

DRAFT

Question and Answers to support announcement on 16 January 2007 about changes to the NHS Bursary Scheme from September 2007 (England Only)

Q1. Why have we changed the scheme?

A review was undertaken to review and update the scheme to reflect changes in legislation and some outdated elements in the Scheme.

Q2. Who is affected by these changes?

Students who begin their training before September 2007 will remain on the current scheme and the changes will only affect **new** students who start their course on or after 1 September 2007.

Q3. How did we do it?

The changes have been agreed in negotiations with trades unions, student representatives and other stakeholders including the NHS Student Grants Unit, university and Strategic Health Authority representatives.

Q4. Why are some of the changes only being introduced for new students from September 2007?

Existing students already in receipt of a NHS bursary will have made decisions and plans based on the current bursary rules and rates, they will remain on these until they complete or discontinue your studies. .

Q5. Is there any other financial support available?

If students are experiencing financial difficulties, additional support may be available in the form of NHS Hardship and University Access to Learning Funds. These are administered via Higher Education Institutions and are available to students who have exhausted all other forms of student support. Students can approach the student support office, the student union and their local representative at their university for further information on applying for these.

Q6. How do students find out more information about how the changes will affect them?

More information for students will be provided in "Student Bulletins" posted on the Department of Health, NHS Careers, NHS Student Grant Unit and Trade Union websites. However, more detailed information will be provided by March 2007 to enable students to make informed decisions.

Q7. What difference will the rent being a deductible expense actually make?

This will be introduced for **all** eligible students from September 2007. Currently existing students only have their mortgage payments taken into account when calculating, what dependents and childcare allowances they may be entitled to. This will be changed so that rent will be treated the same as mortgage payments.

Q8. Will my bursary be affected if I became pregnant during my studies?

Students receiving the maintenance grant element of the NHS bursary are entitled to a continuation of their bursary payments whilst on leave for maternity purposes. Separate Guidelines have been produced to answer any questions about the NHS bursary scheme maternity awards.

Q9. What changes have been made to the definition of an independent student and how can I prove I am independent?

Reference to age has been removed and instead a student will need to provide evidence to demonstrate that they meet one of the criteria in the new rules for independent students found in the student bulletin.

Q10. Why has there been an increase in the ‘independent’ threshold for means testing?

This has been increased in line with the dependent threshold so that both can be assessed at the same level. The increase is from £19,409 to £22,561.

Q11. Will there be other changes to the bursary scheme?

Currently these are the only changes, however the Department of Health and the trade unions are keen to continue this work and ensure that the bursary has the capacity to change and grow with the NHS. There may therefore in the future be further changes, when and if these occur information will be on the above websites.

Q12. How will students on accelerated (i.e. shortened two year training programmes) diploma nursing courses be affected?

[DN they currently get the older students allowance regardless of their age)
Because of the required changes being introduced from September 2007 **new** students on these courses will no longer receive an “older students allowance” but will receive the £244 being added to the basic bursary. For existing students there is no change.