
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations provide for support for students taking designated higher education courses in respect of an academic year beginning on or after 1st September 2008.

These Regulations are based on the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the “2007 Regulations”) to which they make a number of changes, some of which are of a minor and drafting nature. Changes of substance other than increases in rates of grants and loans are described below.

These Regulations revoke the 2007 Regulations. Regulation 3 sets out the extent of the revocation.

Part 4 of these Regulations provides for fee support, in the form of grants for fees (for old system students) and fee loans (for current system students). Changes have been made to allow students on flexible post-graduate courses for the initial training of teachers starting on or after 1 September 2008 to qualify for fee support where that the course is at least six weeks in length. This means that for the first time a designated course (one which meets the criteria in Regulation 5) may be of less than one academic year’s duration, providing that it is a flexible post-graduate course for the initial training of teachers.

Chapter 5 of Part 5 of these Regulations provides for grants for travel for certain categories of eligible students. Regulations 50 to 54 have been amended to clarify the types of expenses in respect of which the travel grant for students studying overseas is payable, and the way in which the amount of that grant is calculated.

Part 6 has been amended to raise the income thresholds for maintenance grants for students starting a new course on or after 1 September 2008. The students affected by these changes (“2008 cohort students”) are defined in Regulation 2. Similar changes have been made to the assessment of, and income thresholds for, loans for living costs for 2008 cohort students. In addition, a new separate loan, the long courses loan, has been introduced for these students in relation to additional weeks of attendance beyond the normal academic year. This loan replaces the previous arrangement whereby an additional amount of loan calculated in relation to those additional weeks would increase the maximum amount of the loan for living costs itself.

Apart from increases to amounts in line with inflation, the income thresholds and assessments of loans for living costs and maintenance grants are not changed for students who are not 2008 cohort students, unless their household income is also used to assess the support to which a 2008 cohort student receives. The provisions relating to “split contributions” (which apply where the household income is used to assess the support for more than one student) have been simplified where a 2008 cohort student is part of that household. Those provisions are set out in Schedule 4.

An impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as it has no impact on the costs of business, charities or voluntary bodies. The impact on the public sector is minimal.