



Changes to residency criteria for access to financial support in Further and Higher Education (March 2023)

The Scottish Social Services Council is the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce.

We protect the public by registering the social work, social care and children and young people's workforce, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

We:

- publish the national codes of practice for people working in social services and their employers
- register people working in social services and make sure they adhere to the SSSC Codes of Practice
- promote and regulate the learning and development of the social service workforce
- are the national lead for workforce development and planning for social services in Scotland
- are an ONS statistics provider.

Question One: Do you agree with the overarching policy aim that students need to be able to demonstrate a connection to Scotland in order to obtain financial support from the Scottish Government for their studies?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

We have no views on this.

Question Two: Please provide any relevant comments you may have in regard to your answer at question one.

We have no views on this.

Question Three: Do you agree that the length of a person's residence in the UK (together with a requirement to be ordinarily resident in Scotland on the relevant date) is an appropriate way of assessing whether a person has a sufficient connection with Scotland to qualify for the financial support package in Further / Higher Education?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't Know**

We have no views on this.

Question Four: Do you agree that 3 years' residence in the UK is a suitable minimum residence requirement for setting eligibility for student support in Scotland?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't Know**

We have no views on this.

Question Five: Do you agree that residence based on any form of leave to enter or remain from the Home Office in the UK should entitle a person to student support in Scotland, provided they otherwise meet the residence requirements?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't Know**

We have no views on this.

Question Six: Do you agree that individuals who are here specifically for education purposes and are on a student visa, should remain ineligible for the financial support package from Scottish Government.

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't Know**

We have no views on this.

Question Seven: Do you think eligibility should be extended to the dependents (child, spouse or civil partner) of those with student visas?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

We have no views on this.

Question Eight: Should financial support beyond support already given through discretionary funds be extended to students who are currently ordinarily resident in Scotland and have sought asylum from the UK Home Office, but whose application is still pending?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

We have no views on this.

Question Nine: Do you think eligibility for student financial support should be fixed according to an assessment at the start of their course (i.e., with reference to the relevant date)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

We have no views on this.

Question Ten: Do you have any comments on the sort of events or changes in circumstances that should trigger reassessment of a student's eligibility after the first academic year of their course?

We have no views on this.

Question Eleven: Do you have any other comments on the current policy of carrying out an assessment of eligibility on the relevant date, or the proposals to change it?

We believe that there are challenges around the recruitment and retention of staff within the social work, social care and children and young people's workforce in Scotland. The current petition to reform the financial support for social work students on placements (PE1993) before the Scottish Parliament is evidence of this. We will be responding to that petition separately because making sure that individuals who are looking to join this workforce are supported to do so is important to us.

We support the education of individuals in the workforce through section 55 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act. This provision gives us the power to make grants and pay travelling expenses for social service worker's training for relevant individuals resident in Scotland.

We pay grants and other allowances to postgraduate students studying social work course, this is done under our Postgraduate Student Bursaries Policy, which also sets out our eligibility criteria. To be considered for a Bursary award, applicants must satisfy all conditions, namely:

- They are resident in Scotland on the first day of the course
- They are either entering into or already participating in a Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETW) or Council approved postgraduate social work course that is delivered in Scotland
- They are studying on a full-time basis

Our policy also states that the eligibility criteria for applicants are the same as those set out in Schedules 1 and 2 of The Students' Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 1999, as amended. This section of the policy is out of date and the SSSC applies the eligibility criteria set out in the Students' Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007, as a matter of policy. This has been a long-standing agreement between us and the Scottish Government.

The only legal obligation placed on the payment of grants or other expenses in our founding legislation is that applicants are resident in Scotland. We would welcome clarification from Scottish Government about how the proposed changes to residency criteria for access to financial support in further and higher education should be applied to our work.

Scottish Social Services Council

March 2023