

Health Education Funding in England from 2017/18: The System Explained

Summary

In November 2015, the [Government announced changes to the funding system for university education for nursing, midwifery and most of the allied health professions in England](#). In the past, these have been funded through NHS grants but from the 2017/18 academic year will be funded through student loans.

This briefing sets out the essence of the changes with our best information to date.

What's changing?

From 1 August 2017, new students in England on nursing, midwifery and AHP pre-registration courses (which lead on to registration with one of the health professional regulators) [will have access to the standard student support package of tuition fee loans and support for living costs, rather than getting an NHS grant](#)

Which courses does this affect?

This change affects a wide range of courses that lead to professional registration:

- Nursing (all four fields – adult, child, mental health, learning disability)
- Midwifery
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Podiatry
- Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiography
- Dietetics
- Orthoptics
- Operating Department Practice
- Prosthetics/Orthotics
- Dental hygienists
- Dental therapists

It does not affect funding for paramedic courses, which are currently on a mixed funding model (some self-funded, some funded by Ambulance Trusts and some by Health Education England) but are not part of the NHS Bursary system.

Health Education Funding in England from 2017/18: The system explained

Purpose: From 1 August 2017 there's a new funding system for new students on nursing, midwifery and AHP pre-registration courses in England, with the system moving from NHS grants to student loans.

This briefing sets out some of the key background information on the changes.

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Relevant for: Prospective students, current students, staff in higher education, staff advising students at schools and colleges.

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I'm already a student, does it affect me?

No. This change is for new students only.

I've applied for 2016/17, does it affect me?

No. This change will be implemented only for new students starting from 1 August 2017.

Does this affect students domiciled in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

No. This is a decision about higher education funding in England. In February 2016, the First Minister for Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon, [announced](#) that Scotland would retain 'a nursing and midwifery bursary'. However, the Scottish Government is currently undertaking a review of student support, so we can expect debates to come on how to ensure a financially sustainable system that allows the workforce numbers to grow to meet health needs.

What about deferrals?

If you have applied for a place on a course that starts in 2016/17 but defer to September 2017, you will come under the new rules, so will take out tuition and maintenance loans rather than getting grants. If you defer to a course date before 1 August 2017, you will be under the current rules.

If you have started your course, or start in 2016/17 (i.e. under the current rules) and then have to defer, for example for maternity leave, you will not be transferred on to the new rules but will continue under the current system (i.e. with grants rather than loans).

Under the new system, what happens when I graduate?

As with other students, if you graduate and earn above a certain amount of money (currently above £21k) you start repaying the loan. This is usually taken out of your pay packet each month. There are a lot of myths about whether this is affordable. The thresholds and amounts can change according to government policy but as an indication, at the moment on a Band 5 salary in the NHS of £21.7k (the usual starting salary for new nurses) you would repay £5.25 per month. Any unpaid loan amount is written off after 30 years.

[Find more information about how the funding works](#)



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