



Welsh Government Learning Grants (Further Education), 2019/20

29 October 2020
SB 33/2020



£4.9 million was paid to FE students in 2019/20, compared with £5.1 million in 2018/19



About this bulletin

Welsh Government Learning Grants (WGLG) provide extra money for further education students who might otherwise experience financial difficulty when undertaking post-compulsory education courses.

The data included here are obtained from Student Loans Company (SLC). Unless otherwise stated, figures are for the 2019/20 academic year, as at the end of July 2020.

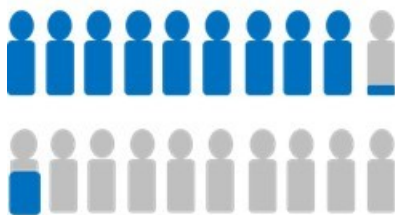
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5,305 students in FE applied for a WGLG in 2019/20, with 4,435 applications being successful

83.5% of applications were successful



Of all successful applications:

4,085 (92.2%) were from **full-time** students

325 (7.3%) were from **part-time** students

(The remainder were of unknown study mode)

Key points

- 5,305 students in FE applied for a WGLG in 2019/20 (a decrease of 5.5% on 2018/19) and 4,435 applications were successful (a decrease of 7.3% on 2018/19)
- 83.5% of applications received were successful versus 85.2% in 2018/19
- The proportion of successful applications from full-time students remains high at 97.0%, with the corresponding figure for part-time students at 80.0%
- 3,035 (74.3%) of successful full-time applications and 235 (72.9%) of successful part-time applications were from students with a household income of £6,120 or less, and were therefore awarded the full grant amounts of £1,500 and £750 respectively
- 1,625 (39.8%) successful full-time applications and 75 (22.8%) successful part-time applications were from students aged 21 or under

Policy and operational context

Welsh Government Learning Grants for Further Education (WGLG FE) were introduced by the Welsh Government from academic year 2002/03 to provide extra money for students who might otherwise experience financial difficulty when undertaking post-compulsory education courses.

Initially the scheme only included students studying at Further Education institutions or Higher Education institutions. From 2003/04 the scheme was extended to include students at all learning centres (e.g. schools) providing Education and Learning Wales or Local Education Authority facilitated courses. From 2006/07 responsibility for the administration of applications of WGLG FE for students at Further Education Institutions was transferred from Local Authorities to the Student Loans Company (SLC). Students qualify for the scheme if they are 19 or older, on an eligible course and meet the rest of the criteria (see Notes section for further information).

The number of WGLG FE awarded is influenced by the number of learners in post-16 education and the effect of minimum wage and/or employment levels on household income (used for means-tested allowances). Students can receive payments of up to £1,500 if they are in full-time education or up to £750 if they are in part-time education.

Further information on WGLG FE is on the [Student Finance Wales website](#).

Notes on the data

- Throughout the bulletin, data has been rounded to the nearest five
- Totals and percentages have been calculated using unrounded data, so a total may not equal the sum of its parts
- The academic year runs from 1 August to the 31 July
- The data for 2019/20 was extracted on the 5 August 2020 and is accurate as of that date
- Part-time applications include applications where the course of study is below the threshold of taught hours

Applications by workstage and mode of study

There has been a general downward trend in total WGLG FE applications since 2012/13. This reflects the demographic decline in post-18 learner numbers overall.

The maximum income threshold for successful claims has been frozen at £18,370 since 2011/12. The real-terms fall in this threshold may have led to fewer post-18 learners applying. Information on learner numbers by age and gender can be found on [StatsWales](#).

Table 1: Applications by outcome and mode of study

Academic Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Full-Time					
Successful	5,405	4,935	4,760	4,430	4,085
Ineligible	80	70	75	60	120
Awaiting Evaluation	10	*	*	*	*
Total	5,495	5,015	4,835	4,495	4,210
Part-time					
Successful	445	365	350	250	325
Ineligible	50	55	60	50	80
Awaiting evaluation	0	*	0	0	0
Total	495	420	410	300	405
Unknown					
Successful	140	95	40	105	20
Ineligible	330	280	340	320	295
Awaiting evaluation	630	390	415	400	375
Total	1,105	765	795	820	690
All Successful applications	5,990	5,395	5,145	4,785	4,435
All Applications	7,095	6,200	6,045	5,615	5,305

Notes

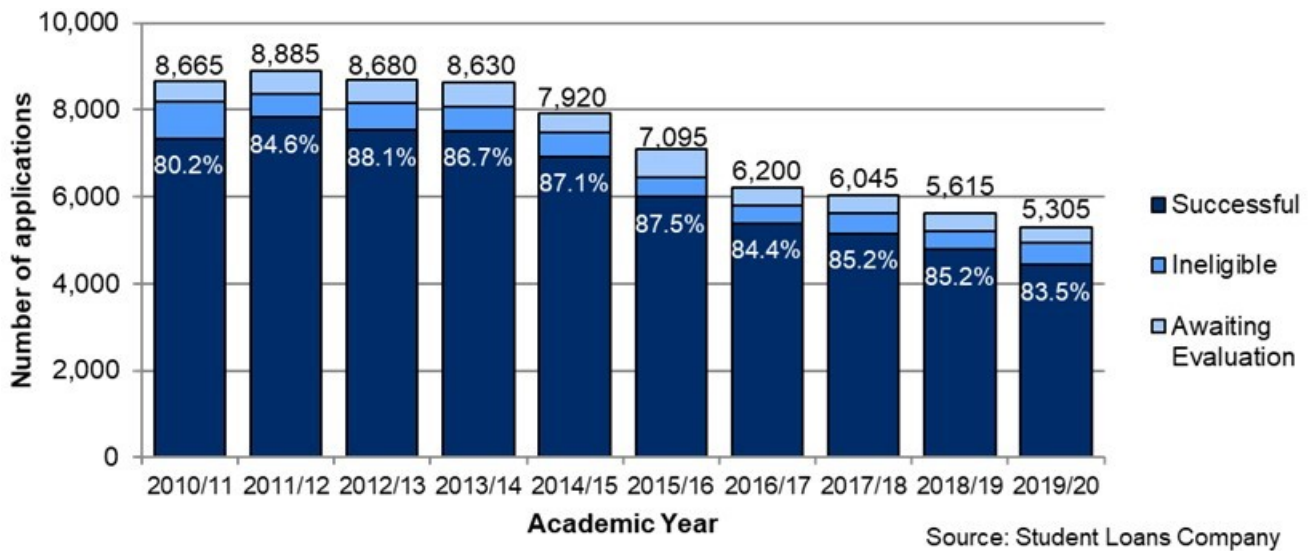
Source: Student Loans Company

* The data item is disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication (more than 0, less than 5)
All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

There were 5,305 applications for financial assistance in 2019/20:

- 4,210 applications were from full-time students, of which 4,085 (97.0%) were successful
- 405 applications were from part-time students, of which 325 (80.0%) were successful

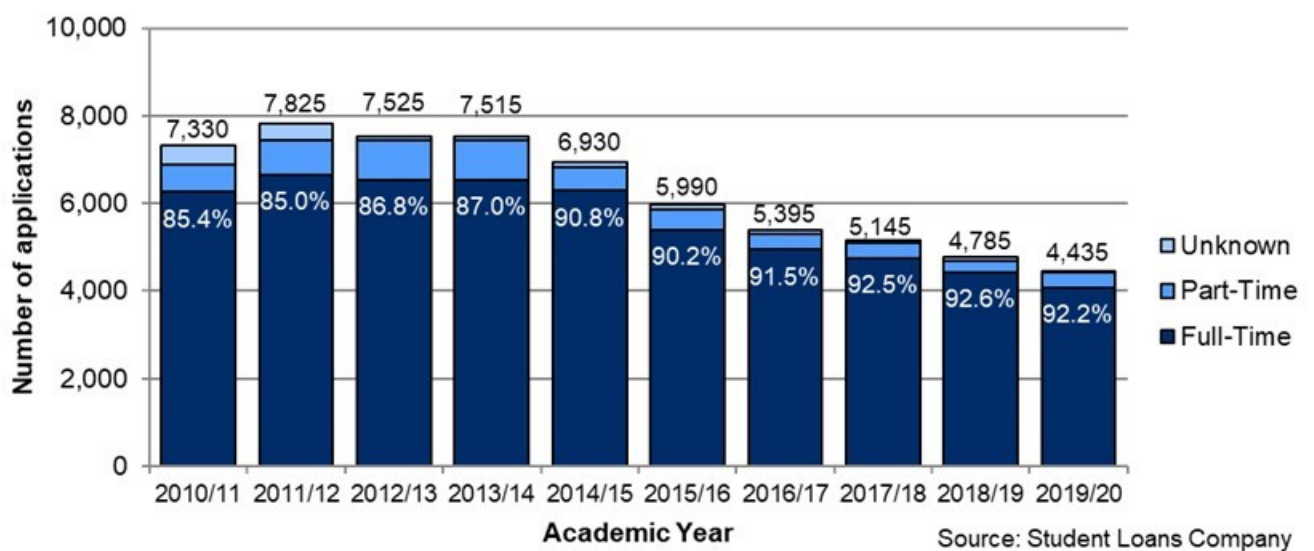
Chart 1: Applications by application workstage and the percentage of applications that were successful



In 2019/20:

- There were 5,305 applications for WGLG FE, a decrease of 5.5% on the previous academic year
- 4,435 of these were successful applications, a decrease of 7.3% on the previous academic year (see [Table 1](#))

Chart 2: Successful applications by mode of study and the percentage of applications from fulltime students



There were 4,435 successful applications in 2019/20:

- 92.2% (4,085) were from full-time students, a decrease of 7.7% on 2018/19
- 7.3% (325) of successful applications were from part-time students, an increase of 29.5% on 2018/19 (see [Table 1](#))

Successful applications by age and mode of study

Table 2: Successful applications by age and mode of study

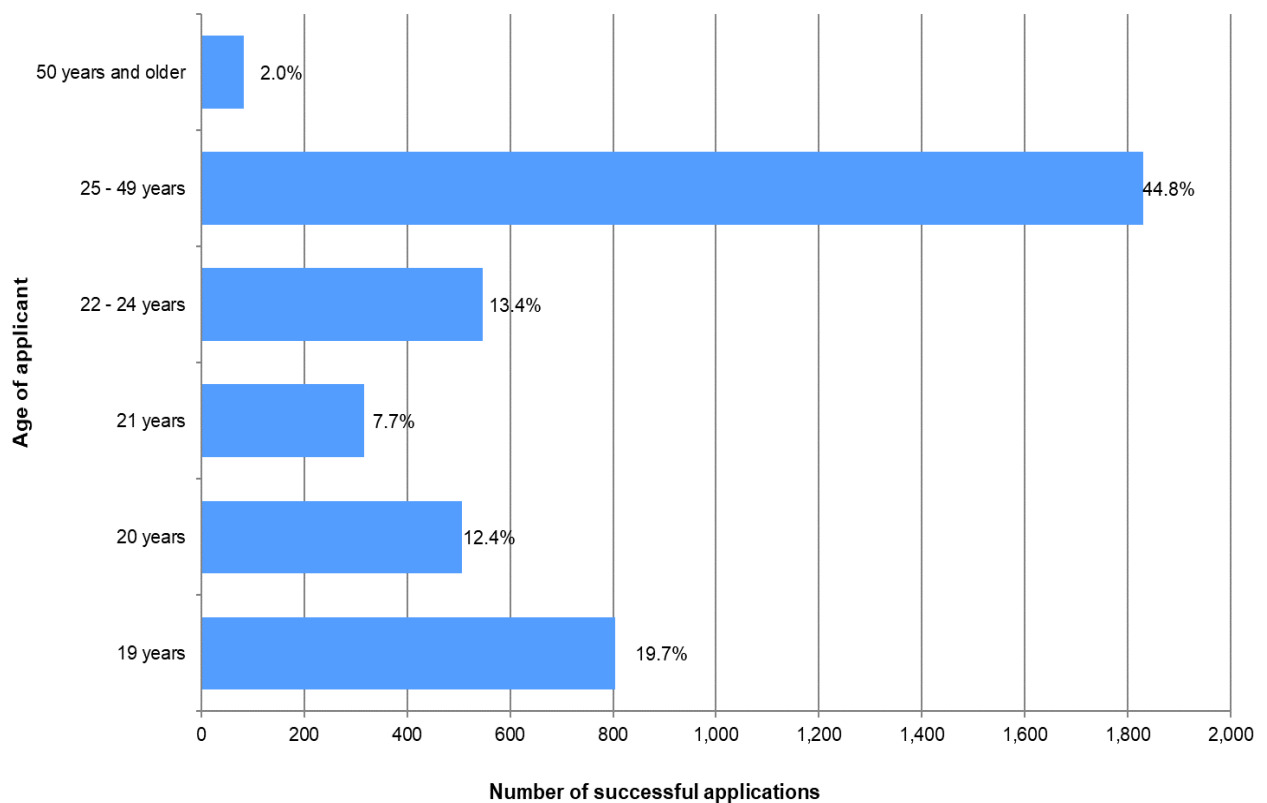
	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
19 years	1,225	35	1,225	20	1,040	35	1,005	25	805	35
20 years	655	20	560	15	650	15	535	20	505	20
21 years	405	20	345	15	325	20	325	10	315	15
22 to 24 years	860	45	730	40	650	40	565	35	545	40
25 to 49 years	2,170	275	2,000	240	2,025	230	1,925	150	1,830	200
50 years and over	90	55	80	35	70	15	70	10	85	10
Total	5,405	445	4,945	365	4,765	350	4,430	250	4,085	325

Notes

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Source: Student Loans Company

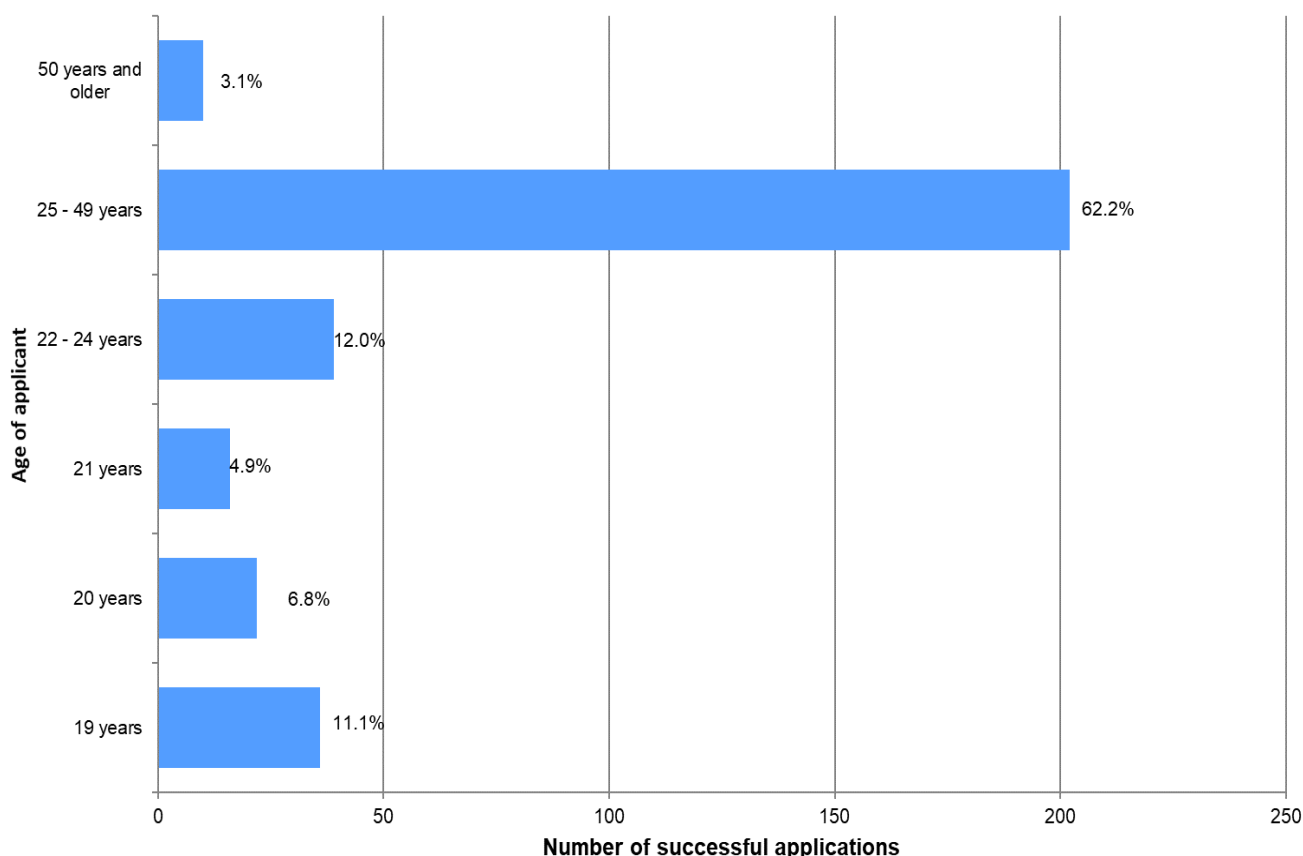
Chart 3: Successful full-time applications by age, 2019/20



Source: Student Loans Company

- In 2019/20, 39.8% (1,625) of successful full-time applications were from students aged 21 or under
- 44.8% of successful full-time applications were from the 25 – 49 years age group; a 25-year range. When combining the 19 – 24 year olds, a 6-year range, this accounts for 53.2%.

Chart 4: Successful part-time applications by age, 2019/20



Source: Student Loans Company

- In 2019/20, 22.8% (75) of successful part-time applications were from students aged 21 or under
- 62.2% of successful part-time applications were from the 25 – 49 years age group, a 25-year range. When combining the 19 – 24 year olds, a 6-year range, this accounts for 34.8%.

Successful applications by gender

Table 3: Successful applications by gender

Academic Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Female	3,790	3,290	3,110	2,945	2,650
Male	2,200	2,105	2,035	1,840	1,785
Total	5,990	5,395	5,145	4,785	4,435

Notes

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Source: Student Loans Company

- In 2019/20, 59.8% (2,650) of successful applications for WGLG FE were from females, but this should be considered in the context of learner demography: in 2018/19 (the latest figures available), around 60 per cent of post-18 learners were female

Successful applications and amount paid

Table 4a: Successful applications by household income

	Number			
	2018/19		2019/20	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
£0 - £6,120	3,490	200	3,035	235
£6,121 - £12,235	605	35	720	60
£12,236 - £18,370	335	15	330	30
Total	4,430	250	4,085	325
Percentage				
£0 - £6,120	78.8%	79.7%	74.3%	72.9%
£6,121 - £12,235	13.6%	13.5%	17.7%	17.8%
£12,236 - £18,370	7.6%	6.8%	8.1%	9.2%

Notes Source: Student Loans Company

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

- 3,035 (74.3%) of successful full-time applications and 235 (72.9%) of successful part-time applications were from students with a household income of £6,120 or less, meaning these students were awarded the full grants of £1,500 and £750 respectively

Table 4b: Amount paid by household income (a)

	Amount Paid (£000s)			
	2018/19		2019/20	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
£0 - £6,120	4,480	115	4,060	165
£6,121 - £12,235	380	15	500	25
£12,236 - £18,370 (b)	130	*	130	10
Total	4,990	130	4,690	195
Percentage				
£0 - £6,120	89.8%	87.3%	86.6%	83.8%
£6,121 - £12,235	7.6%	9.6%	10.6%	12.0%
£12,236 - £18,370	2.6%	3.1%	2.8%	4.2%

Notes Source: Student Loans Company

(a) Most of the payments will be associated with applications that are successful. Some however are currently in a state other than "Successful"

(b) Includes small amounts paid to those with income since identified as "£18,371+"

* The data item is disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication (more than 0, less than 5)

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

- £4.9 million was paid in WGLGs to FE students in 2019/20, a decrease of 4.5% on the £5.1 million paid in 2018/19

Successful applications by type of institution

Table 5: Successful applications by institution and mode of study

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Welsh Institutions	5,385	440	4,910	355	4,745	340	4,415	250	4,070	320
<i>of which (per cent) (a)</i>										
FE Institutions	99.0%	95.9%	99.5%	95.0%	99.4%	97.4%	99.8%	98.4%	99.7%	99.7%
HE Institutions	0.2%	0.7%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Learning Centres	0.8%	3.4%	0.5%	3.9%	0.6%	2.6%	0.2%	1.6%	0.3%	0.3%
English Institutions	20	*	30	5	15	5	15	*	15	5
Total	5,405	445	4,940	365	4,760	350	4,430	250	4,085	325

Notes

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) Care should be taken if comparing with previous releases: percentage had previously been of Total but is now of Welsh Institutions

* The data item is disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication (more than 0, less than 5)

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

- In 2019/20, 99.7% of successful full-time applications were from students attending FE Institutions, with the remainder from Other Learning Centres (which include Community Colleges and Community Education Centres). English Institutions, which are now excluded when calculating percentages, continue to show low numbers.
- 99.7% of successful part-time applications were also from students attending FE Institutions, with the remainder from Other Learning Centres. English Institutions, which are now excluded when calculating percentages, continue to show low numbers.

Successful applications by local authority

Table 6: Successful applications by Local Authority and mode of study

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Isle of Anglesey	85	10	95	10	90	10	70	10	70	10
Gwynedd	130	20	130	20	135	5	110	10	125	10
Conwy	275	15	210	25	210	20	170	10	165	5
Denbighshire	260	5	220	10	220	5	175	10	160	10
Flintshire	330	*	260	*	230	*	225	*	145	*
Wrexham	250	5	240	*	195	10	165	10	140	15
Powys	105	10	95	*	105	5	90	*	115	*
Ceredigion	95	10	80	*	105	*	85	*	70	*
Pembrokeshire	130	*	105	*	95	5	105	*	100	*
Carmarthenshire	220	25	210	20	220	30	185	25	190	30
Swansea	340	95	350	65	340	70	310	55	325	65
Neath Port Talbot	250	15	215	25	205	15	220	10	215	25
Bridgend	240	5	240	*	235	*	210	*	190	*
Vale of Glamorgan	200	10	185	*	180	10	195	5	150	*
Cardiff	825	115	720	105	720	90	670	25	595	30
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	510	20	470	10	445	10	395	*	375	5
Merthyr Tydfil	165	15	130	15	115	10	130	20	105	15
Caerphilly	290	10	310	10	295	*	260	5	250	5
Blaenau Gwent	125	10	120	0	100	*	105	5	80	35
Torfaen	150	15	150	10	125	10	145	10	120	10
Monmouthshire	75	*	75	5	60	*	55	5	55	10
Newport	340	20	335	20	325	15	345	15	340	25
Wales	5,390	445	4,930	360	4,740	345	4,425	250	4,080	325

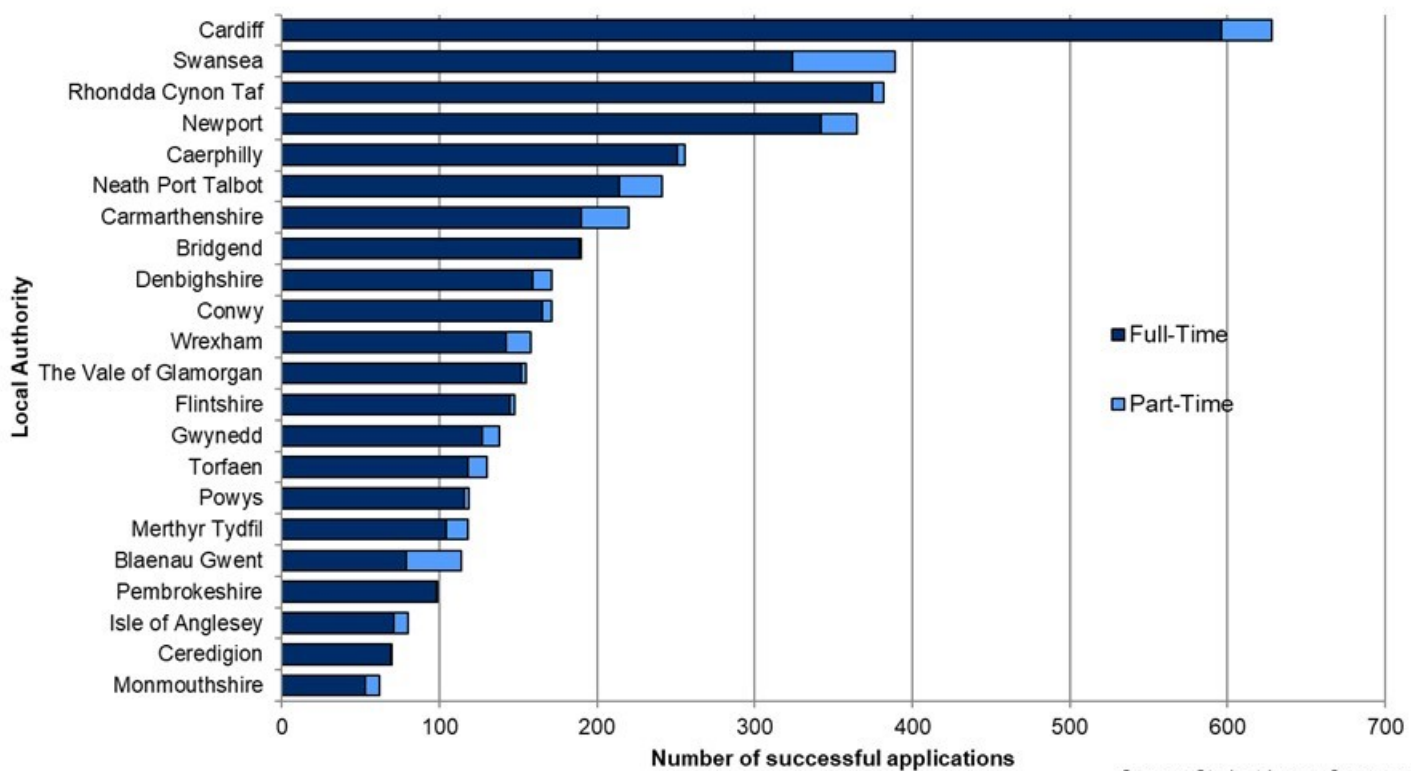
Notes

Source: Student Loans Company

* The data item is disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication (more than 0, less than 5)

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Chart 5: Successful applications by Local Authority and mode of study, 2019/20



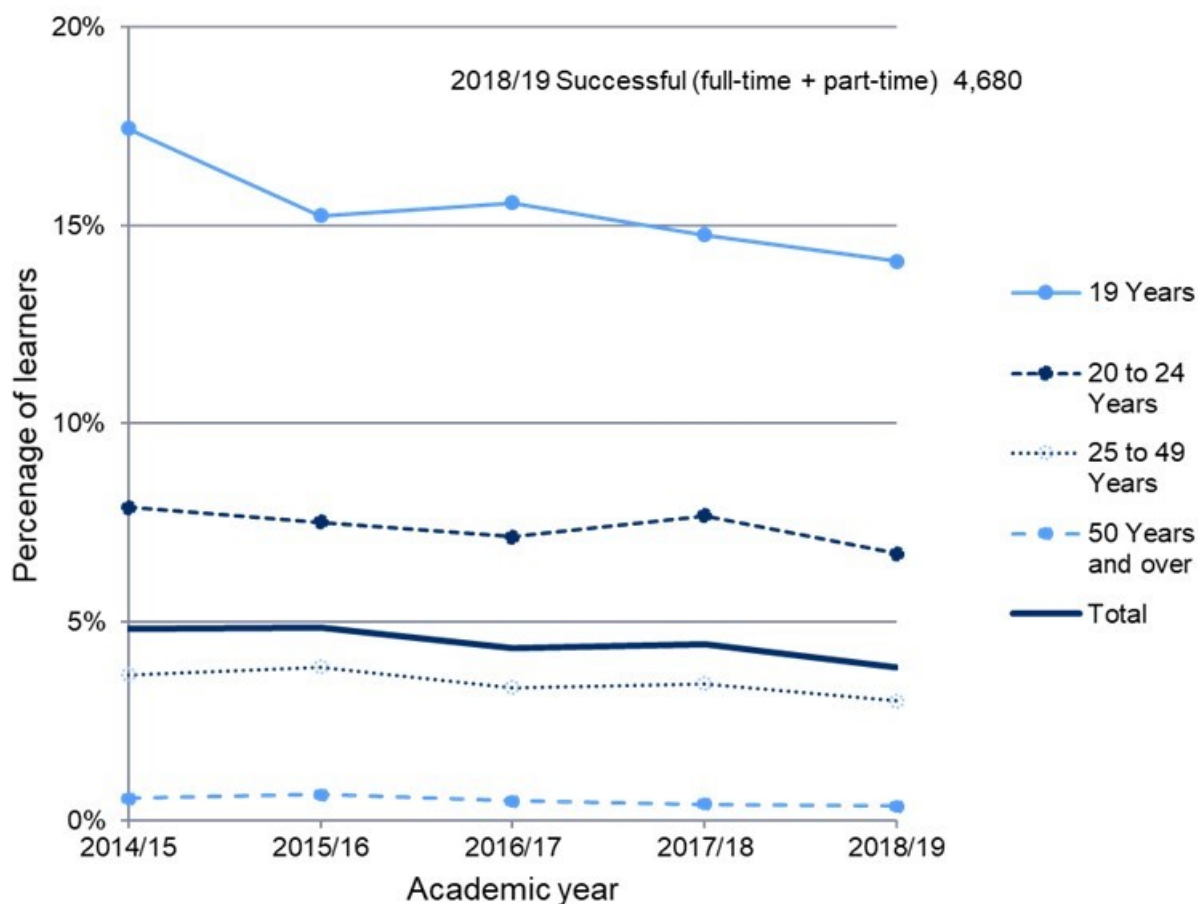
Source: Student Loans Company

- The number of successful applications ranged from 60 in Monmouthshire to 630 in Cardiff
- Cardiff accounted for 14.0% of all full-time successful applications
- Swansea accounted for the largest share of part-time successful applications at 19.2%
- The local authority with the highest proportion of part-time learners amongst their successful applications was Blaenau Gwent, at 30.7%

Percentage of learners receiving WGLG FE

Chart 6 shows the proportion of learners in further education that receive WGLG FE. This chart uses the Life Long Learning Wales Record (LLWR) for student numbers. The latest year available in LLWR is 2018/19. This data is available on [StatsWales](https://stats.wales.gov.uk/).

Chart 6: Historical post-18 FE learners successfully claiming WGLG FE



Source: Student Loans Company, LLWR

- Over the last 5 years, the percentage of these learners receiving WGLG FE has declined from a little under 5% to a little under 4%
- By age group, the highest proportion receiving WGLG FE in 2018/19 was 19 year olds (around 14%) and the lowest was those aged 50 and over (less than 0.4%)

Notes

1. Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education) eligibility criteria

The grant is available to eligible students studying in Wales or elsewhere in the UK. For a grant to be awarded both the student and course criteria must be satisfied. The WGLG FE scheme has various student and course criteria, including:

Student criteria

1. Residence: To be eligible for a grant the first condition is that a student must be ordinarily resident in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course. The second condition is that the student must have been ordinarily resident, for the three years prior to that date, in either (a) the UK or (b) the European Economic Area (EEA), depending on nationality status.
2. Age: 19 or over at the start of the academic year for further education courses. There are no age criteria for WGLG higher education courses.

Course criteria

Further Education: The course is supported through the Education directorate which requires regular attendance at a Further Education Institution or Other Learning Centre and involves at least 275 taught hours in each academic year.

Calculation of level of award is based on the residual household income of the student or student's family. Residual household income is calculated by taking gross income (before tax and National Insurance) and deducting certain allowances.

For all FE students, where a student is on an eligible course, awards are calculated on the following basis:

Value of Welsh Government Learning Grant by mode of study and residual income

Further Education	Residual household income			
	Between £0 - £6,120	Between £6,121 - £12,235	Between £12,236 - £18,370	£18,370 or over
275-499 (part-time)	£750	£450	£300	Nil
500 or more (full-time)	£1,500	£750	£450	Nil

2. Data source

WGLG FE applications and payments are administered by the [Student Loans Company](#) (SLC). Data held on WGLG FE students is entered by SLC staff onto an administrative database for the purpose of assessing and paying WGLG FE to students. This data is also stored in a management information data warehouse for the purpose of management reporting, operational performance reporting, audit of processes, statistics, future policy planning and forecasting.

These statistics make use of that data to report on key aspects of the scheme:

- trends in applications and approvals
- age, gender and mode of study
- household income ranges
- learning centre type
- Local Authority

Detailed analyses are available in this annual Bulletin and data published on [StatsWales](#).

Data collection

The data in this release were collected via the SLC management information system and were extracted on 5 August 2020. All information is based on applications received by 31 July 2020.

Further information including numbers of WGLGs administered by the SLC can be found on the [StatsWales website](#).

Validation and verification

Processes and systems which enable customer and application assessment data to be held electronically are subject to periodic audit and integrity checks. SLC Internal Audit ensures that the processes governing data entry and application assessment are adhered to. Data integrity validation rules are used to identify and correct errors in data. Management Information extracted from SLC systems are subject to quality assurances prior to distribution: statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with the SLC before tables are published.

Publication

Once the data has been finalised, the release is compiled and the key points and commentary are drafted. The release is independently checked and a final sense check is carried out by the relevant statistician prior to publication on the website.

Disclosure control and confidentiality

All the figures are rounded to the nearest 5 for confidentiality. Due to rounding, the sums of some rows or columns may not add to the total figure given. Numbers less than 5, but not zero, are represented by '*'. A '-' denotes a percentage less than 0.5 (but not zero).

3. Definitions

3.1 Students who have withdrawn

The data represented in this release on successful applications refer to applicants who have been approved for a WGLG during the course of the academic year. Students who have withdrawn from their course are not removed from the analysis. Furthermore, figures on successful applications represent the total value of the approved WGLG and have not been adjusted for unpaid or recovered instalments.

3.2 Awaiting evaluation

Applications 'awaiting evaluation' are incomplete, missing either information from the application or supporting evidence. At the cut-off date (31st July for the most recent year) these were the approximate numbers:

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
480	525	510	545	440	640	395	420	400	380

3.3 Mode of study 'unknown'

Data provided by the SLC on applications for WGLGs from students at Further Education institutions showed approximately 20 successful applications in 2019/20 where the mode of study was 'unknown'. These are included in Table 1, but are excluded in other tables showing figures by mode of study.

4. Equal Opportunities

2,505 Equal Opportunities monitoring forms were received in 2019/20, which equates to 47.2% of all applications received. It is not known whether these applications have been approved, rejected or are currently being processed, since the data are disassociated from the application process, and not all forms were fully completed.

The data as at 1st September 2020 show that of the applications for which an equal opportunities form was completed:

- 18.6% classed themselves as disabled
- 82.0% classed their ethnicity as white
- 12.1% made up of the groups who were of mixed race, Asian or British Asian and 'Chinese or other ethnic origin'
- 5.8% said they were 'Black or British Black'

Key quality information

These statistics adhere to the Welsh Government's Statistical Quality Management Strategy. They are produced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics independently under the responsibility of the Welsh Government Chief Statistician.

They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. Here are further details of how we adhere to the dimensions:

1. Relevance (the degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content)
2. Accuracy (the closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value)
3. Timeliness and punctuality (timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer, whilst punctuality refers to the time lag between the actual and planned dates of publication)
4. Accessibility and clarity (accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information, whilst clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice)
5. Comparability and coherence (the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain and the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but which refer to the same phenomenon, are similar)

1. Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales
- Officials in the Welsh Government
- Other government departments
- Further Education Institutions, Work-Based Learning providers, schools and local authorities
- Wales Audit Office
- Students, researchers, academics and universities
- Individual citizens, private companies, and the media

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- general background and research
- inclusions in reports, articles and briefings
- advice to Ministers
- to inform and monitor the education policy development and decision-making process in Wales
- to forecast future expenditure of student support schemes in Wales

2. Accuracy

Statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with the SLC before tables are published. The figures in this release reflect the final position as at the end of the 2019/20 academic year (31 July 2020), and are correct as at 5 August 2020.

3. Timeliness and punctuality

This release has met the previously announced date of publication.

4. Accessibility and clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

5. Comparability and coherence

Strengths

- Outputs have been developed to meet the internal and external user need in Wales
- The data is derived from well-understood SLC systems
- Detailed statistics are provided via our StatsWales website

Limitations

- When the WGLG was introduced for Further Education institutions, the grant was available to students aged 18 and over at the start of the academic year. From 2006/07, the student eligibility criterion for WGLGs for Further Education institutions was changed to students aged 19 and over at the start of the academic year, due to the extension of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to include 18 year olds. This would only be relevant if comparison were made with such historical years as figures on applications and awards for students at Further Education institutions for years from 2006/07 onwards are consequently lower than for previous years and are not directly comparable. Further information on EMAs was published in September in the statistical first release '[Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2019/20](#)'.
- Data provided by the SLC on applications for WGLGs from students at Further Education institutions showed approximately 20 successful applications in 2019/20 where the mode of study was 'unknown' and are included in Table 1, but are excluded in other tables showing figures by mode of study.

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in a letter of 03 May 2012 following a compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation ([Assessment Report 76](#)) against the Code of Practice in December 2010. This is the last time these statistics underwent a full assessment.

Since then we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- added more value by replacing pie charts showing breakdown by age with bar charts making comparison within and between charts easier
- added more value by introducing chart of successful applications by gender
- added more value by introducing Historical chart showing proportion of learners successfully claiming
- added more value by introducing a description and link to the Well-being of Wales report
- added more value by introducing alt-text and expanded alt-text detail to all charts and tables
- added more value by moving the webpage to the updated gov.wales stats and research pages
- added more value by having two age categories (22 to 24, 25 to 49) in place of the age category 22 to 49

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section

(10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at:

<https://gov.wales/welsh-government-learning-grants-further-education>

Tables associated with this bulletin containing a greater amount of detail are available on the Welsh Government’s interactive data dissemination service, [StatsWales](#).

Further information about the WGLG (FE) scheme can be found on the [Student Finance Wales website](#).

Information on WGLG HE is published by the Student Loans Company in the SFR ‘[Student Support for Higher Education in Wales](#)’.

Next update

October 2021

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to HigherEducationAndStudentFinance.Stats@gov.wales.

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