
STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2003 No. 298

Education (Student Support)
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003

PART VIII

SUPPORT FOR PART-TIME COURSES

Eligible part-time students

28.—(1) Subject to and in accordance with this Part a person shall be eligible for support in connection with his undertaking a designated part-time course if he is a person mentioned in Schedule 1.

(2) A person shall not be eligible under this regulation if –

- (a) he is a person mentioned in paragraph 7 of Schedule 1 and not in any other paragraph of that Schedule;
- (b) there has been made to him or paid to him in relation to his undertaking the part-time course –
 - (i) a bursary or award of similar description under Article 44 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 or section 63 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 whether or not the amount of such bursary or award is calculated by reference to his income;
 - (ii) any allowance under the Nursing and Midwifery Student Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 1992; or
 - (iii) any allowance under sections 73(f) and 74(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 where that part-time course leads to a qualification in a healthcare profession, other than as a medical doctor or dentist, whether or not the amount of such allowance is calculated by reference to his income;
- (c) he is in breach of any obligation to repay any loan;
- (d) he has not ratified any agreement for a loan made with him when he was under the age of 18; or
- (e) he has, in the opinion of the Department, shown himself by his conduct to be unfitted to receive support.

(3) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(c) and (d) “loan” means a loan made under the Education (Student Loans) (Northern Ireland) Order 1990, the Order and Regulations made thereunder, the Education (Student Loans) Act 1990, the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 and Regulations made thereunder or the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and Regulations made thereunder.

(4) Paragraph (2)(d) shall only apply, in a case where the agreement for a loan is subject to the law of Scotland, if it was made –

- (a) before 25th September 1991, and

(b) with the concurrence of the borrower’s curator, or at a time when he had no curator.

(5) A person shall not be eligible for support for more than one designated part-time course at any one time.

(6) Where a person who meets the requirements of this regulation is notified of that fact by the Department under regulation 32(7) he shall thenceforth be an “eligible part-time student” for the purposes of these Regulations.

Designated part-time courses

29.—(1) Subject to paragraph (3), a part-time course shall be designated for the purposes of Article 3(1) of the Order and regulation 28(1) if –

- (a) it is mentioned in Schedule 2;
- (b) it exceeds one academic year’s duration and does not exceed twice the period normally required to complete a full-time course leading to the same qualification;
- (c) it is wholly provided by an educational institution or institutions in the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland which are maintained or assisted by recurrent grants out of public funds or is provided by such institution or institutions in conjunction with an institution or institutions outside the United Kingdom; and
- (d) it is not designated by or under regulation 5.

(2) Paragraphs (5) and (6) of regulation 5 shall apply for the purposes of paragraph (1) as they apply for the purposes of paragraph (1) of that regulation.

(3) For the purposes of Article 3(1) of the Order and regulation 28(1) the Department may designate part-time courses of higher education which are not designated by paragraph (1).

Eligibility for loans for part-time courses

30.—(1) Subject to and in accordance with the following paragraphs, an eligible part-time student shall be eligible for a loan if –

- (a) he is –
 - (i) under the age of 50 on the first day of the first academic year of the course; or
 - (ii) aged 50 or over and under the age of 55 on that day, if the Department is satisfied that he intends to enter employment after he has completed his part-time course or such other higher education course which he intends to start undertaking immediately after completing his present course, disregarding any intervening vacation; and
- (b) in respect of the second and any subsequent year of his part-time course, he is ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland on the first day of the academic year.

(2) An eligible part-time student shall not be eligible for a loan if –

- (a) he holds a first degree from an educational institution in the United Kingdom or a comparable qualification from an educational institution outside the United Kingdom; or
- (b) there have been paid to him 6 loans in connection with his undertaking one or more designated part-time courses.

(3) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(a) a degree shall not be treated as a first degree where –

- (a) it is a degree (other than an honours degree) that has been awarded to an eligible part-time student who has completed the required modules, examinations or other forms of assessment for his first degree course;
- (b) the course was undertaken at an educational institution in the United Kingdom; and

- (c) the eligible part-time student is registered to continue the course at the same educational institution after the award of his degree so as to obtain an honours degree on completion of the required modules, examinations or other forms of assessment.
- (4) An eligible part-time student shall be eligible for a loan in respect of –
- (a) an academic year during which –
- (i) his course becomes a designated part-time course, or
- (ii) he or his spouse or parent is recognised as a refugee or is granted leave to enter or remain as mentioned in paragraph 3 of Schedule 1; and
- (b) any academic year which begins after the events referred to in paragraph (a), but shall not be eligible for a loan in respect of any other academic year.
- (5) Subject to paragraph (6), an eligible part-time student shall not be eligible for a loan if he is a prisoner serving a custodial sentence.
- (6) Paragraph (5) shall not apply in respect of an academic year during which the student enters prison to serve a custodial sentence or is released from prison having served such a sentence.
- (7) An eligible part-time student shall be eligible for a loan in respect of an academic year in accordance with the preceding paragraphs only if –
- (a) at the date of his application for the loan, he or his spouse is entitled under Part VII of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act (Northern Ireland) 1992(1) to income support(2) or housing benefit (3);
- (b) his financial resources for the preceding financial year do not exceed £13,000.
- (8) For the purposes of paragraphs (7) and (10) an eligible part-time student’s financial resources for a financial year means the aggregate of his income for that year together with the aggregate of the income for that year of any person who at the date of his application for the loan is his spouse.
- (9) In calculating an eligible part-time student’s income under this regulation there shall be disregarded-
- (a) £2,000 in respect of his spouse;
- (b) £2,000 in respect of the only or eldest child who is dependent on him or his spouse; and
- (c) £1,000 in respect of each other such child.
- (10) Where the Department is satisfied that an eligible part-time student’s financial resources in the current financial year are unlikely to, or do not, exceed £13,000 it may assess that student’s eligibility for a loan under this regulation by reference to those resources in the current financial year.
- (11) For the purposes of this regulation –
- “child” in relation to an eligible part-time student includes a step-child and any child for whom the student has parental responsibility and, in the case of an eligible part-time student aged 25 or over on the first day of the academic year in respect of which his eligibility for a loan is being assessed, any child of his partner;
- “dependent” means wholly or mainly financially dependent;
- “financial year” means the period of 12 months for which the income of the eligible part-time student is computed for the purposes of the income tax legislation which applies to it;

(1) 1992 c. 7, as amended by the Social Security (Incapacity for Work) (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 (S.I.1994/1898 (N.I. 12)), Articles 3 to 5, 7, 8, 10 to 12 and Schedules 1 and 2

(2) Section 123, which provides for income support, is amended by the Jobseekers (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (S.I. 1995/2705 (N.I. 15)), Schedules 2 and 3 and by the Welfare Reform and Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/3147 (N.I. 11)), Schedule 8, Part IV, paragraph 26

(3) Section 129

“income” means gross income from all sources excluding any tax credits awarded pursuant to any claims made under section 3 of the Tax Credits Act 2002;

“partner” means a woman ordinarily living with a male part-time student as his wife or a man ordinarily living with a female part-time student as her husband;

“preceding financial year” means the most recent financial year ending before the first day of the academic year in respect of which a person’s eligibility for a loan is being assessed and “current financial year” means the financial year which includes the first day of that academic year;

“spouse” includes, in the case of an eligible part-time student aged 25 or over on the first day of the academic year in respect of which his eligibility for a loan is being assessed, a partner. It does not include a spouse of an eligible part-time student where they have ceased ordinarily to live together, in the case of a married part-time student whether or not an order for their separation has been made by any court, or where the spouse is ordinarily living outside the United Kingdom and is not maintained by him.

Amount of loan

31. The amount of a loan for a designated part-time course in respect of each academic year shall be £500.

Applications for support

32.—(1) A person shall apply for support in respect of an academic year of a part-time course (other than a course for the initial training of teachers) by completing and submitting to the Department an application in such form as it may require; and regulation 6 shall not apply to him in connection with his undertaking that course.

(2) The completed application form shall include among other things the following particulars –

- (a) the applicant’s United Kingdom national insurance number, unless he does not have one;
- (b) his most recent student loan account number, if any; and
- (c) the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two persons who know the applicant.

(3) The applicant shall sign a declaration on the application form that –

- (a) the particulars given in the application form are correct to the best of his knowledge and belief;
- (b) he will notify the Department (or if an Education and Library Board or any other person is exercising functions in relation to his application by virtue of a determination under Article 4 (1)(a) or 4(3) of the Order he will notify that board or person) of any change in those particulars;
- (c) in the case of an application for a loan, he shall repay the amount lent to him, together with interest and applicable charges and penalties, in accordance with the Order and Regulations made thereunder from time to time; and
- (d) in the case of an application for a grant under regulation 33, he will if required to do so repay to the Department any amount paid to him which for whatever reason exceeds the amount of grant to which he is entitled under that regulation.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5) the application form must reach the Department not later than 6 months after the first day of the academic year of the course in which it is submitted, but where –

- (a) the course becomes a designated part-time course after the first day of that academic year, the application must reach the Department not later than 6 months after the date on which the course was designated;

- (b) the student, or his spouse or parent, is recognised as a refugee or has been granted leave to enter or remain as mentioned in paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 after the first day of that academic year, the application must reach the Department not later than 6 months after the date of recognition or the date leave was granted respectively; or
 - (c) the Department considers that having regard to the circumstances of the particular case the time limit should be relaxed, the application must reach the Department not later than such date as it specifies.
- (5) Where an eligible part-time student is applying for support under regulation 33 the application form must reach the Department as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- (6) An applicant shall demonstrate his eligibility for support by providing such evidence as the Department may require; and the Department may take such steps and make such inquiries as it considers necessary to determine whether the applicant is eligible for support.
- (7) If the Department considers that the applicant is eligible for the support for which he has applied under this Part it shall –
- (a) where the application is the first to be made in connection with the applicant’s undertaking the part-time course, notify him of the fact that he is an “eligible part-time student” and is eligible for the support for which he has applied; and
 - (b) in respect of any subsequent application notify him that he is eligible for the support for which he has applied.

Grants for disabled part-time students' living costs

33.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), regulation 14 shall apply in relation to an eligible part-time student in respect of his undertaking a designated part-time course as it applies in relation to an eligible student in respect of his undertaking a designated course with the substitution –

- (a) for the amount specified in regulation 14(2)(a) of £8,465; and
- (b) for the amount specified in regulation 14(2)(d) of £1,115.

(2) An eligible part-time student shall be eligible for grant under this regulation if, in respect of the second and any subsequent year of his part-time course, he is ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland on the first day of the academic year.

(3) Subject to paragraph (4), an eligible part-time student shall not be eligible for grant under this regulation if he is a prisoner serving a custodial sentence.

(4) Paragraph (3) shall not apply in respect of an academic year during which the student enters prison to serve a custodial sentence or is released from prison having served such a sentence.

Transfers of eligibility

34.—(1) An eligible part-time student may request the Department to transfer his eligibility in any case where –

- (a) on the recommendation of the academic authority the student starts to undertake another part-time course at the institution;
- (b) the student starts to undertake a part-time course at another institution with the consent of the academic authority of that institution; or
- (c) after commencing a part-time course for a first degree (other than an honours degree) the student is, before the completion of that course admitted to a part-time course for an honours degree in the same subject or subjects at the institution.

(2) The Department, on being satisfied of the matters referred to in paragraph (1) and that the second course is a designated part-time course, shall transfer the eligible part-time student’s

eligibility, and thenceforth the student shall for all purposes be an eligible part-time student in connection with his undertaking the second course, whether or not he may have been so eligible if he had applied under regulation 32.

(3) An eligible part-time student's eligibility as such may not be transferred after it has expired or been terminated under regulation 36.

Conversion of eligibility

35.—(1) An eligible student under Part II may request the Department to convert his eligibility to that of an eligible part-time student in any case where –

- (a) on the recommendation of the academic authority the eligible student ceases to attend his course and starts to undertake a designated part-time course at the institution; or
- (b) the eligible student ceases to attend his course and starts to undertake a designated part-time course at another institution with the consent of the academic authority of that institution.

(2) Subject to paragraph (3) the Department, on being satisfied of the matters referred to in paragraph (1) and that the second course is a designated part-time course, shall convert the eligible student's eligibility, and thenceforth the student shall for all purposes cease to be an eligible student and shall be an eligible part-time student in connection with his undertaking the second course, whether or not he may have been so eligible if he had applied under regulation 32.

(3) The Department shall not under paragraph (2) convert the eligibility of a student who is a person mentioned in paragraph 7 of Schedule 1 and not in any other paragraph of that Schedule.

(4) An eligible student's eligibility as such may not be converted after it has expired or been terminated under regulation 8.

(5) Where under this regulation an eligible student under Part II becomes an eligible part-time student in the course of an academic year –

- (a) where the Department has determined to pay an amount of grant to the student under regulation 14 in periodic instalments no payment in respect of that amount of grant shall be made in respect of any instalment period beginning after the date on which the student became an eligible part-time student;
- (b) the maximum amount of grant to which the student would, apart from this regulation, be entitled to under regulation 33 in connection with his undertaking a designated part-time course in respect of that academic year shall be reduced by one third, where the student became an eligible part-time student during the second quarter of the academic year, and by two thirds where he became such a student in a later quarter of that year;
- (c) where an amount of grant for any purpose has been paid to the student under regulation 14 in a single instalment the maximum amount of grant payable to him under regulation 33 for that purpose shall be reduced (or where sub-paragraph (b) applies further reduced) by the amount of grant paid to him for that purpose under regulation 14, and where the resulting amount is nil or a negative amount that amount shall be nil; and
- (d) where immediately before he became an eligible part-time student he was eligible to apply, but had not applied, for a loan for living costs in respect of that year under regulation 21, or had not applied for the maximum amount or increased maximum for which he was entitled under regulation 21 without prejudice to regulation 30 he may apply for such a loan or such additional amount of loan in accordance with regulation 21 as if he had continued to be an eligible student under Part II; and in the circumstances mentioned in paragraph (6) the maximum or increased maximum amount of such loan for the academic year shall be reduced in accordance with that paragraph.

(6) Where the application is made during the first quarter of the academic year in respect of which the loan is payable the maximum amount or increased maximum amount of loan (as the case may be) shall be reduced by two thirds, and where the application is made during the second quarter of that year that amount shall be reduced by one third.

(7) An eligible part-time student may request the Department to convert his eligibility to that of an eligible student under Part II in any case where –

- (a) on the recommendation of the academic authority the eligible part-time student ceases to undertake his course and starts to attend a course designated by or under regulation 5 at the institution; or
- (b) the eligible part-time student ceases to undertake his course and starts to attend a course designated by or under regulation 5 at another institution with the consent of the academic authority of that institution.

(8) The Department, on being satisfied of the matters referred to in paragraph (7) and that the second course is a designated course, shall convert the eligible part-time student's eligibility, and thenceforth the student shall for all purposes cease to be an eligible part-time student and shall be an eligible student in connection with his attendance at the second course, whether or not he may have been so eligible if he had applied under regulation 6.

(9) An eligible part-time student's eligibility as such may not be converted after it has expired or been terminated under regulation 36.

(10) Where under this regulation an eligible part-time student becomes an eligible student under Part II in the course of an academic year –

- (a) where the Department has determined to pay an amount of grant to the student under regulation 33 in periodic instalments no payment in respect of that amount of grant shall be made in respect of any instalment period beginning after the date on which the student became an eligible student;
- (b) any loan to which the student is entitled under this Part in respect of that year shall be ignored in determining the amount of support to which he may be entitled in respect of that year under Parts III to V;
- (c) the maximum amount of any support under Part IV or V to which the student would, apart from this regulation, be entitled in connection with his attendance at a designated course in respect of that academic year shall be reduced by one third, where the student became an eligible student during the second quarter of the academic year, and by two thirds where he became such a student in a later quarter of that year; and
- (d) where an amount of grant for any purpose has been paid to the student under regulation 33 in a single instalment the maximum amount of grant payable to him under regulation 14 for that purpose shall be reduced (or where sub-paragraph (c) applies further reduced) by the amount of grant paid to him for that purpose under regulation 33, and where the resulting amount is nil or a negative amount that amount shall be nil.

Termination of eligibility

36.—(1) Subject to the following paragraphs an eligible part-time student shall cease to be eligible for support at the end of the academic year in which he completes his course.

(2) Where an eligible part-time student has withdrawn from a course in circumstances where the Department has not transferred or converted, or will not transfer or convert, his eligibility under regulation 34 or 35, or has abandoned, ceased to undertake or been expelled from his course, the Department shall determine that he is no longer eligible to receive support under this Part and on such determination he shall cease to be an eligible part-time student.

(3) Where an eligible part-time student has shown himself by his conduct to be unfitted to receive support under this Part the Department may determine that he is no longer eligible to receive such support and on such determination he shall cease to be an eligible part-time student.

Payment of support

37.—(1) The Department shall pay a loan under this Part in a single instalment at such time as it considers appropriate.

(2) The Department shall pay grant under regulation 33 in such instalments (if any) and at such times as it considers appropriate.

(3) Payments shall be made in such manner as the Department considers appropriate, and it may make it a condition of entitlement to payment that the eligible part-time student shall provide it with particulars of a bank or building society account in the United Kingdom into which payment may be made by electronic transfer.

Overpayments

38.—(1) Any overpayment of a loan under this Part in respect of any academic year may be recovered if in the opinion of the Department –

- (a) the overpayment is a result of a failure of the student to provide promptly information which might affect his eligibility for a loan under this Part, or
- (b) any information which he has provided is inaccurate in a material particular,

but otherwise it shall be treated as a loan properly made which shall be repayable in accordance with the Order and Regulations made under it.

(2) Where an overpayment of loan is recoverable in accordance with paragraph (1) it shall be recovered in such of the following ways as the Department considers appropriate in all the circumstances –

- (a) by subtracting the overpayment from the amount of loan under this Part for which the student is eligible in respect of any other academic year;
- (b) by taking such other action for the recovery of a payment made without statutory authority as is available to it.

(3) Any overpayment of grant paid under regulation 33 in respect of an academic year shall be recovered in such one or more of the following ways as the Department considers appropriate in all the circumstances –

- (a) by subtracting the overpayment from any grant for which the student is eligible under regulation 33 in respect of any other academic year;
- (b) by subtracting the overpayment from any grant other than a grant for dependants for which the student is eligible under Part IV;
- (c) by taking such other action for the recovery of a payment made without statutory authority as is available to it.