

How much do *you* know about bursaries?

Recent research shows many higher education advisers don't know enough about bursaries. Are you one of them?

Make sure you're clued up – learn more about bursaries today!

Key bursary facts

- Bursaries are free. Students don't have to pay them back
- They're paid for by individual universities and colleges, not the government
- Some universities pay much larger bursaries than others – more than £3,000 a year in some cases
- Bursaries don't affect eligibility for state support such as maintenance grants and loans for tuition fees and living costs
- Bursaries are paid every year – they're not a one-off payment
- Many universities also offer scholarships to reward academic success or achievement in other areas – these scholarships may or may not be means-tested. Some also give bursaries to students who have left local authority care
- Eligible students are entitled to receive bursaries *as well as* any scholarships they are offered.

Who can get a bursary

- All universities *must* give at least a minimum bursary (see below) to anyone entitled to the full state maintenance grant (i.e. students whose parents earn less than £25,000 between them)
- Over and above the minimum bursary, each university sets its own entitlement criteria
- Many universities give bursaries to students entitled to a partial state maintenance grant (i.e. students whose parents earn up to £50,000 between them)
- Some universities give a bursary to everyone.

All students should check whether they're eligible for a bursary and/or scholarship at their chosen university.

How much are bursaries worth

- In 2011-12, bursaries for students receiving the full maintenance grant range from £338 to more than £3,000 a year¹
- The minimum bursary for 2011-12 is £338
- In practice, most universities give lower income students much more than the minimum bursary. In 2010-11, the average bursary for a student receiving the full maintenance grant was around £900 a year²
- Over and above the minimum bursary, bursary amounts differ from one university to another. The most selective universities tend to offer higher bursaries - in 2010-11, lower income students at these universities received an average of £1,573 a year³

¹ Amounts may rise by inflation each year.

² No figures are yet available for 2011-12.

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How students apply for a bursary

- The process varies
- In most cases, students don't have to apply separately for a bursary. They simply have to agree to share their personal and financial information with their university when they apply for government loans and grants. Their bursary will then be paid straight into their bank account
- However, some universities *do* require students to apply for a bursary separately. These universities usually explain the process in their welcome pack and other literature for new students.

All students should check out how to apply by looking at the student finance pages on their chosen university's website.

What now?

- Get the core bursary message out to your students
- Do this well **before** they start thinking about which universities to apply to⁴
- This will enable them to make an informed choice about which universities to apply to – and which offers to accept. Even similar universities or colleges can offer very different bursary amounts.

Where to find out more

- For general information on bursaries, see the student finance pages on www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance (including Student Finance Calculator) or www.offa.org.uk/students
- For details of bursaries at a particular university, see the student finance pages on the university's website

(Please note: all the information in this leaflet relates to England only. Different rules may apply if students normally live outside England or if they're doing their course outside England. All figures apply to the academic year 2011-12 unless otherwise stated.)

⁴ Research commissioned by OFFA shows that fewer than half of students search for information on bursaries before submitting their UCAS application form.