
STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2007 No. 195

**The Education (Student Support)
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007**

PART 12

SUPPORT FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Eligible postgraduate students

125.—(1) An eligible postgraduate student qualifies, subject to and in accordance with this Part, for a grant to assist with the additional expenditure which the Department is satisfied he is obliged to incur by reason of a disability to which he is subject in respect of his undertaking a designated postgraduate course.

(2) Subject to paragraph (4), a person is an eligible postgraduate student in connection with a designated postgraduate course if in assessing his application for support the Department determines that he satisfies the conditions in paragraph (3).

(3) The conditions are—

- (a) the person falls within one of the categories set out in Part 2 of Schedule 2; and
- (b) by reason of a disability to which he is subject, he will be obliged to incur additional expenditure in respect of his undertaking the course.

(4) A person is not an eligible postgraduate student if—

- (a) there has been made to him or paid to him in connection with the course—
 - (i) a healthcare bursary;
 - (ii) any allowance under the Nursing and Midwifery Student Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 1992⁽¹⁾;
 - (iii) any allowance, bursary or award of similar description made by a Research Council;
 - (iv) any allowance, bursary or award of similar description made by his institution which includes any payment for the purpose of meeting additional expenditure incurred by the student by reason of his disability; or
 - (v) any allowance, bursary or award of similar description made under section 14 (4) (a) of the Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001⁽²⁾ which includes payment for meeting additional expenditure incurred by the student by reason of his disability;
- (b) he is in breach of an obligation to repay any loan;
- (c) he has reached the age of 18 and has not ratified any agreement for a loan made with him when he was under the age of 18; or

⁽¹⁾ S.I. 1992/580, amended by S.S.I. 2002/423, S.S.I. 2003/401 and S.S.I. 2006/323

⁽²⁾ 2001 c. 3 (N.I.)

- (d) he has, in the opinion of the Department, shown himself by his conduct to be unfitted to receive support.
- (5) For the purposes of paragraphs (4)(b) and (4)(c), “loan” means a loan made under the student loans legislation.
- (6) In a case where the agreement for a loan is subject to the law of Scotland, paragraph (4)(c) only applies if the agreement was made—
 - (a) before 25th September 1991; and
 - (b) with the concurrence of the borrower’s curator or at a time when he had no curator.
- (7) An eligible postgraduate student does not qualify for a grant under this Part if the only paragraph in Part 2 of Schedule 2 into which he falls is paragraph 9.
- (8) An eligible postgraduate student does not qualify for a grant under this Part unless the Department considers that he is undertaking his course in the United Kingdom.
- (9) Despite paragraphs (3)(a) and (4), and subject to paragraphs (12) to (14) a person is an eligible postgraduate student for the purposes of this Part if he satisfies the conditions in paragraph (3)(b) and in paragraph (10) or (11).
- (10) The conditions are—
 - (a) the person qualified as an eligible postgraduate student in connection with an earlier academic year of the current designated postgraduate course pursuant to regulations made by the Department under Article 3 of the Order; and
 - (b) the person’s status as an eligible postgraduate student has not terminated.
- (11) The conditions are—
 - (a) the Department has previously determined that the person is an eligible postgraduate student in connection with a designated postgraduate course other than the current designated postgraduate course;
 - (b) the student’s status as an eligible postgraduate student in connection with the course referred to in sub-paragraph (a) has been transferred from that course to the current designated postgraduate course as a result of one or more transfers in accordance with regulations made by the Department under Article 3 of the Order; and
 - (c) the person’s status as an eligible postgraduate student has not terminated.
- (12) Where—
 - (a) the Department determined that, by virtue of being a refugee or the spouse, civil partner, child or step-child of a refugee, a person (“A”) was an eligible postgraduate student in connection with an application for support for an earlier year of the current postgraduate course or an application for support in connection with another designated postgraduate course from which his status as an eligible postgraduate student has been transferred to the current postgraduate course; and
 - (b) as at the day before the academic year in respect of which A is applying for support begins, the refugee status of A or of his spouse, civil partner, parent or step-parent has expired and no further leave to remain has been granted and no appeal is pending (within the meaning of section 104 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002),
 A’s status as an eligible postgraduate student terminates immediately before the first day of the academic year in respect of which he is applying for support.
- (13) Where—
 - (a) the Department determined that, by virtue of being a person with leave to enter or remain or the spouse, civil partner, child or step-child of such a person, a person (“A”) was an eligible postgraduate student in connection with an application for support for an earlier

year of the current postgraduate course or an application for support in connection with another designated postgraduate course from which his status as an eligible postgraduate student has been transferred to the current postgraduate course; and

- (b) as at the day before the academic year in respect of which A is applying for support, the period for which the person with leave to enter or remain is allowed to stay in the United Kingdom has expired and no further leave to remain has been granted and no appeal is pending (within the meaning of section 104 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002),

A's status as an eligible postgraduate student terminates immediately before the first day of the academic year in respect of which he is applying for support.

(14) Paragraphs (12) and (13) do not apply where the student began the course in connection with which the Department determined that he was an eligible postgraduate student before 1st September 2007.

(15) An eligible postgraduate student may not, at any one time, qualify for support for—

- (a) more than one designated postgraduate course;
- (b) a designated postgraduate course and a designated course;
- (c) a designated postgraduate course and a designated part-time course.

Students becoming eligible in the course of an academic year

126.—(1) Where one of the events listed in paragraph (2) occurs in the course of an academic year—

- (a) a student may qualify for a grant under this Part in respect of that academic year in accordance with this Part; and
- (b) a grant of the kind available under this Part is not available in respect of any academic year beginning before the academic year in which the relevant event occurred.

(2) The events are—

- (a) the student's course becomes a designated postgraduate course;
- (b) the student, his spouse, his civil partner or his parent is recognised as a refugee or becomes a person with leave to enter or remain;
- (c) the state of which the student is a national accedes to the European Community where the student has been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands throughout the three-year period immediately preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course;
- (d) the student acquires the right of permanent residence (as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 2);
- (e) the student becomes a person described in paragraph 6(1)(a) of Schedule 2; or
- (f) the student becomes the child of a Swiss national.

Designated postgraduate courses

127.—(1) A postgraduate course is designated for the purposes of Article 3 of the Order and regulation 125 if—

- (a) it is a course for entry to which a first degree (or equivalent qualification) or higher is normally required;
- (b) it is a course—
 - (i) of at least one academic year's duration; and

- (ii) in the case of a part-time course, it is ordinarily possible to complete the course in not more than twice the period ordinarily required to complete the full-time equivalent;
 - (c) it is wholly provided by a publicly-funded educational institution or institutions in the United Kingdom or provided by such an institution or institutions in conjunction with an institution or institutions outside the United Kingdom; and
 - (d) it is not a course for the initial training of teachers or a course taken as part of an employment-based teacher training scheme.
- (2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)—
- (a) a course is provided by an institution if it provides the teaching and supervision which comprise the course, whether or not it has entered an agreement with the student to provide the course;
 - (b) a university and any constituent college or institution in the nature of a college of a university is to be regarded as publicly funded if either the university or the constituent college or institution is publicly funded; and
 - (c) an institution is not to be regarded as publicly funded by reason only that it receives public funds from the governing body of a higher education institution in accordance with section 65(3A) of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992(3).
- (3) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b)(ii)—
- (a) “full-time equivalent” means a full-time postgraduate course leading to the same qualification as the part-time postgraduate course in question;
 - (b) “period ordinarily required to complete the full-time equivalent” means the period that a standard full-time student would require to complete the full-time equivalent;
 - (c) “standard full-time student” means a student who is to be taken—
 - (i) to have begun the full-time equivalent on the same date as the eligible postgraduate student began the part-time postgraduate course in question;
 - (ii) not to have been excused any part of the full-time equivalent;
 - (iii) not to have repeated any part of the full-time equivalent; and
 - (iv) not to be absent from the full-time equivalent other than during vacations.
- (4) For the purposes of Article 3 of the Order and regulation 125, the Department may designate courses of higher education which are not designated under paragraph (1).

Period of eligibility

128.—(1) A student retains his status as an eligible postgraduate student in connection with a designated postgraduate course until the status is terminated in accordance with this regulation and regulation 125.

(2) The period for which an eligible postgraduate student retains the status is the “period of eligibility”.

(3) Subject to the following paragraphs and regulation 125, the period of eligibility terminates at the end of the period ordinarily required for the completion of the designated postgraduate course.

(4) The period of eligibility terminates when the eligible postgraduate student—

- (a) withdraws from his designated postgraduate course in circumstances where the Department has not transferred or will not transfer his status as an eligible postgraduate student to another course under regulation 129; or

(3) 1992 c. 13; section 65(3A) was inserted by the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 (c. 30), section 27.

(b) abandons or is expelled from his designated postgraduate course.

(5) Where the eligible postgraduate student is undertaking a designated postgraduate course that is a part-time course, the period of eligibility terminates at the end of the relevant academic year where he cannot complete the course within the period specified in regulation 127(1)(b)(ii).

(6) For the purposes of paragraph (5), “relevant academic year” means the academic year during or at the end of which it becomes impossible for the student to complete the course within the period specified in regulation 127(1)(b)(ii).

(7) The Department may terminate the period of eligibility where the eligible postgraduate student has shown himself by his conduct to be unfitted to receive support.

(8) If the Department is satisfied that an eligible postgraduate student has failed to comply with any requirement to provide information under this Part or has provided information which is inaccurate in a material particular, the Department may take such of the following actions as it considers appropriate in the circumstances—

- (a) terminate the period of eligibility;
- (b) determine that the student no longer qualifies for a grant or any particular amount of grant;
- (c) treat any support paid to the student as an overpayment which may be recovered under regulation 134.

(9) Where the period of eligibility terminates on or before the expiry of the period ordinarily required for the completion of the designated postgraduate course, the Department may, at any time, renew the period of eligibility for such period as it determines.

Transfer of status

129.—(1) Where an eligible postgraduate student transfers to another postgraduate course, the Department must transfer the student’s status as an eligible postgraduate student to that course where—

- (a) it receives a request from the eligible postgraduate student to do so;
- (b) it is satisfied that one or more of the grounds for transfer in paragraph (2) applies; and
- (c) the period of eligibility has not terminated.

(2) The grounds for transfer are—

- (a) on the recommendation of the academic authority the eligible postgraduate student starts to undertake another designated postgraduate course at the institution; or
- (b) the eligible postgraduate student starts to undertake a designated postgraduate course at another institution.

(3) Subject to paragraph (4), an eligible postgraduate student who transfers under paragraph (1) shall receive in connection with the academic year of the course to which he transfers the remainder of the support for which the Department has determined he qualifies in respect of the academic year of the course from which he transfers.

(4) The Department may re-assess the amount of support payable after the transfer.

(5) An eligible student who transfers under paragraph (1) after the Department has determined his support in connection with the academic year of the course from which he is transferring but before he completes that year may not apply for another grant under this Part in connection with the academic year of the course to which he transfers.

Applications for support

130.—(1) A person (the “applicant”) must apply for a grant under this Part in connection with each academic year of a designated postgraduate course by completing and submitting to the Department an application in such form and accompanied by such documentation as the Department may require.

(2) The application must reach the Department as soon as is reasonably practicable.

(3) The Department may take such steps and make such inquiries as it considers necessary to determine whether the applicant is an eligible postgraduate student, whether he qualifies for a grant and the amount of grant payable, if any.

(4) The Department must notify the applicant—

- (a) whether he qualifies for a grant;
- (b) if he does qualify, the amount payable in respect of the academic year, if any; and
- (c) how that amount is allocated between the types of eligible expenditure.

Information

131. Schedule 4 deals with the provision of information.

Amount of grants

132.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), the grant under this Part is such amount as the Department considers appropriate to assist with one or more types of eligible expenditure.

(2) The grant must not exceed £5,915 in respect of an academic year.

(3) For the purposes of this Part, the “types of eligible expenditure” are—

- (a) expenditure on a non-medical helper;
- (b) expenditure on major items of specialist equipment; and
- (c) additional expenditure incurred—
 - (i) within the United Kingdom for the purpose of attending the institution;
 - (ii) within or outside the United Kingdom for the purpose of attending, as part of the course, any period of study at an overseas institution or for the purposes of attending the Institute.

Payment of grants

133.—(1) The Department may pay a grant for which a student qualifies under this Part in such instalments (if any) and at such times as it considers appropriate and in the exercise of its functions under this Part it may make provisional payments pending the final calculation of the amount of grant for which the student qualifies.

(2) Payments are made in such manner as the Department considers appropriate and it may make it a condition of entitlement to payment that the eligible postgraduate student must provide it with particulars of a bank or building society account in the United Kingdom into which payments may be made by electronic transfer.

Overpayments

134.—(1) An eligible postgraduate student must, if so required by the Department, repay any amount paid to him under this Part which for whatever reason exceeds the amount of grant to which he is entitled under this Part.

(2) The Department must recover an overpayment of grant under this Part unless it considers it is not appropriate to do so.

(3) The methods of recovery are—

- (a) subtracting the overpayment from any kind of grant payable to the student from time to time pursuant to regulations made by the Department under Article 3 of the Order;
- (b) taking such other action for the recovery of an overpayment as is available to the Department.

(4) A payment of grant under this Part made before the relevant date is an overpayment if the student withdraws from the course before the relevant date unless the Department decides otherwise.

(5) In this regulation, the “relevant date” is the date on which the first term of the academic year in question actually begins.

(6) In the circumstances in paragraphs (7) and (8), there is an overpayment of grant under this Part unless the Department decides otherwise.

(7) The circumstances are—

- (a) the Department applies all or part of the grant under this Part to the purchase of specialist equipment on behalf of the eligible postgraduate student;
- (b) the student’s period of eligibility terminates after the relevant date; and
- (c) the equipment has not been delivered to the student before the period of eligibility terminated.

(8) The circumstances are—

- (a) the eligible postgraduate student’s period of eligibility terminates; and
- (b) a payment of grant under this Part in respect of specialist equipment is made to the student after the period of eligibility terminated.

(9) Where there is an overpayment of the grant under this Part, the Department may accept the return of specialist equipment purchased with the grant by way of recovery of all or part of the overpayment if it considers it is appropriate to do so.