



# **GUERNSEY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

## **Appendix II**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

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Here are some of the most frequently asked questions regarding Higher Education Awards. If your question is not answered here, please contact the Grants Section at the Education Department (Tel: 733000) who will be happy to help you.

### **What is the difference between an assessed award and a fee subsidy only award?**

An assessed award is based on an assessment of gross household worldwide income and assets. A fee subsidy only award does not require a declaration of income or assets and parents assume responsibility for the maximum contribution.

### **On whose income is the award based?**

It depends. The award is based on worldwide household income and assets, which means the income and assets of both parents, or if parents are separated, the parent with whom the student lives and any new partner of the parent who may now live with them. In exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Education Department, the income of an absent parent may be taken into account.

### **I'm not sure if I should declare my assets?**

If you have assets worth more than £100,000 (excluding your main residence and approved pension schemes) you should declare them all on your application form.

### **I'm living with a new partner who pays maintenance to a former partner, is this taken into account?**

Yes. This will need to be declared in the relevant section on your application form, and will be deducted when the Department makes an assessment.

Likewise, any maintenance your partner receives from a former partner is taken into account and should be declared on the application form.

### **Is there a maximum length of financial support for awards?**

Students will not be eligible for a grant for more than five years of study in total if they are studying qualifications up to and including masters courses at level 7 (excluding medicine and dentistry courses, which are, by necessity, longer) or more than seven years of study for PhD/DPhil courses.

**My parents have separated/divorced since I started my course, what happens to my grant?**

Where a student's parents are living together on 30<sup>th</sup> June prior to the commencement of the course, but cease to live together at a later date, the grant will be assessed by reference to the income of both parents until the end of the course. The parents should complete separate application forms and will be assessed separately.

**We have two children studying further/higher education at the same time. Does this mean we will have to pay twice as much towards their education?**

Not normally. Most parents with two or more children away at the same time are eligible for an assessed award. Many of these will contribute the same for two as they would have for one. However this is not the case for all families and some may still be required to pay the maximum contribution for each child.

Where there is more than one student eligible for grant in a family the parental contribution is assessed in the same way as if there were only one student, and is then divided between the students, usually in equal proportions.

If you are unclear, please contact the Grants Section.

**How will my grant be paid?**

Maintenance: If you qualify for maintenance, this is paid in three termly amounts, appropriate to the length of your terms, directly into your bank account, usually the Friday before your term starts. You should ensure that the Grants Section have your correct bank account details.

Tuition Fees: If you have been assessed to have a contribution towards tuition fees, you should pay this amount only, directly to the institution. The Education Department will pay its contribution, upon receipt of invoice, directly to the institution.

**Can I claim for my travel expenses between Guernsey and my institution?**

No. These are included within the maintenance grant should you be eligible. There is no need for students to claim separately.

**I think the term dates are different to those you have on record – does this matter?**

It may do. The Department contacts each institution annually and obtains its term dates. The Department uses these term dates for each student at that institution. Some courses do not follow the general terms. If you believe your terms are longer, shorter, or start on different dates to those which the Department has on record, obtain

written confirmation from the institute and forward it to us. The Department will then update your record, and if they are altered, your maintenance will be amended accordingly.

**I have to go on a compulsory field trip will my travel allowance be increased or can I claim for the trip?**

No. Travel grants for field trips and individual study visits (e.g. to museums and libraries) are no longer payable.

**I am required to undertake a work placement as part of my course – can I claim for travel expenses?**

Yes, in certain circumstances you may claim for the cost of travel to unpaid work placements (e.g. teaching practice for students training to be teachers and hospital placements for students taking courses in professions allied to medicine.)

To claim for such expenses, you should contact the Education Department for the relevant form.

Students in receipt of a Fee Subsidy Only award, or a minimum grant, are ineligible.

**What happens if I am required to spend a year of my course abroad?**

If attendance at an overseas institution is a requirement of the course, the student is treated in the same way as if studying at a UK institution.

**What happens if I don't want to study in the UK but somewhere else abroad?**

In exceptional circumstances and provided you have a genuine academic reason for this choice **and** the course is fully accredited **and** of an educational standard at least as high as that of recognised courses in the UK you may be eligible for a grant, but this is discretionary and the Department will not pay more than the cost of studying an equivalent course in the UK.

Any fees will need to be paid by the student/parent in the first instance.

The Education Department recommends that anyone who wishes to study outside the UK contact the Department as soon as possible for advice.

**What happens if I am absent from the course due to illness?**

If you are absent from the course for more than 40 days due to illness or any other reason, you should contact the Education Department immediately.

**What should I do if I want to change course or institution or if I want to withdraw from the course completely?**

If a student withdraws from a course, he will be asked to repay all or part of the maintenance grant for the relevant term. The Department may ask for repayment of part of the tuition fees depending on the circumstances.

If a student withdraws from his original course and applies for an award in respect of another course, the Department may, at its discretion, make an award for the new course. If the student will enter his new course at year one, he will normally be required to borrow the value of the Department grant already paid for his first course (including the grant for tuition costs) as a loan. The balance of costs will be awarded as a grant and the normal rules for the assessment of grant apply.

If the student enters the new course at the level above that which he achieved on the former course he will normally be awarded a grant. (For example, the student had completed the first year of a degree course in one subject and transferred to the second year of another degree course.)

**What happens if I have to repeat a year?**

A student who has to repeat a year of his course will not be given a grant for the repeat year, except in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Education Department, such as a major interruption of study due to illness where a detailed medical certificate is required.

If a grant is not awarded, the Department may, at its discretion, offer the student a loan subject to confirmation of satisfactory attendance and effort by the Institution.

**Who can help me fill in my application form?**

If you require any assistance, please telephone the Grants Section on 733000.