Funding for students with children, carers and disabled students

At Birmingham, we promote a positive and supportive attitude towards students who face additional costs as a result of caring for dependants or dealing with a disability.

Support for students with children

Depending on your income and circumstances, you may be eligible for the **Parents' Learning Allowance or a Childcare Grant (http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Extrahelp/DG_171503)** . These do not need to be repaid and are paid in three instalments from the Student Loans Company along with your other statutory support payments. You may also be eligible for **Child Tax Credit (http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/TaxCredits/index.htm)** from the Inland Revenue.

Open all sections

Special Support Grant

If you are a single parent on a full-time undergraduate programme and qualify for either Income Support or Housing Benefit, you will be eligible for the Special Support Grant. This funding element replaces the Maintenance Grant, providing the same level of non-repayable support (£3,387 for 2014/15) but enabling you to take out the maximum rate of Maintenance Loan.

Parents' Learning Allowance

The Parents' Learning Allowance (PLA) is an income-assessed grant to help full-time undergraduate students with dependent children meet their course-related costs. The allowance is worth up to £1,523 a year for 2014/15.

You will not need to apply specifically for PLA; Student Finance England (or your relevant SLC agency) will calculate your entitlement when you apply for your student loans and Living Cost Grant.

Childcare Grant

The Childcare Grant is an income-assessed grant available for full-time undergraduate students with dependent children in registered and approved childcare. The Grant will make up 85% of your actual childcare costs. In 2014/15, eligible students will receive up to £150.23 a week for one child, and up to £257.55 a week for two or more children throughout the year. Students can receive the Childcare Grant or the childcare element of Working Tax Credits but not both.

You will not need to apply specifically for the Childcare Grant; Student Finance England (or your relevant SLC agency) will calculate your entitlement when you apply for your student loans and Living Cost Grant.

Child Tax Credit

Students with dependent children are also eligible for Child Tax Credit from the Inland Revenue. Students receiving the maximum amount of Child Tax Credit (and no Working Tax Credit) are entitled to free school meals for their children. To qualify for Child Tax Credit you must be responsible for a child under 16 or for someone aged 16 to 19 in full-time education. You qualify for Child Tax Credit at a higher rate if your child or one of your children is under one year old or disabled.

Income support and housing benefit

If you are a full-time single parent student who will be continuing your studies next academic year, you should be assessed as eligible to receive Income Support and Housing Benefit during the months of July and August. When calculating your benefits, your July and August income will not include your Student Loan. If you have already put in a claim for Income Support and Housing Benefit this academic year, you will need to inform your Benefits Agency that there will be a change in your circumstances, since you will have a reduction of income from the first benefit week in July.

If you have not yet put in a benefit claim this academic year, you should request the relevant application forms now, stating you wish to apply for benefit from the first benefit week in July as you are a student. Some Benefit Agencies do not deal with students on a regular basis and it might be useful to refer them to Social Security Amendment (Students and Income Related Benefits) Regulations 2007 SI No 1632 regarding Income Support and HB/CTB A2/2008 regarding Housing Benefit. The Student Loan is counted as income from the first benefit week of September, even if you have not started the university year. Therefore, if you receive the same level of benefits during September as in July and August, this is likely to be an error and you will be liable to repay these amounts.

Support for students with adult dependants

If you have a partner (including a partner of the same sex) or another adult, usually a member of your family, who depends on you financially, you may be eligible for the **Adult Dependants' Grant (http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Extrahelp/DG_171617)** . How much you get depends on your income and that of your adult dependants. The grant is worth up to £2,668 a year (in 2014/15) and is paid in three instalments by the Student Loans Company.

Support for students with disabilities

If you have a disability, including dyslexia, you may be entitled to a **Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) (http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG_10034898)** , which will help with costs you incur whilst attending your course that are directly related to your disability. You are not required to repay any financial support you receive from DSA.

If you have any queries regarding the services that the University provides for students with

disabilities, more information can be obtained by **contacting the Disability and Learning Support Service (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/support/disability/index.aspx)** .

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