs to students if they are off sick / self-isolating?

No, if the student is self-isolating either with or without symptoms, they should not be travelling anywhere outside of their home, and hence should not require any travel costs.

[This is an extract from Scottish Funding Council guidance, click here for further information and useful links](#)

[Extra funding for FE students due to Covid-19 related financial hardship](#)

Students studying at further education level may be able to access extra funding through the FE discretionary funds. Normally you can only make three applications in an academic year to a maximum of £4,000 in total, however both of these restrictions have been lifted in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. [See this SFC factsheet](#) for more information and speak to your college to discuss making an application. In addition your college may have made extra funds available for students facing financial hardship, speak to them directly to find out what you can apply for.

[SQA Assessments and qualifications](#)

As announced by the Scottish Government, the 2020 exam diet will not be going ahead and an alternative method to award certificates is being devised. SQA are working in partnership with Colleges Scotland to develop a fair system to recognise learner achievement based on past achievements and progress to date. [Check the SQA website here](#) for the latest updates and sign up to [My SQA](#) as a direct way to receive results.

[Higher Education \(SCQF Level 7 and above\)](#)

[Loans, grants and bursaries](#)

SAAS have confirmed they will continue to fund students as normal during the COVID-19 crisis, including for self-isolating students and those with a COVID-19 diagnosis. The following is extracted from a SAAS FAQ document, it is live document, so please check the [SAAS website](#) regularly for further information and updates and also follow your institution's social media account

Q: Will SAAS remain open to assess applications?

SAAS has robust business continuity measures in place to ensure our business services remaining functioning. Students can submit their applications for 2020/21 to www.saas.gov.uk from 1 April 2020. However, given these unprecedented times, we will continue to monitor the situation closely and advise students and institutions to follow our social media channels for the latest updates.

Q: Will SAAS remain open to make payments?

Yes, this is our top priority. We will endeavour to continue to fund students on time. Again, students and institutions are advised to follow our social media channels for the latest updates.

Q: I've not applied for this year's funding yet and the 31 March deadline is fast approaching, will I still be paid?

We would encourage students to submit their outstanding applications for 2019/20 academic session where possible by 31 March 2020; however, given the unprecedented times, we will apply discretion when considering late applications and will endeavour to continue to fund students on time.

Q: I'm now really apprehensive about going to/ going back to college or university, should I still apply for my funding by 30 June?

Yes – you should still apply for your funding as soon as you can to ensure you receive this in time for your course commencing, should you decide to go. You can do this by submitting your application to www.saas.gov.uk from 1 April 2020. You can update your SAAS Account at any time, should you decide to not pursue your course.

Q: My college or university is moving to an alternative course delivery model, will I still receive funding?

Yes – individual colleges and universities are putting their own arrangements in place, for example, remote or online learning and will communicate this to their students. If students are at home with no symptoms, they will be expected to continue to engage with their studies via the new course arrangement.

Q: How will colleges and universities manage non- attendance?

Individual institutions will have their own arrangements in place, for example, remote or online learning. Students should report their non-attendance as per individual institution arrangements, including whether that is related to COVID-19 or not.

Q: What about my student loan - will this be paid? Note: Student Loans are issued by the Student Loans Company.

Yes – students should continue to engage with their studies via the new course arrangements at their college and university whether that is remote or digital means. In addition to that, you should follow attendance reporting arrangements including letting your institution know you are unwell or self-isolating. The Scottish Government including SAAS, Department of Education and Student Loans Company continue to monitor the situation and engage with each other on this matter. Students and Institutions are advised to follow our social media channels and check SLC's website for latest updates.

Q: I am about to sit my exams at college/ university, what if these don't go ahead, will I be funded to sit them later in the year?

At this stage, it is not possible to know with certainty what the impact of COVID-19 will be. In the first instance, colleges and universities should develop their own mitigating strategies to minimise impact on delivery of teaching. If any changes are made to the exam timetables, further communications will be issued in relation to student support. Please continue to check your institutions social media channels/ website and follow our social media channels for the latest updates.

Q: My college/university has told me that my course will be extended by a month/few months/into the summer, will I still receive funding?

In the first instance, colleges and universities should develop their own strategies to minimise impact on delivery of teaching. If any changes are made to timetables, further communications will be issued in relation to student support. Please continue to check your institution's social media channels/ website and follow our social media channels for latest updates.

[Extra sources of funding for HE students facing COVID-19 related hardship](#)

HE students can already access the [higher education discretionary fund](#) if they are facing financial hardship. No extra funding has been announced to address COVID-19 related HE student hardship yet, however individual colleges and universities may have created their own hardship fund, so speak to them directly, check their website and follow their social media pages for more information. For example the University of Strathclyde have launched a specific [COVID-19 Student Hardship Fund](#).

[Exams and assessments](#)

See the SQA section above for Higher National Certificates and Diplomas. For study at degree level and above, check directly with your university to understand what the requirements will be. Many institutions are offering students the opportunity to sit their exams online or to make recordings of practical performance where possible. Check your university's website and social media for the latest updates.

[Disabled Students' Allowance](#)

Q: In light of the guidance around social distancing – can DSA needs assessments be undertaken by other means?

Yes – telephone and Skype assessments are acceptable for the purposes of compiling a needs assessment. Given the unprecedented times, our Operations Dept. will also accept electronic signatures.

This is an extract from a SAAS FAQ document. Chere the [SAAS website](#) for further information, updates and useful links related to the COVID-19 crisis.