

## **BOSS – PUTS YOU IN CHARGE!**

Here's some good news... if you are doing any of these courses the NHS may be able to PAY your tuition fees...

AND, if your course started after September 2012, you also get a thousand pounds toward your living expenses!

It's a grant that isn't income-assessed... which means everyone gets it... apart from some EU nationals who can still get their tuition fees paid.

Even better... if you're eligible, you can also apply for a bursary to help pay for all your other expenses.

That part IS income-assessed... as you'd expect.

Now, you might think that you, your partner or your parents earn too much money to get a bursary. That doesn't matter.

You still NEED to apply to get your fees paid... and the grant. When you do, you can choose to declare any income and see if you're eligible for the bursary.

The important thing is – you need to APPLY.

Why?

Because you can't get your tuition fees paid... or that one thousand-pound-grant... if you don't.

Which is where BOSS comes in.

The Bursary Online Support System... BOSS.

It's designed to put you in charge of your future so you get what's due to you... and get your career going.

It's an online ACCOUNT and a tool to help you get what you're entitled too... manage your payments... and, each year you're at university, reapply so your fees are paid and you receive your grant.

You'll be able to use BOSS all the way through your course.

So, what do you need to do?

First, you need to check some key things before you make your application.

There are three calculators to help you...

The first tells you if you're eligible to apply to have your tuition fees paid in the first place.

It's not about how much you might get or anything like that... that comes later... what this does is ask you questions about your nationality... your residency status in the UK... and things like that

Once you know you can apply... then you should check your Student Status...

That's important because it'll help you click the right boxes in the application form... and ensure that your application goes through quicker.

The Student Status calculator asks you questions to find out what kind of student you are...

That doesn't mean a studious one or a party animal... but whether we should class you as independent...or dependent.

If you've been supporting yourself financially for at least 36 months... or have been married... in a civil partnership... or are caring for children... then you're classed as independent.

If you are none of these things... then we'll class you as dependent.

If you're independent then you'll have to prove it by sending in the relevant evidence.

It helps to check all this out before you fill in the form; it'll save time, believe me.

The calculator will tell you what kind of evidence you'll need... for instance, pay slips or proof of self-employment income for 3 years; things like that.

Some potential students don't live at home... but are still classed as dependent on their parents... and they might be uneasy about asking their folks to declare their income.

Don't worry... parents can do it confidentially. They don't have to show you what they send in if that helps smooth the process. More about this later.

If you are estranged from your parents... you'll have to prove it. Someone, like a doctor or a social worker, will have to write a letter confirming it..

Again, don't let that put you off applying. If you are eligible APPLY because you'll get your fees paid and that grant, even if you don't qualify for the bursary.

Right, the third calculator is one that'll give you an idea... a general idea... of what your award might be.

The Award Estimate Calculator loves numbers... put in some relating to what you earn... what your parents or your partner earn... and you'll get an idea about the level of bursary you might receive. If it says you won't get one... doesn't matter... still APPLY!

Use the calculators BEFORE you create an account. You'll KNOW that you're eligible...

You'll KNOW what your status is...

And you'll KNOW the likelihood of getting the extra bursary.

Now it's time to create your account.

It's just like creating an online account for a bank... or any other service you can think of.

This account will be yours right through your time at university. You'll need to use it to apply for your first year's fees and the grant, as well as any bursary you're entitled to... and then you'll be using it to REAPPLY for all those things before the start of each year.

That's important. Applying in your first year isn't enough. You have to re-apply before the start of each academic year.

If you don't then your fees won't get paid and you won't get your one thousand pounds... or the bursary, if you're awarded one.

So, avoid delays... and make a note on your calendar to re-apply before the start of your next academic year.

OK – setting up your account is pretty straightforward...

You'll need a username and password...

Click REGISTER... put in your email address... answer security questions... that kind of thing.

It's the usual.

You'll get an email that acknowledges your registration -don't forget to check your junk or spam folder for it -... and in it there's a link to activate your account.

You need to activate it within 72 hours of registering.

If you don't, you'll have to register again... but with a DIFFERENT email address.

So, as soon as that email comes... activate your account.

Then you can fill in the online forms.

If you need to you can SAVE what you enter and come back to complete the form later. Just remember to click save before you log out.

The form expands depending on what information you enter...

Just answer the questions one by one... logically... and follow the guidance.

There are short, to the point, hints next to every question and they explain what things mean... or what kinds of answers you need to give.

The important thing is to avoid the silly mistakes that hold things up...

I know I always get 'forename' and 'surname' mixed up... not because I don't know what they mean... but because your brain goes into automatic and you put your surname first.

On this form, your forename must go first!

Then, it's really important that you choose the right course.

Find your university... and then choose the course you intend to take up.  
Make sure the qualification and start month are right... I mean, there can be FOUR different courses for adult nursing... so it's easy to make a mistake.  
Double check that you haven't.

But, what if you're still wondering which course you want to study and where... or you've got a few offers from different universities?

And what happens if you don't get into the university or the course you want and you end up somewhere else?

No problem. Chose the course at the university you're most likely to go to... and then if you change your mind or you go through clearing, the information we get when you enrol will sort it all out.

The form will ask you about the country of your residence... this can be confusing because it asks you when you STARTED living in the UK... which is for many, simply when you were born.

But it also asks for an end-date. Computers like end dates! But don't worry, it's not asking you to predict when you might emigrate or... well... err... expire.

Just put today's date or the start date of your course. We just want to know that you've been in the UK for enough time before your course starts.

You will have to send in evidence to support different parts of your application. We need ORIGINAL documents, like your passport or birth certificate or recent payslips and P60s and so on. At least one item of ID has to have your photo on it!

Don't worry... we'll be careful with them... and after we've scanned them in to our system you'll get them back. You just have to send us the evidence; preferably all in one go. Don't forget to include your student coversheet which you can print from your BOSS account and a self-addressed envelope with recorded or Special Delivery paid on it.

That last part is up to you... but its a good idea to do this to protect your documents just in case the envelope goes missing.

After you've submitted the form you'll get an email which tells you all the evidence you need to provide based on your answers.

So, if you answer that you're a dependent student who lives at home with their parents... and they choose to declare their income... then they will have to send proof of their earnings.

Like I said before... they don't have to show you that evidence... they can seal it in an envelope and you can include it with everything else you send us. It'll only be sent back to them separately if they include a pre-paid self-addressed envelope... plus a letter telling us that that's what they want.

If you're an independent student... and you've been working or self-employed for at least three years... if you're married... in a civil partnership... have children... are a single-parent... all those kinds of things... click the right boxes and then you'll be asked more questions.

Now, it can look complicated... but it's not really. And there IS guidance on the website to help you answer the questions the right way.

There's also help available if you have people who are dependent on you: it's called, Dependants' Allowance. You can also get help toward paying for your childcare, if you're not already receiving childcare tax credits from another agency.

Check out the advice on our website... and you'll also see what evidence you'll need to support your childcare claim.

If you are claiming Dependents' Allowance for your partner then they'll need to fill in details of their income and financial status too. You may still get help even if they are working. We just need to assess their income.

The key thing is to answer 'yes' to the question about whether somebody is financially dependent on you ... if you say 'no' then you can't be considered for any of the additional help I've been talking about.

We'll also need to know what income you will have whilst you're studying.

If you're going to be studying full-time, then you don't have to tell us about any part-time work you'll be doing. If you're a part-time student then we will need to know about your income from a job.

Here's one important point though... see the parts where it asks about 'maintenance'?

That doesn't mean the up-keep of where you live... it's about whether you're receiving money from somebody, either because a court has set a payment, or the CSA has arranged it, or you've agreed it as part of a separation or divorce settlement.

If you receive maintenance add it into your income... if you pay it to someone else... include it in your expenses.

We may need to know what your possible expenses will be while you're studying...

If you have NO income... then DON'T fill in the expenses part of the form. Why?... well if you put in what your rent will be... then you'll have to send evidence of this to us or your application won't be processed.



So, DON'T tell us about your rent if you've not got any income to offset against it. It really does save a lot of time and hassle if you ONLY fill in the expenses part of the form IF you have income to declare.

If your parents or your partner have to fill in sections of the form... then make sure they do it BEFORE you submit it to us.

Right... phew... we're almost there.

Add in your bank details... and then declare that everything you've entered is correct... so check it through just in case... and then click SUBMIT.

You'll get an email confirming that you've submitted an application, and it'll list all the evidence you need to send in.

Like I said, try and do that all at once. It saves time, and we cannot begin to process your application without all of the supporting evidence.

Then, you can go back into your account and check the activity status of your application... it'll say it's PENDING while we're waiting for your evidence... then it'll become ACTIVE while it's being considered. It'll go back to PENDING if we need to ask you for more evidence... and then go back to ACTIVE... and, finally, you'll get a result.

If it's APPROVED... your fees get paid... and you get that one thousand pound grant. If you've applied for the income-assessed bursary, then you will find out how much you've been awarded. Even if this is nil you will still get your fees paid and the grant.

If it's REJECTED... this is usually because you're not eligible due to residency; but it could be that there was a problem with your application. Whatever the reason, we'll contact you to explain what's going on.

After you've applied you can use your account to check when your payments are due... what your activity status is... tell us about a change in circumstances... update your details and re-apply each academic year.

BOSS is an ACTIVE account... and it will be a major part of your new life as a student... Our whole website is also packed with all the information that will help you with all aspects of your student bursary journey during your time at University.

We're here to help you be the BOSS of your own future.

Make the most of it... and good luck!