



Nottingham Trent
University

Student Financial Support

Guide to Previous Study and the Compelling Personal Reasons process for full-time undergraduates

Introduction

This guide provides information on the previous study and compelling personal reasons rules for full-time home undergraduate students receiving support from Student Finance England under the Education (Student Support) Regulations. If you are a part-time undergraduate, or a postgraduate student, or receiving funding from a different funding authority, please contact Student Financial Support Service for further advice as arrangements may vary.

1. How future student finance entitlement can be affected if a student has previously studied, repeated, suspended or withdrawn.

The government provides full student finance, i.e. a tuition fee loan and maintenance loan (and a maintenance grant pre-2016) for the ordinary duration of a course plus one extra year if needed called a "gift year". Therefore, if a course has a duration of 3 years, a student would be entitled to 4 years full student finance in total:

3 years (course duration) + 1 (gift year) = 4 years

If you repeat an academic year of your current course, or you have studied in Higher Education (HE) prior to joining NTU, your future entitlement to student finance is likely to be reduced to reflect your previous study.

Example: If a student starts a 3 year full time course but has previously studied in HE for 2 years, they would be entitled to a further 2 years of full student finance in total ($3+1-2=2$) The student would not be entitled to a Tuition Fee Loan during the first year of the new course, their full student finance entitlement would be available in years 2 and 3. They would be entitled to a maintenance loan only during the first year.

Entitlement to a maintenance loan usually continues until you obtain a qualification even if you are not entitled to a tuition fee loan.

2. What is considered a previous course

Attendance on full time higher education or part time course of initial teacher training which you undertook before the current course for which you **did not** achieve a qualification.

Or Attendance on full time or part time higher education course, part time course of initial teacher training, undertaken before the current course and where you **did** achieve a qualification.

3. What is considered as a previous year at HE level

Student Finance England will count any full year or **partial year** which you have spent on a previous course when calculating the number of years full student finance, you will be supported for in the future. If you suspend or withdraw part way through an academic year, this will count as an entire year.

4. I had to suspend, repeat or withdraw due to personal/health reasons

If there were compelling personal reasons or extenuating circumstances as to why you had to withdraw, suspend, or repeat such as ill health or family bereavement, this can be taken into consideration. If you were affected by compelling personal reasons (CPR) and you can submit evidence to demonstrate that this impacted on your ability to study, you can ask Student Finance England to disregard the affected academic year which would provide you with an additional year of full student finance to your overall entitlement. There is no limit to the number of times CPR can be considered but Student Finance England can only award 1 year at a time. Any CPR awarded will be applied to the next academic year of your course.

5 . What are compelling personal reasons (CPR)?

Compelling personal reasons include mental/physical illness, bereavement, caring responsibilities and significant issues arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic. Generally, academic performance alone would not normally be deemed a compelling personal reason – but Student Finance will consider all cases carefully.

6. How can I request that an academic year is disregarded due to CPR?

A letter should be sent to Student Finance England detailing the compelling personal reasons (CPR) and evidence of the mitigating circumstances should be provided. All evidence must be from an official source.

7. What evidence can be provided in support of my CPR?

- Medical evidence from a GP
- Supporting letter from Support Professional at NTU or a previous university.
- Supporting letter from Course Leader/Tutor
- Letter from social services
- Letter from clergy or professional person
- Death Certificate
- Photocopy of a Birth Certificate

The list is not exhaustive and any evidence you feel can support your claim should be sent for consideration. However, you should be aware that in some circumstances

one piece of evidence may not be sufficient, therefore we would recommend that you send as much evidence in as possible.

You should also provide a personal statement outlining how your circumstances have impact on your capacity to study, complete work and attend university. You can use the template covering letter we have provided in section 14 to help formulate your personal statement.

8. When should I submit my CPR evidence?

CPR evidence must be supplied with your application or after an application has been made to Student Finance for the academic year, otherwise a decision cannot be made. You can use the template letter in this guide to help you pull your case together.

9. How long will I have to wait for a decision from SFE regarding my CPR?

Student Finance England work to timescales dependent on the time of year, at busy times it could take as long as 6 to 8 weeks to look at your evidence.

10. Can I get some help preparing my CPR case?

NTU's Student Financial Support Service have Advisers who can assist and advise you on your case. They can also assist with preparing and make requests on behalf of students. The process of preparing a CPR case, including sourcing the correct evidence can take several weeks, and you are advised to start the process as soon as possible.

11. Will I have to pay Tuition fees if I haven't been awarded a Tuition Fee Loan?

You are personally liable for tuition fees whilst Student Finance assesses your CPR case and if you are not awarded a tuition fee loan. You will be able to set up a fee payment arrangement to pay in instalments, usually on a termly basis. Until your tuition fees are covered, you will remain temporarily enrolled, your enrolment status will change to fully enrolled once you have set up a fee payment arrangement or your tuition fee loan has been awarded. Any fees paid can be refunded if you are subsequently awarded a tuition fee loan.

12. Do I have to set up a fee payment arrangement to become fully enrolled.

If you consult with a Student Financial Support Adviser at NTU regarding your CPR case, they may be able to request your full enrolment status dependent on the strengthen of your evidence, without making a fee payment arrangement to cover tuition fees.

13. Can I get any other funding to help with tuition fees?

Unfortunately, there are not any other funding bodies that can award that level of funding. You may find trusts, charities, funding from other sources which offer grants, scholarship, bursaries but they may only be able to offer you a proportion of the total tuition fees. You can look for additional funding on the following websites and publications:

<http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk>
<http://www.uksponsorship.com/>
<http://www.turn2us.org.uk/>

Useful publications which can be found in your local library include: • The Educational Grants Directory

- The Charities Digest
- The Grants Register
- The Directory of Grant Making Trusts

14. Template Letter

Student Finance England PO Box 210
Darlington
DL1 9HJ

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: *(insert full name)* CRN: *(insert customer reference number)*

Your address line 1 Your address line 2 Your address line 3 Your address line 4

Date:

I write in regard to my entitlement to student finance during the academic year *(insert year)* as I have been advised that my previous study is now affecting my current entitlement to a tuition fee loan.

In summary of my academic history, I began my studies in *(insert academic year)* at *(insert University name)* in year 1 of a *(insert full course name)*, *(please insert a full academic history stating which years you progressed and which year you are required to repeat)*. I would like to request that SFE consider disregarding *(insert year)* academic year and award a tuition fee loan in *(insert year)* due to the compelling personal reasons which I experienced. I am enclosing the following evidence which outline my circumstances:

- *(insert who the evidence is from and the format)*
- *(insert who the evidence is from and the format)*
- *(insert who the evidence is from and the format)*

During the *(insert year)* academic year I *experienced/suffered from/fell ill from/had surgery* which had an impact on my capacity to study and complete work, *(insert information about your specific circumstances and how this impacted on your year of study)*

I hope the information and evidence provided is sufficient for you to consider disregarding the *(insert year)* academic year and award a tuition fee loan for *(insert year)*.

Yours faithfully

(insert name)

15. Useful Contacts

NTU Student Financial Support Service
financial.support@ntu.ac.uk
0115 848 2494

NTU Finance Systems Team
FINstudentfinancesystems@ntu.ac.uk
0115 848 8707

NTU Finance Income & Debt Management
FinFinanceIncome&DebtManagement@ntu.ac.uk
0115 848 6500

Student Finance England
www.gov.uk/student-finance
0300 100 0607