



**QUICK
GUIDE**

Part-Time Study Funding 2024/25

from SERC Student Finance



Student Finance at SERC

It can be difficult to juggle your finances when you're a student. Thankfully, there is support available.

Student Finance is assistance in the form of money towards:

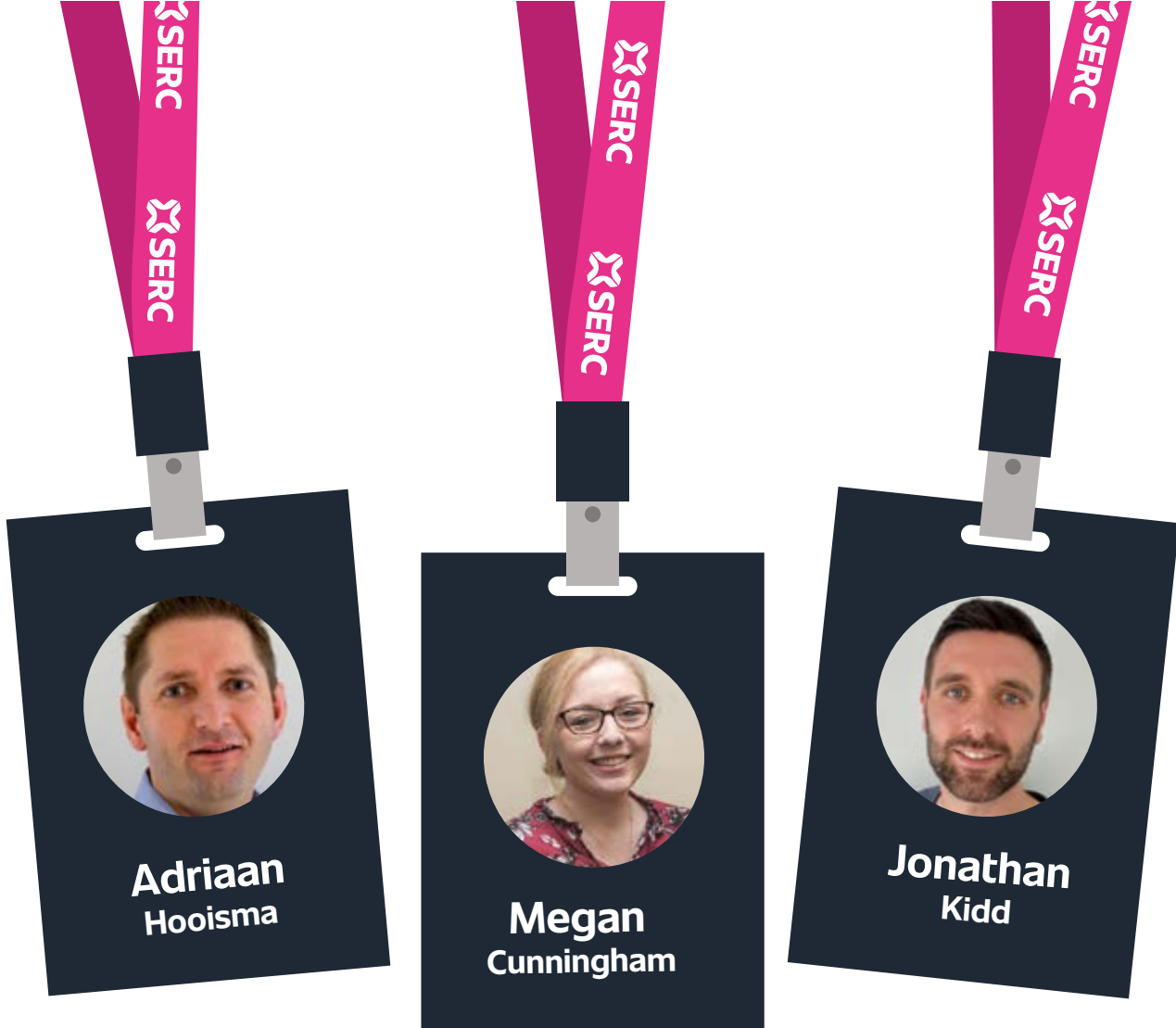
- Course tuition fees costs;
- Books / kit / equipment costs;
- Home to College travel costs; and
- Childcare costs

This guide provides you with an overview of the funding options available to part-time students at SERC, for both Further Education and Higher Education study. For an explanation of the key terms used in this guide, please see page 12.

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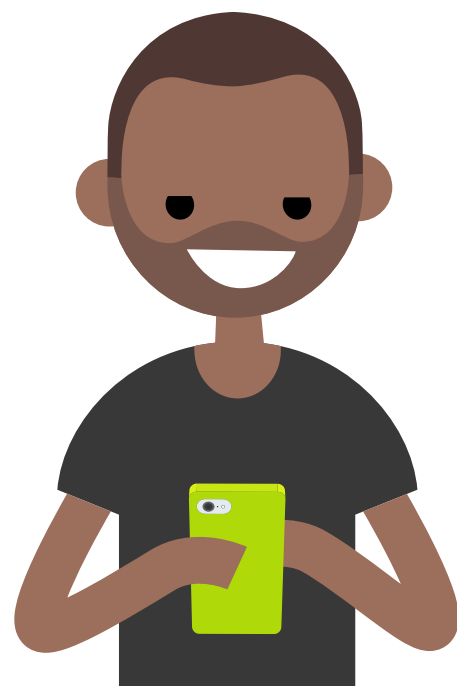


Meet the team

At SERC, we have an experienced team of Student Finance Advisors on hand to help answer your questions at Lisburn (1B-7), Bangor (A27), Newtownards (A3), Downpatrick (B2-8), Newcastle and Ballynahinch.

We are here to help - you can correspond with us via email, telephone or in person. We can offer general advice and are also happy to provide confidential one-to-one appointments.

Contact us via email studentfinance@serc.ac.uk or telephone **0345 600 7555**, choose Option 3 for 'Finance and Funding' then Option 1 for 'Student Finance'.



Further Education (FE) Grant

If you are aged 19 or over on 1 July 2024 and studying an accredited part-time Further Education Course (Level 1 - 3) you may be able to receive a Further Education Grant, administered by the Education Authority.

Eligible courses for this funding must be:

- At least one academic year in duration;
- be completed in no longer than twice the time it would take to complete the full time equivalent;

or

- If no full-time equivalent course exists then the part time course must be for at least 8 hours per week in duration with the 8 hours being made up of taught hours plus compulsory placement hours.

The part time grant can assist with course fees and also books and stationery. Your entitlement is means-tested and depends on your own income and that of your spouse/partner (if applicable):

Household Income	Grant for Fee Support	Grant for books & stationery
Up to £15,000	£465	£265
£15,000 - £20,000	£275	£157
£20,001 - £25,000	£185	£105
£25,001 and over	NIL	NIL

FE Grant - Childcare

In addition to the grants for Fee Support and Books & Stationery, you can also apply for a Childcare Grant if you are aged 20 or over when your course commences and are using registered or approved childcare. If approved, the funding is paid directly to the Childcare Provider.

How much you get depends on your household income and also on the number of hours involved in your course. **The number of hours stated refers to the number of taught hours plus compulsory placement hours.**

Household Income	1 Child 1 - 7 Hours / Week	1 Child 8-14 Hours / Week	2 or more Children 1-7 Hours / Week	2 or more Children 8 - 14 Hours / Week
Up to £21,330	£33	£65	£56	£110
£21,330 - £26,160	£28	£56	£48	£95
£26,161 - £31,580	£20	£39	£34	£67
£31,581 - £38,805	£10	£20	£17	£39
£38,806 and over	No Funding	No Funding	No Funding	No Funding

Contact Details / How to Apply

For further information on FE Grants, including full eligibility criteria and to apply online, please visit: www.eani.org.uk/fegrants

Apply now - don't wait until after enrolment. The closing date for FE Grant applications is 31 October 2024. The FE Grants team can be contacted via email: fegrants@eani.org.uk or telephone: 028 9598 6000 and selection option 2.

Higher Education (HE) Funding

If you are studying a part-time Higher Education Course (Level 4 – Degree Level) you may be able to receive funding through **Student Finance NI**.

There are 3 main elements to the funding:

1. Fee Grant

This non-repayable grant helps towards the cost of tuition fees. You could get up to £1,230 depending on your course intensity (see below) and the cost of your course fees. How much you get will depend on your residual household income.

Course Intensity	Maximum Fee Grant you can get
50% to 59% of the equivalent full-time course.	Up to £820 or the fee charged by the College, whichever is lower.
60% to 74% of the equivalent full-time course.	Up to £985 or the fee charged by the College, whichever is lower.
75% or more of the equivalent full-time course.	Up to £1,230 or the fee charged by the College, whichever is lower.

The maximum fee grant will be available if your residual household income is **below £16,843**; and no fee grant will be available if your residual household income is **above £25,420**. A partial grant is available on a sliding scale between these two residual income levels, down to a minimum grant of £50.

For further information on providing proof of residual household income and on course intensity, please refer to the SFNI Guide to Financial Support for Part Time students in Higher Education, available on the [Student Finance NI website](#).

2. Course Grant

This non-repayable grant helps towards the cost of books, travel and other course related expenses. You could get up to £265 depending on your residual household income:

Residual Household Income	Maximum Course Grant you can get
Up to £26,029	Full Course Grant of £265
£26,030 to £28,066	Course Grant of £265 less £1 for every £9.47 of your residual income over £26,030
£28,067	£50 Course Grant
£28,068 and over	No Course Grant

3. Fee Loan

This repayable loan helps towards the cost of tuition fees. The loan isn't based on residual household income, but you do have to pay it back. You could get up to £3,562.50 . Your Fee Loan will be reduced by any amount of the Fee Grant that you get.

Course Intensity	Maximum Fee Loan you can get
25% of the equivalent full-time course or above	Up to £3,562.50 (less any Fee Grant received) or the fee charge by the College, whichever is lower.

Fee loans will be repaid under existing Plan 1 residual income contingent repayment terms. You will repay 9% of anything you earn over the minimum threshold of £24,990 before tax per year, and you will become eligible to begin repaying from the earlier of:

- April 6 after you complete or withdraw from your course;
- April 6 after four years have elapsed since the first day of the first academic year of the course.



Extra Help

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

This non-repayable allowance can help with the extra costs you may have in relation to your course as a direct result of your disability, long-term health condition, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty. For more info please contact the SERC Learning Support team - learning-support@serc.ac.uk.

Childcare

Part-time HE students can apply to the Care to Learn Scheme (if aged under 20) or to the College Student Support Fund (if aged 20 and over) for assistance with childcare costs. Please see the relevant sections of this booklet for further information.

Contact Details / How to Apply

For further information, including full eligibility criteria and to apply, please visit: www.studentfinanceni.co.uk

The SFNI Part-Time team can also be contacted via email: studentfinance-pt@eani.org.uk or telephone: 028 9598 6000.

Care to Learn

The Care to Learn (NI) Scheme provides students aged between **16 and 20**, who are a parent, with help towards **childcare costs**.

The scheme is open to all part-time students studying on an accredited Further Education or Higher Education course.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, you must, during your course of study:

- be, or become: the main carer of your child/children;
- be at least 16 years old but under 20 years of age at the start of your course of study; and
- meet residency requirements under the prevailing Education (Student Support) Regulations (Northern Ireland).

The maximum assistance for all costs, including travel, is up to £165 per week for each child. This funding is paid directly to your Childcare Provider. If weekly childcare costs exceed the maximum support, you will be responsible for making direct payment to the childcare provider for the additional amount due.

Contact Details / How to Apply

For further information regarding the Care to Learn Scheme, please contact the Student Finance Team at SERC. Email: studentfinance@serc.ac.uk

Once you have enrolled on your course, a Student Finance Advisor will be happy to arrange an appointment to guide you through the application process.

Student Support Fund

The College offers a Student Support Fund for students who are experiencing exceptional financial hardship. The Student Support Fund can assist with **tuition fees, books / kits / materials, travel costs & childcare**.

You must be **aged 18 or over** and have **explored all other sources of funding before applying**.

To be eligible, you must meet residency requirements and be enrolled on an accredited course (leisure courses are not eligible). Assistance is means-tested against gross household income up to a maximum limit – support cannot be offered where household income is £33,951 and over.

NB The Student Support Fund cannot assist with a category of support for which you are already receiving assistance with from another funding body.

Tuition Fees – you may be assisted if funding is not available from another source. If you are a part time student, you can only be assisted if you are in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Housing Benefit, Income Related Employment Support Allowance or Working Tax Credit and have a household income of below £22,930 or you have lost your job during your course of study.

Books / Kits / Materials - costs can be supported up to a maximum limit of £300. Items must be deemed essential before the Student Support Fund can cover any costs and original receipts must be submitted prior to payment.

Home to College Travel - available if you live a minimum of 3 miles away from College and is based on public transport costs (ticket price) or a mileage allowance if travelling by private car.

Student Support Fund – Childcare

If you are aged 20 and over and have not been approved for childcare support through FE grants, or you are a part-time HE student, you may be eligible for a Childcare Grant from the Student Support Fund. (NB If you are under 20 on the first day of the academic year, you should apply for childcare assistance through the Care to Learn scheme).

This is a discretionary, means-tested grant that is paid directly to your registered Childcare Provider. If approved, you could receive the following based on household income:

Household Income	1 Child / Week	2 or more Children / Week
Up to £22,930	£56	£95
£22,931 - £28,125	£39	£67
£28,126 - £33,950	£20	£34
£33,951 and over	No Funding	No Funding

Contact Details / How to Apply

For further information regarding the Student Support Fund, please contact the Student Finance Team at SERC. Email: studentfinance@serc.ac.uk

Look out for the emails about the Student Support Fund at the start of the Academic Year. You must be enrolled prior to applying to the Student Support Fund.

Key Terms

Accredited Course – your course must be a nationally accredited professional or technical course, entry level 1 to level 6, listed on the Qualifications and Credit Framework which can be found on the [Register of Regulated Qualifications \(RRQ\)](#).

Registered/Approved Childcare facility - the childcare provider must be a childminder, pre-school playgroup, day nursery, out-of-school club, or other provider, registered or approved by the Health and Social Care Trust.

Household Income – a calculation of your own annual gross income and that of your spouse/partner if applicable. Income includes any taxable income: earnings from employment, income from benefits (e.g., Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income Support, Housing Benefit) and interest earned on bank accounts and private pensions etc. Any Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will not be treated as income.

Means-tested – the amount of funding you are eligible to receive will be determined using your household income calculation. This works on a sliding scale, with those from lower household income households eligible for more (and vice versa).

Grant Funding – you will not be required to repay any grant funding, unless you withdraw from your course early or receive an overpayment.

Loan Funding – you will be required to repay any loan funding you receive, usually from the April after you leave your course and are in employment earning above a [set threshold](#).





SERC Student Finance

Email: studentfinance@serc.ac.uk

Telephone: 0345 600 7555 (Option 3 for Finance / Funding
then Option 1 for Student Finance)

