

SDR 170/2015

22 October 2015

Welsh Government Learning Grants Awarded to Welsh Domiciled Students in Further Education, 2014/15

This Statistical First Release presents information on the number of Welsh Government Learning Grants (WGLGs) awarded in 2014/15 to Further Education (FE) students, as at the end of July 2015. These were previously called Assembly Learning Grants (ALGs) prior to 2014/15. The release is based on data provided by the Student Loans Company (SLC) and is correct as at 13 October 2015. Statistics on WGLGs for Higher Education (HE) students are published separately by SLC.

The WGLG FE is an income-assessed grant that was introduced to encourage people aged 19 or over and living in Wales to continue with their education. Students can receive payments of up to £1,500 if they are in full-time education or up to £750 if they are in part-time education.

Key results:

There was a decrease in the number of successful applications in 2014/15 compared with 2013/14. This resulted in £7.4 million being paid out in WGLGs to FE students in 2014/15, compared to the £8.0 million that was paid out in 2013/14.

- In total, 7,920 students in FE applied for a WGLG in 2014/15, a decrease of 8 per cent on 2013/14. Of these, 6,930 applications were successful, a decrease of 8 per cent on 2013/14 [Chart 1, Table 1].
- The breakdown of successful applications across full-time and part-time students varied slightly from recent years. 6,290 (91 per cent) of successful applications were from full-time students and 525 (8 per cent) of successful applications were from part-time students [Chart 2, Table 1].
- Successful applications* equate to 87 per cent of applications received. This proportion has increased steadily from 79 per cent in 2008/09. The proportion of successful applications from full-time students remains very high at around 99 per cent, with the corresponding figure for part-time students at 88 per cent [Chart 1, Chart 2, Table 1].
- 4,990 (79 per cent) of successful full-time applications and 450 (86 per cent) of successful part-time applications were from students with a residual income of £6,120 or less, and were therefore awarded the full grant amounts of £1,500 and £750 respectively. These proportions have changed little since 2008/09; however the residual income bands have changed over time (see Notes section 1.2) [Chart 5].
- 2,795 (44 per cent) of successful full-time applications and 80 (15 per cent) of successful part-time applications were from students aged 21 or under [Chart 3, Chart 4, Table 2].

* 115 (2 per cent) of successful applications were from students where the mode of study was 'unknown' (see Notes section 5.5).

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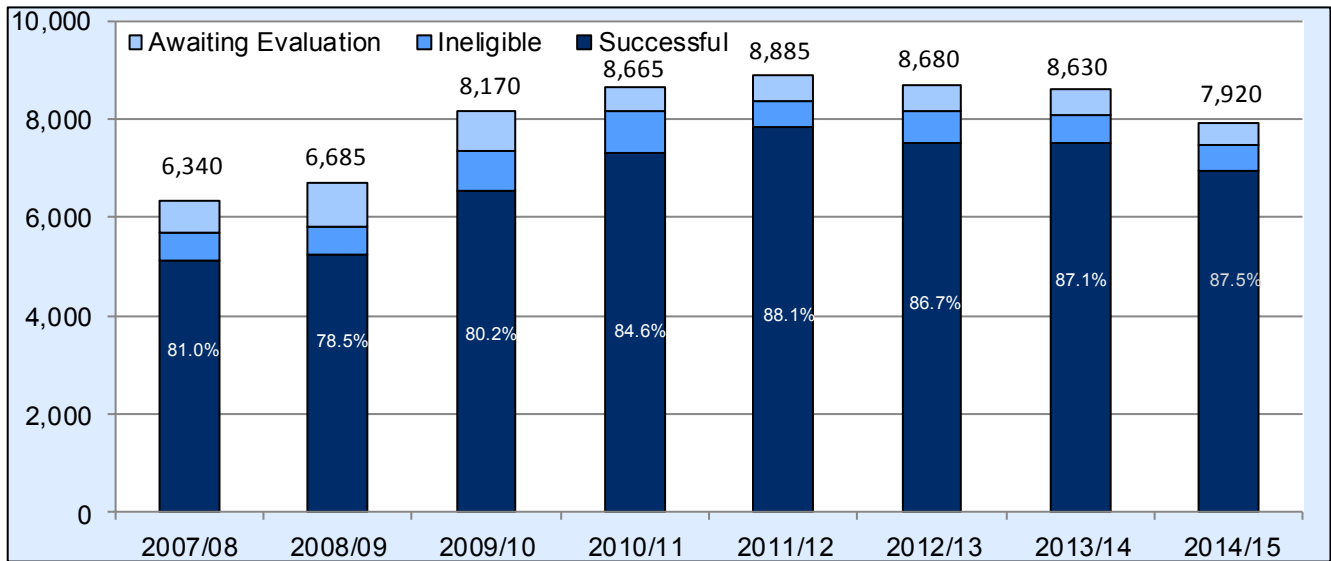
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WGLG FE Applications by Workstage and Mode of Study

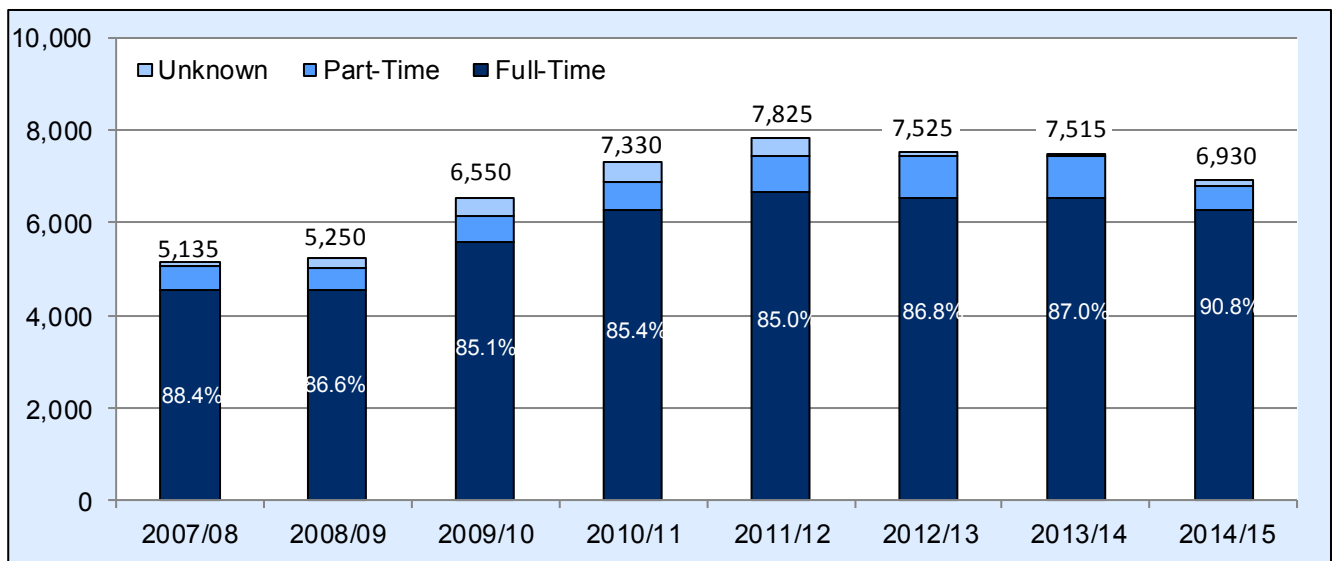
Chart 1: Applications for WGLG FE by Application Workstage, 2014/15



Source: Student Loans Company

In 2014/15 there were 7,920 applications for a WGLG FE, a decrease of 8 per cent on the previous academic year. The number of successful applications was 6,930, a decrease of 8 per cent on the previous academic year [see Table 1].

Chart 2: Successful Applications by Mode of Study, 2014/15



Source: Student Loans Company

In 2014/15, 6,290 (91 per cent) of successful applications were from full-time students, a decrease of 4 per cent compared to 6,540 (87 per cent) of successful applications in 2013/14. 525 (8 per cent) of successful applications were from part-time students, a 42 per cent decrease on 2013/14 [see Table 1].

Table 1: Applications by Outcome and Mode of Study (a)(b)

Academic Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Full-Time					
Successful	6,260	6,655	6,535	6,540	6,290
Ineligible	130	100	185	160	85
Awaiting Evaluation	10	5	20	10	10
Total	6,400	6,760	6,740	6,710	6,380
Part-time (c)					
Successful	615	775	910	900	525
Ineligible	165	105	150	120	70
Awaiting evaluation	*	0	5	0	0
Total	785	880	1,065	1,020	595
Unknown					
Successful	455	395	80	80	115
Ineligible	555	330	310	290	400
Awaiting evaluation	470	520	485	535	430
Total	1,480	1,245	875	900	945
All Successful applications	7,330	7,825	7,525	7,515	6,930
All Applications	8,665	8,885	8,680	8,630	7,920

(a) All figures at as 31 July

Source: Student Loans Company

(b) A '*' denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

(c) Part-time applications include applications where the course of study is below threshold of taught hours.

In 2014/15 there were 6,380 applications for financial assistance from full-time students, of which 6,290 (99 per cent) were successful. Similarly, there were 595 applications from part-time students, of which 525 (88 per cent) were successful.

Applications by Age

Chart 3: Successful Full-Time Applications by Age, 2014/15

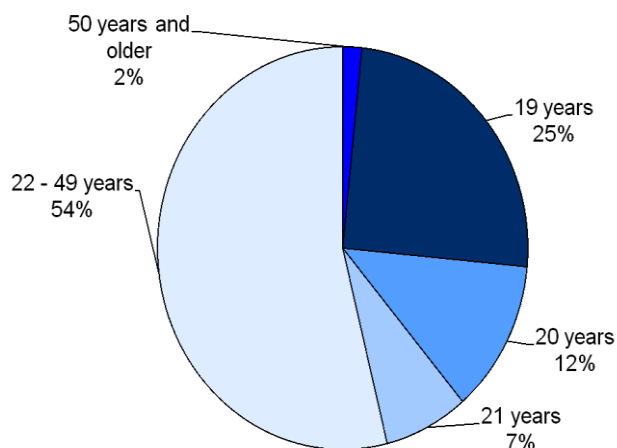
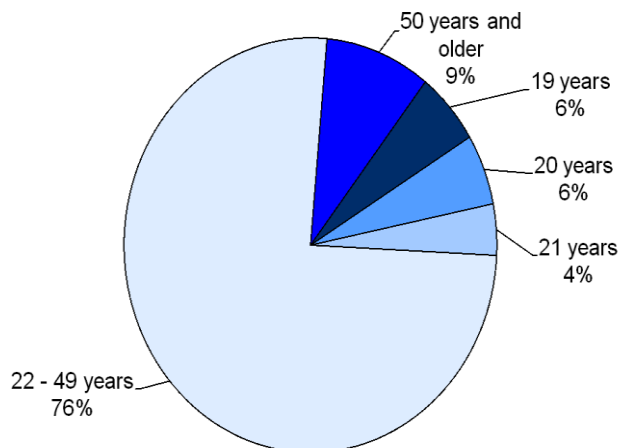


Chart 4: Successful Part-Time Applications by Age, 2014/15



(a) All figures rounded to the nearest integer (i.e percentages may not sum to 100)

1,560 (25 per cent) of the successful full-time applications were from 19 year olds, 775 (12 per cent) were from 20 year olds, 460 (7 per cent) were from 21 year olds, 3,385 (54 per cent) were from applicants aged between 22 and 49, and 105 (2 per cent) were from applicants aged 50 and over.

30 (6 per cent) of the successful part-time applications were from 19 year olds, 30 (6 per cent) were from 20 year olds, 20 (4 per cent) were from 21 year olds, 395 (76 per cent) were from applicants aged between 22 and 49, and 50 (9 per cent) were from applicants aged 50 and over. Applicants whose age was 'unknown' made up the remaining number of successful part-time applications [see Table 2].

Table 2: Successful Applications by Age and Mode of Study (a)(b)

	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
19 years	1,360	65	1,490	50	1,505	75	1,550	75	1,560	30
20 years	750	30	805	45	840	50	830	55	775	30
21 years	525	30	555	40	550	50	545	35	460	20
22 to 49 years	3,525	455	3,595	565	3,520	640	3,490	630	3,385	395
50 years and over	90	35	115	60	115	95	120	100	105	50
Unknown	*	*	90	15	*	0	5	*	0	0
Total	6,260	615	6,655	775	6,535	910	6,540	900	6,290	525

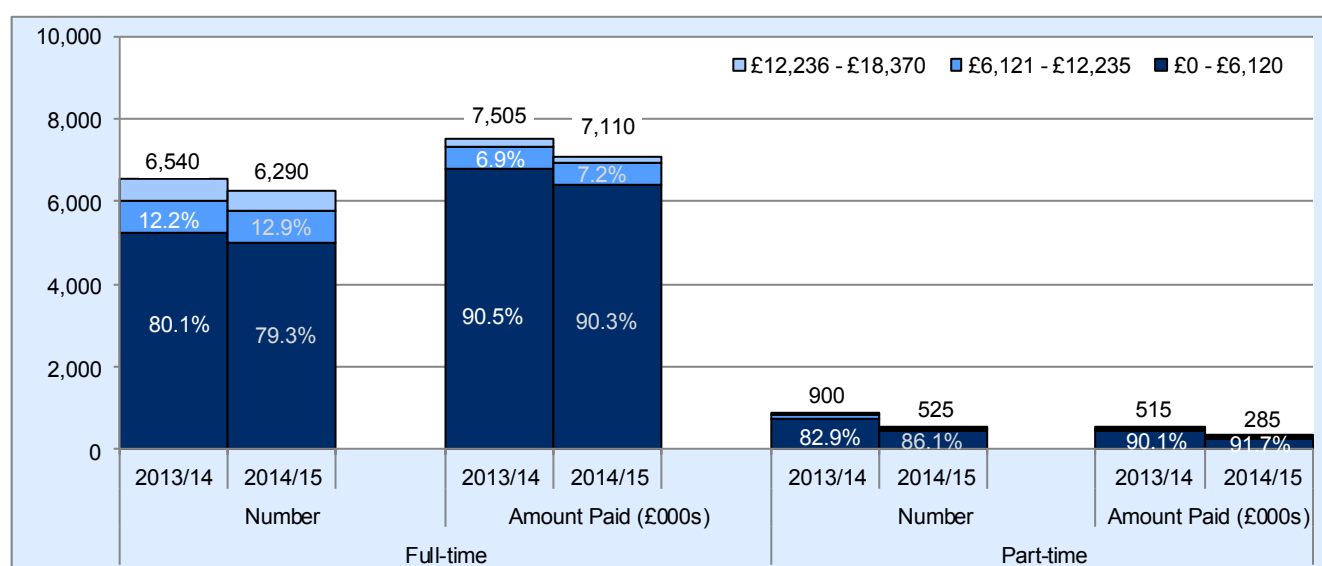
(a) All figures as at 31 July

(b) A '*' denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

Source: Student Loans Company

Applications and Amount Paid by Household Income

Chart 5: Successful Applications and Amount Paid by Household Income, 2014/15



Source: Student Loans Company

An overall total of £7.4 million was paid out in WGLGs to FE students in 2014/15, a decrease of 8 per cent on the £8.0 million that was paid out in 2013/14.

4,990 (79 per cent) of successful full-time applications and 450 (86 per cent) of successful part-time applications were from students with a residual income of £6,120 or less, and were therefore awarded the full grant of £1,500 and £750 respectively.

Successful Applications by Type of Institution

Table 3: Successful Applications by Institution 2014/15

	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Welsh Institutions	6,200	605	6,610	765	6,480	905	6,480	895	6,240	520
<i>of which (per cent)</i>										
FE Institutions (c)	97%	79%	98%	75%	96%	73%	98%	70%	97%	95%
HE Institutions	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	-	1%	-	-	1%
Other Learning Centres	1%	17%	-	24%	3%	27%	1%	30%	1%	4%
English Institutions	60	10	45	5	50	5	55	*	50	*
Total	6,260	615	6,655	775	6,535	910	6,540	900	6,290	525

(a) All figures as at July 31

(b) A '-' denotes a percentage less than 0.5 (but not zero).

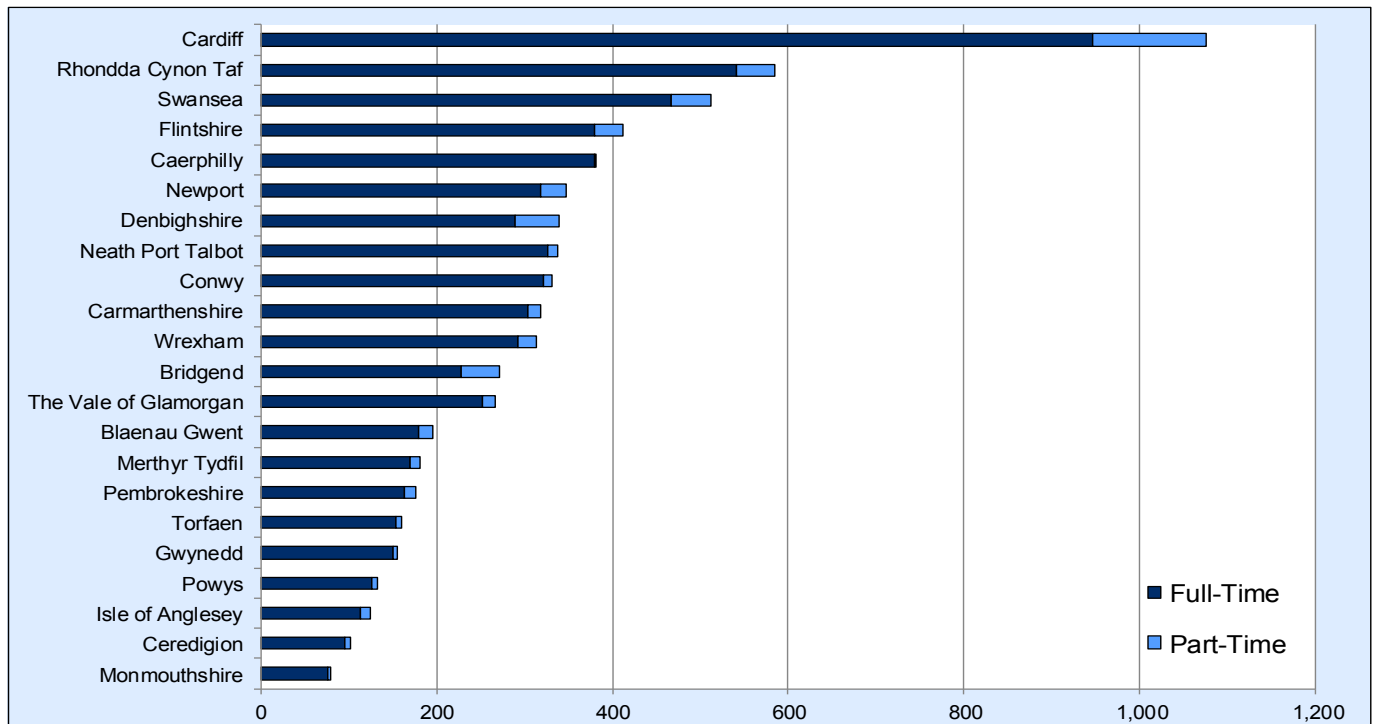
(c) Includes students on courses at the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

Source: Student Loans Company

97 per cent of successful full-time applications were from students attending FE Institutions, with less than 1 per cent from HE Institutions and 1 per cent from Other Learning Centres (which include Community Colleges and Community Education Centres) – similar to the proportions seen in previous years. 95 per cent of successful part-time applications were from students attending FE Institutions, whilst 4 per cent were from Other Learning Centres. This is lower than previous year due to a decrease in the number of applications from three particular Learning Centres.

Applications by Local Authority

Chart 6: Successful Applications by Local Authority and Mode of Study, 2014/15



Source: Student Loans Company

The number of successful applications by local authority, where mode of study is known, ranged from 80 in Monmouthshire to 1,075 in Cardiff. Cardiff accounted for 15 per cent of all full-time successful applications and 25 per cent of all part-time successful applications.

The local authority with the highest proportion of successful applications being from full-time students was Caerphilly, with 99 per cent, and the local authority with the lowest proportion was Bridgend with 84 per cent [see Table 4].

Table 4: Successful Applications by Local Authority and Mode of Study (a)

	2010/11 (b)		2011/12 (b)		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Isle of Anglesey	115	20	110	30	95	25	100	35	115	10
Gwynedd	155	35	205	40	165	60	140	35	165	15
Conwy	335	45	305	40	310	70	280	65	320	30
Denbighshire	270	25	310	20	305	50	315	35	305	15
Flintshire	360	5	400	10	455	10	450	*	380	*
Wrexham	300	20	300	15	300	15	305	15	325	10
Powys	190	15	190	20	180	15	140	15	125	5
Ceredigion	125	25	120	15	135	10	115	15	95	5
Pembrokeshire	155	15	155	10	180	5	180	10	150	5
Carmarthenshire	305	15	340	25	330	35	310	25	295	20
Swansea	500	20	490	25	455	45	485	50	465	45
Neath Port Talbot	260	35	280	55	305	65	300	50	290	50
Bridgend	185	25	265	55	240	60	240	50	230	45
Vale of Glamorgan	245	20	260	25	275	25	260	20	250	15
Cardiff	830	140	955	205	1,020	265	935	305	945	130
Rhondda Cynon Taf	695	70	725	115	575	80	595	100	540	45
Merthyr Tydfil	155	15	125	10	135	10	185	15	170	10
Caerphilly	415	25	380	15	325	15	380	15	320	10
Blaenau Gwent	185	15	215	20	205	25	190	10	155	5
Torfaen	150	10	160	10	145	10	170	10	180	15
Monmouthshire	80	10	75	10	65	5	80	5	75	*
Newport	245	15	285	5	320	10	360	10	380	35
Wales	6,260	615	6,655	775	6,535	910	6,525	900	6,275	525

(a) All figures as at July 31

Source: Student Loans Company

(b) For the 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 full-time total, also included are some (less than 15) applications where Local Authority is in England or unknown.

(c) A "*" denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

Annex: Notes

1. Context

1.1 Policy/operational context

Welsh Government Learning Grants (previously known as Assembly Learning Grants) were introduced by the Welsh Government from academic year 2002/03 to provide extra money for students who might otherwise experience financial difficulty when undertaking post compulsory or higher education undergraduate courses. The grant was available to full and part-time undergraduate students who started their courses in 2002/03 who were domiciled in Wales and studying at a publicly-funded college in the UK. For part-time students their course had to amount to at least 30 credits to be eligible.

The 2002/03 scheme only included students studying at Further Education Institutions or Higher Education Institutions. From 2003/04 the scheme was extended to include students at all learning centres (e.g. schools) providing Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) or Local Education Authority (LEA) facilitated courses. From 2006/07 responsibility for the administration of applications of WGLGs for students at Further Education Institutions was transferred from Local Authorities (LAs) to the Student Loans Company (SLC).

The number of Welsh Government Learning Grants awarded is influenced by the overall numbers of learners in post-16 education, and the effect of the recent recession on employment levels and household income may also have influenced numbers eligible for means-tested allowances.

Further information on Welsh Government Learning Grants can be found at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk.

1.2 Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education) Eligibility Criteria

The grant is available to eligible students studying in Wales or elsewhere in the UK. For a grant to be awarded both the student and course criteria must be satisfied. For the 2011/12 WGLGs FE scheme the student and course criteria included the following:

Student criteria

1. Residence: To be eligible for a grant the first condition is that a student must be ordinarily resident in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course. The second condition is that the student must have been ordinarily resident, for the three years prior to that date, in either (a) the UK or (b) the European Economic Area (EEA), depending on nationality status.
2. Age: 19 or over at the start of the academic year for further education courses. There are no age criteria for WGLG higher education courses.

Course criteria

Further Education: The course is supported through DfES (or equivalent) which requires regular attendance at a Further Education Institution or Other Learning Centre and involves at least 275 taught hours in each academic year.

Calculation of level of award is based on the residual household income of the student or student's family. Residual household income is calculated by taking gross income (before tax and National Insurance) and deducting certain allowances.

For all FE students, where a student is on an eligible course, awards are calculated on the following basis:

Value of Welsh Government Learning Grant by mode of study and residual income, 2011/12 onwards

Further Education	Residual household income			
	Between £0 - £6,120	Between £6,121 - £12,235	Between £12,236 - £18,370	£18,370 or over
Cumulative contact hours in the academic year 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15				
275 – 499	£750	£450	£300	Nil
500 or more	£1,500	£750	£450	Nil

The residual income bands for previous years are:

2010/11 and 2009/10: £0-£5,895, £5,896-£11,790, £11,791-£17,700 and £17,701 or over;

2008/09: £0-£5,745, £5,746-£11,490, £11,491-£17,250 and £17,251 or over.

2. Data source

WGLG FE applications and payments are administered by the SLC. Data held on WGLG FE students is entered by SLC staff onto an administrative database for the purpose of assessing and paying WGLG FE to students. This data is also stored in a management information data warehouse for the purpose of management reporting, operational performance reporting, audit of processes, statistics, future policy planning and forecasting. Processes and systems which enable customer and application assessment data to be held electronically are subject to periodic audit and integrity checks. SLC Internal Audit ensures that the processes governing data entry and application assessment are adhered to. Data integrity validation rules are used to identify and correct errors in data. Management Information extracted from SLC systems are subject to quality assurances prior to distribution.

The data in this release were collected via the SLC management information system and were extracted on 13 October 2015. All information is based on applications received by 31 July 2015.

Prior to the academic year 2006/07 data on applications for WGLG by Welsh domiciled students at FE was collected from Local Authorities. From 2006/07 all data on students at Further Education institutions have been obtained from the SLC.

Further information including numbers of WGLGs administered by the SLC can be found on the [StatsWales](http://StatsWales.gov.wales) website.

3. Definitions

3.1 Students who have withdrawn

The data represented in this release on successful applications refer to applicants who have been approved for a WGLG during the course of the academic year. Students who have withdrawn from their course are not removed from the analysis. Furthermore, figures on successful applications represent the total value of the approved WGLG and have not been adjusted for unpaid or recovered instalments.

4. Rounding strategy

Figures in this release have been rounded to the nearest 5. Due to rounding, the sums of some rows or columns may not add to the total figure given. Numbers less than 5, but not zero, are represented by '*'. A '-' denotes a percentage less than 0.5 (but not zero).

5. Key Quality Information

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability.

5.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Officials in the Welsh Government;
- Other government departments;
- Further Education Institutions, Work-Based Learning providers, schools and local authorities;
- Wales Audit Office;
- Students, researchers, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens, private companies, and the media.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- general background and research;
- inclusions in reports, articles and briefings;
- advice to Ministers;
- to inform and monitor the education policy development and decision-making process in Wales;
- to forecast future expenditure of student support schemes in Wales.

5.2 Accuracy

Statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with the SLC before tables are published. The figures in this release reflect the final position as at the end of the 2014/15 academic year (31 July 2015), and are correct as at 13 October 2015.

5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

This release has met the previously announced date of publication.

5.4 Accessibility and Clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

5.5 Comparability

When the WGLG was introduced for Further Education institutions, the grant was available to students aged 18 and over at the start of the academic year. From 2006/07, the student eligibility criterion for WGLGs for Further Education institutions was changed to students aged 19 and over at the start of the academic year due to the extension of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to include 18 year olds. As a result, figures on applications and awards for students at Further Education institutions for years from 2006/07 onwards will be lower than for previous years and are not directly comparable. Further information on EMAs was published in September in the statistical first release '[Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2014/15](#)'.

The breakdown provided in Table 3 of this release is based on the learning centre details entered by the student on their application form. From 2006/07 the WGLG FE application form only requested the details of the learning centre at which the student would be attending. Prior to 2006/07 the application form requested details of the learning centre providing the course and, where applicable, details of the learning centre to which the course was franchised out. As a result, prior to 2006/07 there may have

been some inconsistency across Local Authorities (LAs) regarding which learning centre they provided information for on the WGLG data collection form.

2014/15 FE data includes approximately 440 applications which, as at the 31 July 2015, were deemed to be awaiting evaluation. These are applications which are incomplete, missing either information from the application or supporting evidence. In 2013/14, 545 applications were deemed as awaiting evaluation, with 510 applications in 2012/13, 525 applications in 2011/12, 480 applications in 2010/11, 815 applications in 2009/10, 875 applications in 2008/09, 665 applications in 2007/08 and 825 applications in 2006/07. Due to the transfer of administration of the WGLG FE from LAs to the SLC in 2006/07 it is possible that in the past applications with missing information or evidence were treated differently, with some LAs cancelling an application after a certain period of time.

Data provided by the SLC on applications for WGLGs from students at Further Education institutions showed approximately 115 successful applications in 2014/15 where the mode of study was 'unknown' and are included in Table 1, but are excluded in other tables showing figures by mode of study.

The data in this release presents information on applications by mode of study for students in Further Education. Previous releases have included information on Welsh Government Learning Grants awarded to students entering Higher Education prior to 2006/07. This data was collected from each Welsh Local Authority. Following the introduction of the new £2,700 Welsh Government Learning Grant in 2006/07, very few applications for WGLGs from Higher Education students have been processed by LAs and the numbers will continue to decrease in future years. Therefore it was decided before the 2007/08 publication, to discontinue the provisional data collection in line with the National Assembly protocol on Managing Respondent Load adopted in 2002 as part of the National Statistics Code of Practice. See below for information on WGLG HE.

6. Further Information

Further detailed information on WGLG FE applications (similar to Table 5 of this Release) can be found on [StatsWales](#).

Further information about the WGLG FE scheme can be found at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk.

Information on WGLG HE is published by the Student Loans Company in the SFR 'Student Support for Higher Education in Wales'. The latest publication can be found at www.slc.co.uk/statistics.

Information on Educational Maintenance Allowances (for younger FE learners) was published in September 2015 in the statistical first release '[Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2014/15](#)'.



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