

Higher Education Funding Council for England

Title	Postgraduate Support Scheme: Guidance for institutions receiving funding to support postgraduate students 2015-16
To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of HEFCE-funded further education colleges
Of interest to those responsible for	Postgraduate education, Access and student success, Research and innovation
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Enquiries to	postgraduatesupport@hefce.ac.uk

Dear Vice-Chancellor or Principal

Postgraduate Support Scheme: Guidance for institutions receiving funding to support postgraduate students 2015-16

1. In its Autumn Statement, the Government confirmed that HEFCE would provide £50 million to institutions during 2015-16, which with matched funding would enable 10,000 masters students each to receive a £10,000 contribution towards the cost of their studies. This is intended to build upon the pilot Postgraduate Support Scheme (PSS) during 2014-15, and to provide a bridge to the proposed implementation of a loan scheme for masters students from 2016-17 onwards.
2. This letter sets out the approach we have used to determine how the 2015-16 funding has been allocated to institutions, and how it may be used, in terms of the nature of awards to students and how they may be targeted. Annex A provides a list of institutions receiving funding for 2015-16, together with an initial amount of funding each institution will receive and an initial number of £10,000 awards to be allocated, taking into account matched funding.
3. The allocations to each institution represent a minimum amount of money and number of awards, and total 90 per cent of the £50 million funding available. These allocations are intended to provide a guaranteed number of awards, and thereby to enable institutions to begin immediately to determine their approach to allocations.
4. Institutions are invited to nominate an individual to act as PSS lead contact. This person should e-mail confirmation of contact details to postgraduatesupport@hefce.ac.uk no later than **Friday 19 December 2014**.
5. The PSS lead, or a suitable alternative, should if possible attend a briefing event we have scheduled for **Thursday 8 January 2015** at Woburn House, London. This event will enable all institutions receiving PSS 2015-16 funding to talk to HEFCE officers and the PSS 2014-15 pilot programme leads, to clarify their approaches to supporting under-represented students and their strategies for meeting the aims of PSS 2015-16. Details of the event will be e-mailed to PSS lead contacts on Monday 22 December 2014.

6. Institutions may decline this funding, in part or whole. Institutions wishing to do this should e-mail postgraduatesupport@hefce.ac.uk no later than **Tuesday 27 January 2015** with the specific amount of funding and number of awards they wish to decline.

7. With the expectation of a loan scheme being introduced for 2016-17, this funding is for one year only and the data used to determine allocations, as is common in other funding areas, has been used as a proxy. Nevertheless, we have held back 10 per cent of the funding at this point to accommodate any material changes to allocations that may be needed as a result of data queries. We are acutely aware of the need for universities and colleges to have a firm idea of the absolute number of awards allocated as soon as possible, given the timing of recruitment activities for 2015-16. We have, therefore, determined that data changes that would result in 10 or fewer additional awards being allocated will not be regarded as material for this purpose. This enables us to set a minimum allocation now for all institutions, which will not be reduced as a consequence of data queries which we know can take time to resolve and agree. Any data queries should be sent to postgraduatesupport@hefce.ac.uk, no later than **Tuesday 27 January 2015**.

8. We aim to resolve any data queries by early March when we will confirm a final allocation of funding and awards taking account also of any declined funding. This should not, however, prevent institutions from beginning to allocate the minimum amounts set out in Annex A.

Background

9. In November 2013, the Government announced that it would repurpose £50 million from the National Scholarship Programme to support progression to taught postgraduate education. It signalled that its approach to allocating the funding would build upon lessons derived from the Postgraduate Support Scheme 2014-15, which was launched by HEFCE in July 2013 to test innovative activity and finance models to support progression and participation.

10. In the 2014 Autumn Statement, the Government confirmed its intention to introduce income-contingent loans for students under 30 years old wishing to undertake a postgraduate taught masters in any subject. These loans, of up to £10,000, are planned to be available from 2016-17. The Government also indicated that, as a bridge to this during 2015-16, HEFCE would allocate £50 million to enable institutions to offer awards of £10,000 to students on a matched-funding basis.

Institutional allocations

11. In the interest of informing institutions as early as possible about the funding they are likely to receive, we have allocated 90 per cent of the funding as initial allocations, which institutions should be able immediately to factor into their recruitment of taught postgraduate students in 2015-16.

12. The Government has agreed that we should focus the allocation on students who are under-represented at taught postgraduate level. We know from previous HEFCE research that students from the areas identified as lower participation at undergraduate level are also less likely to progress directly to a masters course, compounding the disparity at undergraduate level (see 'Trends in young participation in higher education',

HEFCE 2013/28). There have also been concerns about the level of support for students who report a disability at postgraduate level, compared with that available for undergraduates. The formula used to determine institutional allocations is therefore based on the population of HEFCE-fundable masters students in each institution who are from the lowest participation areas or in receipt of a Disabled Students Allowance.

13. In Annex A, the initial allocations for each institution are presented in terms of total PSS funding allocated and as a number of awards, which with matched funding will be worth £10,000 per student.

Nature of support

14. We have agreed with the Government that funding should be provided to each student as a £10,000 award, half of which should be supplied by the institution or other sources. The institutional contribution may take the form of a reduction to the published tuition fee.

15. Awards should be restricted to students who are:

- progressing from an undergraduate course for which they were charged the higher tuition fee applying since 2012-13
- undertaking masters courses in any subject
- studying full-time or part-time for a maximum of two years
- domiciled in the UK or European Union (EU)
- from a group that is evidentially under-represented among the institution's taught masters population.

16. As with the pilot programme in 2014-15, institutions should determine which students to support using their evidence of groups who are under-represented within their taught postgraduate programmes. This year, however, we can supplement this with evidence from the pilot projects, which identifies the ways in which institutions have targeted different types of students for support.

17. In headline terms, the under-represented students supported in 2014-15 have for the most part been from low-participation backgrounds at undergraduate level, specifically those from low performing socio-economic areas, with disabilities, or with characteristics that are under-represented in specific disciplines such as women in Engineering.

18. To ensure funding reached the intended students, pilot projects developed application processes to identify one or more of the following attributes:

- classification in the lowest quintiles of the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) measure
- disability
- household income
- status as a care leaver
- status as the first in a family to attend higher education

- receipt of benefits
- domicile in the UK or EU.

The institutions then used these criteria to determine eligibility for their financial support.

19. The list above is not exhaustive, and institutions in 2015-16 may determine other preferable criteria to use, reflecting the particular student and employer constituencies with which they work.

20. PSS funding is intended to support HEFCE-fundable masters provision. It should not be delivered to students undertaking non-HEFCE fundable provision, such as those on courses funded by other public bodies, or students from outside the EU.

21. It is expected that PSS funding should be spent by the end of academic year 2015-16. For part-time students who receive awards, the HEFCE funding should be spent in academic year 2015-16 and the matched funding used for 2016-17.

22. Institutions should ensure they comply with relevant equality and diversity legislation in targeting students for any PSS-related recruitment or retention activities. Some PSS 2014-15 pilot projects focused on their localities and the needs of local students and employers, having received legal advice based on their data and specified focus. Institutions should be aware that their grounds to target different student groups may depend on their particular circumstances and student populations, and should consult legal advisors when considering any particular targeting mechanisms to ensure that they respect relevant legislative requirements.

23. The 8 January briefing event at Woburn House will help institutions share thinking and practice in this area, including by hearing from the projects supported in the first phase.

Monitoring and evaluation

24. We are developing a monitoring and evaluation plan. This is essential to meet the Government's expectations, gather evidence on the outcomes from the investment, and thereby enable us to judge value for money and influence future funding, policy and practice. We aim to gather information in a format consistent with our wider approach to Student Opportunity funding.

25. In this scheme, the key outcomes we will be seeking to identify will include:

- a. The number of students who would not otherwise have participated in taught masters programmes, and the benefits to the individuals, the economy and society from this.
- b. The level of investment in postgraduate education attracted during 2015-16 from employers, institutions, donors and students themselves, and the extent to which this is later sustained.
- c. The practical learning benefits from applying the lessons from PSS activities across the sector during 2015-16, and from gathering and disseminating further learning to inform later activity.

26. In order to capture those outcomes and evaluate the impact of this funding, we ask institutions to do the following:

- a. Record PSS-supported students in the 'HESA Initiatives' field in the 2015-16 HESA survey. Details of the field will be available in relevant HESA guidance.
- b. Answer PSS-related questions in the HEFCE Annual Monitoring Statement in December 2015.
- c. Complete an end-of-project report in autumn 2016.

Data queries

27. We have withheld 10 per cent of the funding at this point to accommodate any material (i.e. affecting more than 10 awards) changes to allocations that may be necessary as a result of data queries. Any data queries should be sent to postgraduatesupport@hefce.ac.uk, no later than **Tuesday 27 January 2015**. We recognise that the proposed timeline is very tight and comes at a difficult time of year, but we want to provide institutions with a definitive picture of their funding as quickly as possible, to avoid any further delays in factoring it into the recruitment of taught postgraduate students in 2015-16. Details of data used to determine allocations can be found in Annex B.

28. Once the deadline for data queries and for institutions to opt out of this funding has passed, allocations will be recalculated. Institutions will be informed of any additional available funding and awards in March 2015. We have reserved 10 per cent of the funding for possible material amendments, which we would expect to be exceptional, in order to ensure that recalculations result only in an uplift to allocations. Institutions should be mindful of this possible increase when determining their approach to allocating awards.

29. On Tuesday 23 December 2014, links to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Individualised Learner Record files and related technical documents will be sent directly to the usual contact for the Higher Education Students: Early Statistics or Higher Education in Further Education: Students survey contacts at each institution receiving funding. We invite institutions to review these documents and to e-mail any queries to postgraduatesupport@hefce.ac.uk, no later than **Tuesday 27 January 2015**.

Timetable

15 December 2014	PSS guidance and initial allocations published.
19 December 2014	Deadline for submitting PSS lead contact details to HEFCE.
22 December 2014	Event details e-mailed to PSS lead contacts.
23 December 2014	HESA/ILR documents emailed to survey contacts.
8 January 2015	HEFCE-hosted briefing event for all institutions receiving PSS funding.
27 January 2015	Deadline for data queries. Deadline for institutions to decline funding.
20 March 2015	Institutions informed of any uplift to allocations.

Next steps

30. Institutions should nominate a PSS lead contact, who should e-mail confirmation of their contact details to postgraduatesupport@hefce.ac.uk no later than **Friday 19 December 2014**. They, or if they are not available an alternative, should if possible attend the briefing on **Thursday 8 January 2015** at Woburn House.

31. Institutions wishing to decline this funding, in part or whole, should e-mail postgraduatesupport@hefce.ac.uk no later than **Tuesday 27 January 2015** with the specific amount they wish to decline.

32. PSS allocations may increase in March 2015 when we allocate the 10 per cent withheld).

33. All data queries, notification of declined funding, and general enquiries should be sent to postgraduatesupport@hefce.ac.uk or made by phone to 0117 931 7484.

Yours sincerely

Professor Madeleine Atkins

Chief Executive

Annex A PSS initial funding allocations for 2015-16

Institution	Number of full (£10,000) awards	2015-16 PSS initial allocation (£)
Higher education institutions		
Anglia Ruskin University	92	460,000
Aston University	45	225,000
The University of Bath	74	370,000
Bath Spa University	25	125,000
University of Bedfordshire	59	295,000
Birkbeck College	83	415,000
The University of Birmingham	224	1,120,000
Birmingham City University	32	160,000
University College Birmingham	9	45,000
The University of Bolton	4	20,000
The Arts University Bournemouth	3	15,000
Bournemouth University	93	465,000
The University of Bradford	89	445,000
University of Brighton	95	475,000
University of Bristol	119	595,000
Brunel University London	93	465,000
Buckinghamshire New University	19	95,000
University of Cambridge	67	335,000
The Institute of Cancer Research	2	10,000
Canterbury Christ Church University	35	175,000
University of Central Lancashire	138	690,000
University of Chester	68	340,000
The University of Chichester	14	70,000
The City University	95	475,000
Courtauld Institute of Art	11	55,000
Coventry University	156	780,000
Cranfield University	162	810,000
University for the Creative Arts	21	105,000
University of Cumbria	15	75,000
The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama	4	20,000
De Montfort University	30	150,000
University of Derby	64	320,000
University of Durham	114	570,000
The University of East Anglia	107	535,000
University of East London	42	210,000
Edge Hill University	24	120,000

Institution	Number of full (£10,000) awards	2015-16 PSS initial allocation (£)
The University of Essex	108	540,000
University of Exeter	134	670,000
Falmouth University	23	115,000
University of Gloucestershire	23	115,000
Goldsmiths' College	83	415,000
University of Greenwich	26	130,000
Guildhall School of Music & Drama	25	125,000
Harper Adams University	2	10,000
University of Hertfordshire	52	260,000
Heythrop College	3	15,000
The University of Huddersfield	75	375,000
The University of Hull	66	330,000
Imperial College London	155	775,000
The University of Keele	59	295,000
The University of Kent	177	885,000
King's College London	273	1,365,000
Kingston University	84	420,000
The University of Lancaster	111	555,000
The University of Leeds	162	810,000
Leeds Beckett University	80	400,000
Leeds Trinity University	3	15,000
The University of Leicester	127	635,000
University of Lincoln	37	185,000
The University of Liverpool	95	475,000
Liverpool Hope University	31	155,000
Liverpool John Moores University	106	530,000
University of the Arts, London	127	635,000
University of London	4	20,000
University College London	276	1,380,000
London Business School	2	10,000
The London School of Economics and Political Science	175	875,000
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	30	150,000
London Metropolitan University	84	420,000
London South Bank University	46	230,000
Loughborough University	82	410,000
The University of Manchester	258	1,290,000
Manchester Metropolitan University	131	655,000
Middlesex University	53	265,000
The National Film and Television School	6	30,000
University of Newcastle Upon Tyne	111	555,000

Institution	Number of full (£10,000) awards	2015-16 PSS initial allocation (£)
Newman University	13	65,000
The University of Northampton	54	270,000
University of Northumbria at Newcastle	118	590,000
Norwich University of the Arts	6	30,000
The University of Nottingham	175	875,000
Nottingham Trent University	99	495,000
The Open University	18	90,000
The School of Oriental and African Studies	64	320,000
University of Oxford	150	750,000
Oxford Brookes University	77	385,000
University of Plymouth	130	650,000
Plymouth College of Art	3	15,000
University of Portsmouth	137	685,000
Queen Mary University of London	86	430,000
Ravensbourne	1	5,000
The University of Reading	64	320,000
Roehampton University	29	145,000
The Royal Academy of Music	6	30,000
The Royal Agricultural University	7	35,000
The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama	41	205,000
The Royal College of Art	155	775,000
Royal College of Music	9	45,000
Royal Holloway, University of London	75	375,000
Royal Northern College of Music	10	50,000
The Royal Veterinary College	10	50,000
St. George's, University of London	6	30,000
University of St Mark & St John	3	15,000
St Mary's University, Twickenham	7	35,000
The University of Salford	154	770,000
The University of Sheffield	220	1,100,000
Sheffield Hallam University	141	705,000
The University of Southampton	98	490,000
Southampton Solent University	37	185,000
Staffordshire University	31	155,000
University Campus Suffolk Ltd	8	40,000
University of Sunderland	68	340,000
The University of Surrey	77	385,000
University of Sussex	107	535,000
Teesside University	53	265,000
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance Ltd	13	65,000

Institution	Number of full (£10,000) awards	2015-16 PSS initial allocation (£)
The University of Warwick	102	510,000
University of the West of England, Bristol	85	425,000
The University of West London	8	40,000
The University of Westminster	79	395,000
University of Winchester	13	65,000
The University of Wolverhampton	130	650,000
University of Worcester	25	125,000
The University of York	142	710,000
York St John University	8	40,000
Further education colleges		
Bradford College	2	10,000
Colchester Institute	2	10,000
Doncaster College	6	30,000
Hull College	1	5,000
Leeds City College	3	15,000
Ruskin College	2	10,000
Total	9,000	45,000,000

Annex B Method used to inform the initial allocation for 2015-16

The funding allocation method which has been used to inform the initial postgraduate support scheme (PSS) allocation for 2015-16 is described below.

Definitions

The PSS allocations use area-based classifications of low participation or low educational attainment background. The following definitions outline the two classifications used for the initial PSS allocation.

Young HE participation by 2001 census area statistics ward

The young HE participation quintiles come from our work on measuring young participation 'Trends in young participation in higher education' (HEFCE 2013/28, available at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2013/201328/>). For these calculations we use our POLAR3 area classification which is based on young people who reached the age of 18 between 2005 and 2009 and entered a higher education (HE) course in the UK aged 18 or 19. Young participation rates are calculated for each 2001 census area statistics ward in the UK and used to classify the wards into five participation quintiles, each containing 20 per cent of the UK young population for this period. The quintiles are numbered 1 (the lowest 20 per cent of young HE participation rate) to 5 (the highest 20 per cent of young HE participation rate).

Adult HE qualifications by 2001 census area statistics ward

The adult HE qualification quintiles are based on 2001 census area statistics. We use the national equivalents of the 2001 Census Key Statistics table 13 (KS013, 'Qualifications and students') for 2001 Census Output Areas (subsequently aggregated to 2001 census area statistics wards). These tables can be obtained from the Office for National Statistics, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. We calculate the proportion of 16-74 year-olds with an HE qualification for UK 2001 census small area statistics wards. These wards are then ranked by this proportion to give the adult HE qualification quintiles, with each quintile covering 20 per cent of the English 16-74 year-old population. The quintiles are numbered 1 (lowest proportion of HE qualified adults) to 5 (highest proportion of HE qualified adults).

National Statistics Postcode Directory

We allocate postcodes to 2001 census area statistics wards using the 2012 release of the Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory. A file containing the allocation of postcode to young participation and adult HE qualification quintiles is available on the POLAR3 section of the HEFCE web-site (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/ourresearch/polar/polar3data/>). This file also identifies postcodes which are excluded from the quintile mapping along with the reason for exclusion.

Funding method

Step 1

Wherever possible we linked 2012-13 HESA and ILR data for UK-domiciled HEFCE-fundable masters entrants¹ estimated with at least 45 per cent FTE aged 36 or under² to earlier HESA and ILR returns to establish the student's postcode when they were aged 19 or under. We mapped these postcodes to POLAR3 quintiles. For all other UK-domiciled HEFCE-fundable masters entrants with at least 45 per cent estimated FTE (that is, those aged 37 or over, or those where we were unable to make a link), we mapped their 2012-13 HESA or ILR postcode to the adult HE qualification quintiles.

Step 2

We identified UK-domiciled HEFCE-fundable masters entrants estimated with at least 45 per cent FTE who were in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) according to their 2012-13 HESA or ILR data.

Step 3

For each institution we calculated an average weighting as follows:

Total FTE of 'under-represented' UK-domiciled HEFCE-fundable masters entrants with at least 45 per cent FTE
Total FTE of UK-domiciled HEFCE-fundable masters entrants with at least 45 per cent FTE

where a student was considered to be 'under-represented' if either they were:

- assigned to quintiles 1 or 2 according to Step 1, or
- in receipt of DSA according to Step 2.

The FTE of students that were considered to be 'under-represented' due to both Steps 1 and 2 were **not** counted twice in the numerator of the average weight calculation.

Step 4

For each institution we calculated a weighted FTE as follows:

$$\text{Weighted FTE} = \text{average weighting (from Step 3)} \times \text{total FTE of HEFCE-fundable masters entrants with at least 45 per cent FTE}^3$$

¹ Excluding masters entrants on courses that are eligible for undergraduate student support.

² The restriction to '36 or under' reflects our ability to link students back to the 1995-96 HESA record.

³ Total FTE of HEFCE-fundable masters entrants estimated with at least 45 per cent FTE includes the FTE of non-UK-domiciled HEFCE-fundable masters entrants with at least 45 per cent FTE that were not used in the calculation of the average weighting.

Step 5

The weighted FTE is multiplied by the PSS rate⁴. This figure is then rounded to the nearest whole number to calculate the initial number of full PSS awards for the institution in 2015-16. The number of initial full PSS awards is then multiplied by the value of the HEFCE contribution to one full award (i.e. 5000 pounds) to give the initial 2015-16 PSS allocation for the institution.

⁴ The PSS rate is the total number of full PSS awards available for 2015-16 (9,000) divided by the total weighted FTEs in the sector. The PSS rate (that is, the number of awards per weighted FTE) for the 2015-16 initial PSS allocation is 0.0107768703. A detailed technical description of the HESA/ILR data and the methodology used for calculating the allocations will be available on the 23 December.