



Welsh Government Learning Grants (Further Education), 2020/21

27 October 2021
SB 34/2021

£4.2m was paid to FE students in 2020/21
compared with
£4.9m paid to FE students in 2019/20.



4,495
students applied for a WGLG in 2020/21,
of these
3,725 (83%)
applications were successful.

3,500 (94%)
of successful applications
were from full-time students.



210 (6%)
were from part-time
students.

Source: Student Loans Company

Key points

- The number of applications for a WGLG decreased by 15% between 2019/20 and 2020/21. The number of successful applications decreased by 16% for the same period.
- 97% of applications from full time students were successful and 85% of applications from part time students were successful.
- 2,570 (74%) of successful full-time applications and 150 (70%) 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
- 1,480 (42%) successful full-time applications and 50 (24%) successful part-time applications were from students aged 21 or under

About this bulletin

Welsh Government Learning Grants for Further Education (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 2020/21 academic year, as at the end of July 2021.

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Policy and operational context

This statistical bulletin includes data on the Welsh Government Learning Grants for **Further Education** (WGLG). Information on Welsh Government Learning Grants for **Higher Education** is published by the Student Loans Company in the Statistical First Release '[Student Support for Higher Education in Wales](#)'.

Welsh Government Learning Grants for Further Education (WGLG) 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 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 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 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 2020/21 was extracted on the 18 October 2021 and is accurate as of that date.
- Part-time applications include applications where the course of study is below the threshold of taught hours (less than 275 hours per year).

Applications by work stage and mode of study

There has been a general downward trend in total WGLG 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	2020/21
Full-Time						
Successful	5,405	4,935	4,760	4,430	4,085	3,500
Ineligible	80	70	75	60	120	95
Awaiting Evaluation	10	*	*	*	*	*
Total	5,495	5,015	4,835	4,495	4,210	3,600
Part-time						
Successful	445	365	350	250	325	210
Ineligible	50	55	60	50	80	40
Awaiting evaluation	0	*	0	0	0	0
Total	495	420	410	300	405	250
Unknown						
Successful	140	95	40	105	20	15
Ineligible	330	280	340	320	295	305
Awaiting evaluation	630	390	415	400	375	325
Total	1,105	765	795	820	690	645
All Successful applications	5,990	5,395	5,145	4,785	4,435	3,725
All Applications	7,095	6,200	6,045	5,615	5,305	4,495

Notes

Source: Student Loans Company

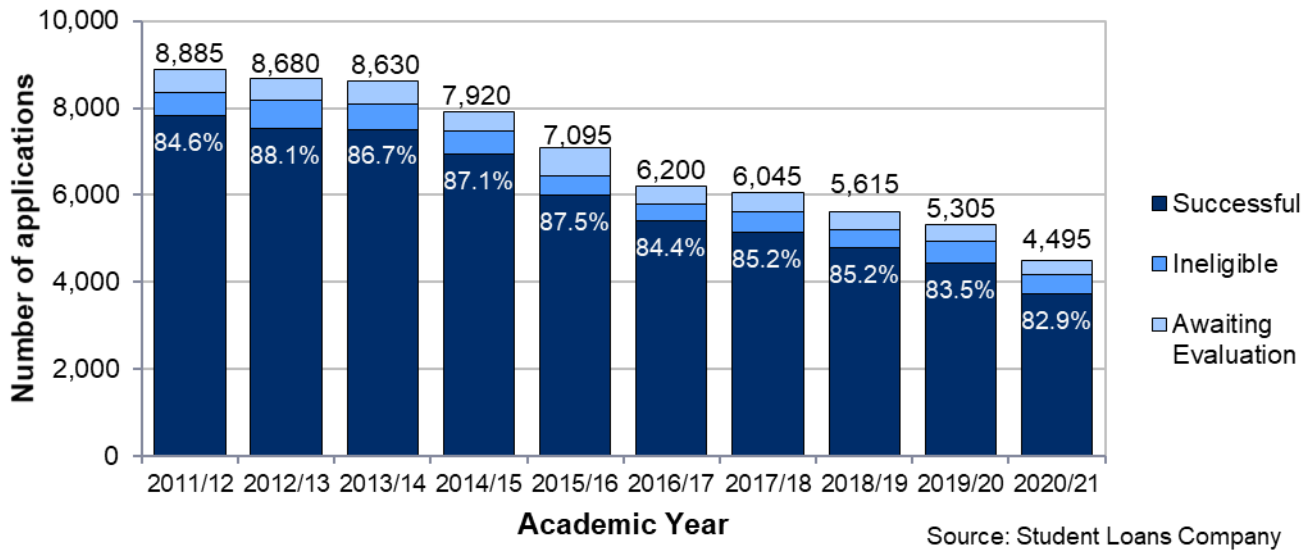
* The data item is disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication (more than 0, less than 5)

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

There were 4,495 applications for financial assistance in 2020/21:

- 3,600 applications were from full-time students, of which 3,500 (97%) were successful
- 250 applications were from part-time students, of which 210 (84%) were successful

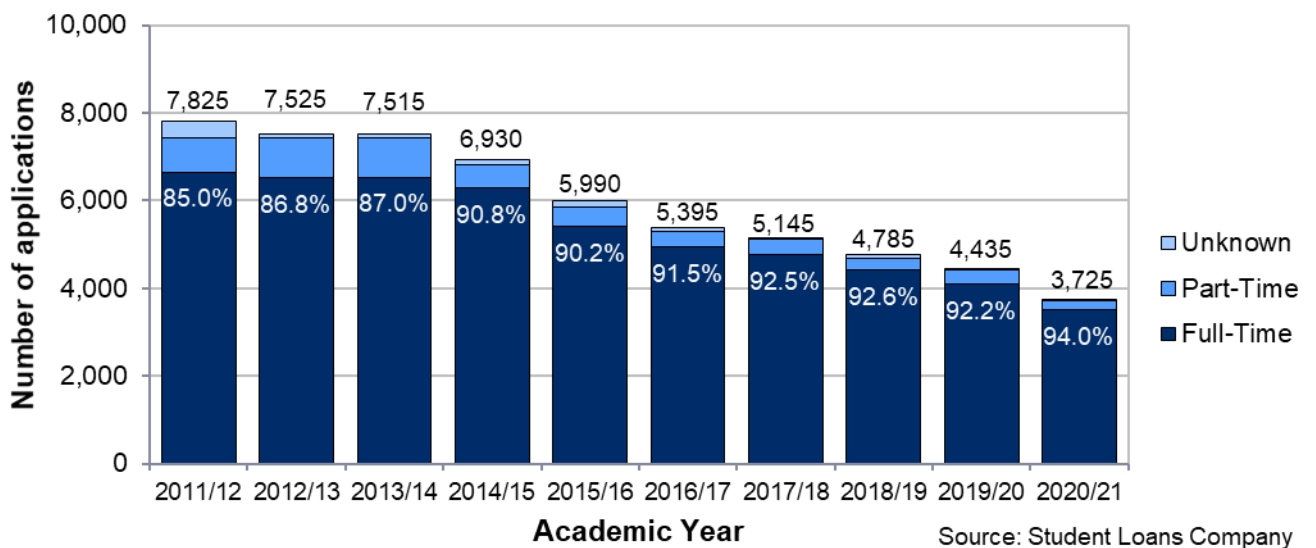
Chart 1: Applications by application work stage and the percentage of applications that were successful



In 2020/21:

- There were 4,495 applications for WGLG, a decrease of 15% compared to the previous academic year
- 3,725 of these were successful applications, a decrease of 16% compared to the previous academic year (see [Table 1](#))

Chart 2: Successful applications by mode of study and the percentage of applications from full-time students



There were 3,725 successful applications in 2020/21:

- 94% (3,500) were from full-time students, an increase of 2 percentage points compared to 2019/20
- 6% (210) of successful applications were from part-time students, a decrease of 1 percentage point compared to 2019/20 (see [Table 1](#))

Successful applications by age and mode of study

Table 2: Successful applications by age and mode of study

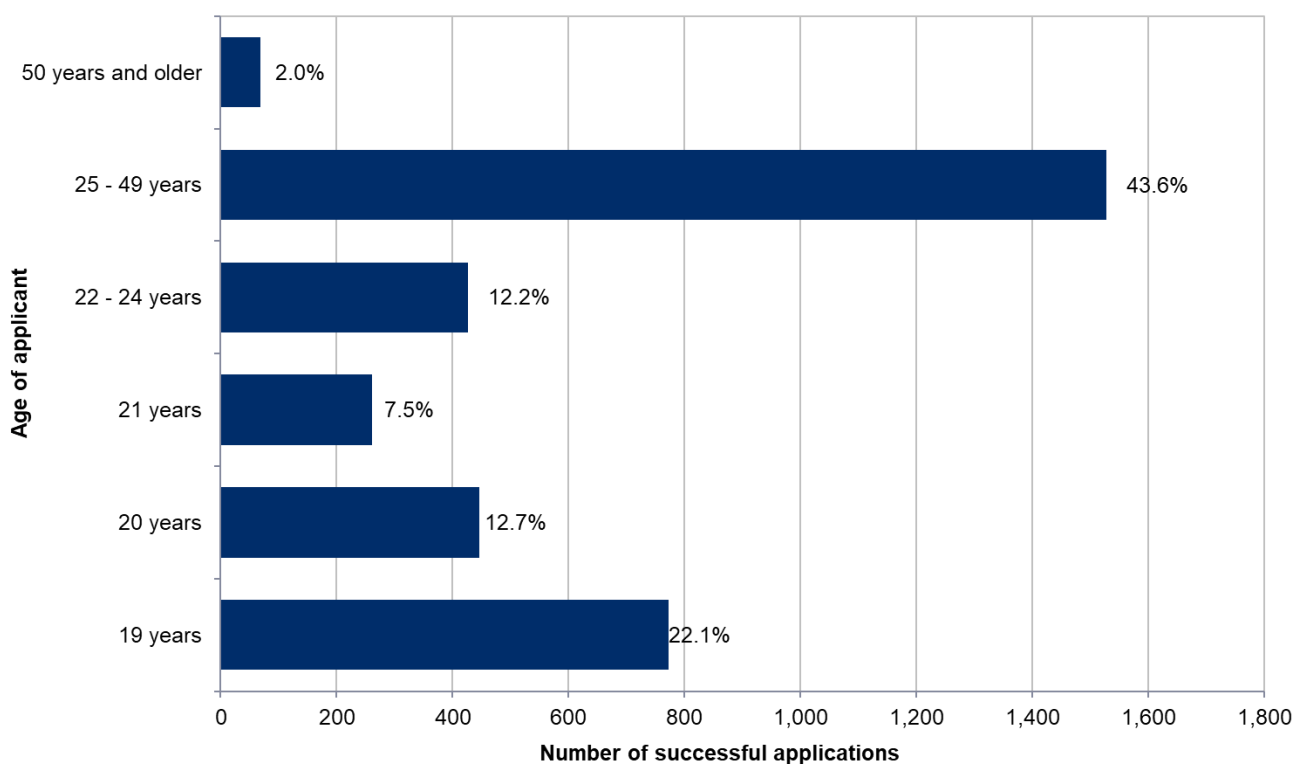
Academic Year	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
19 years	1,225	20	1,040	35	1,005	25	805	35	770	20
20 years	560	15	650	15	535	20	505	20	445	15
21 years	345	15	325	20	325	10	315	15	260	15
22 to 24 years	730	40	650	40	565	35	545	40	425	30
25 to 49 years	2,000	240	2,025	230	1,925	150	1,830	200	1,525	125
50 years and over	80	35	70	15	70	10	85	10	70	5
Total	4,945	365	4,765	350	4,430	250	4,085	325	3,500	210

Notes

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Source: Student Loans Company

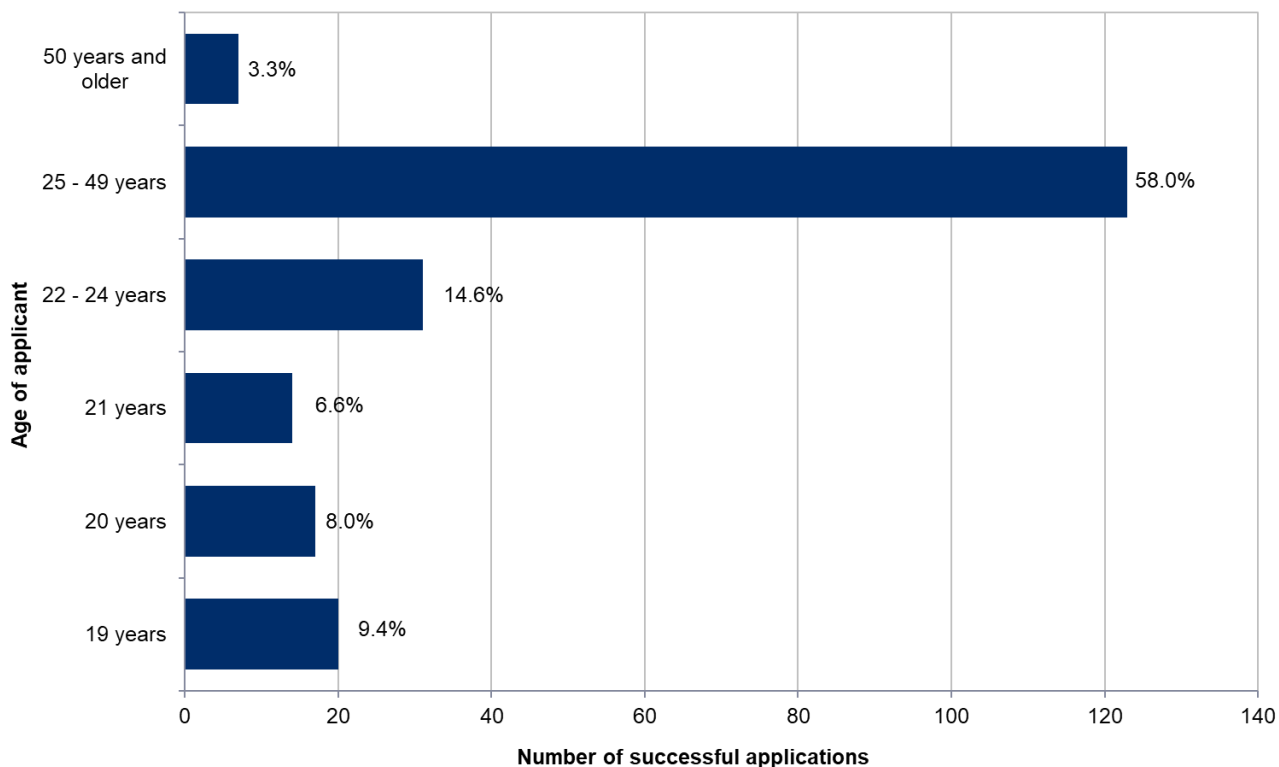
Chart 3: Successful full-time applications by age, 2020/21



Source: Student Loans Company

- In 2020/21, 42% (1,480) of successful full-time applications were from students aged 21 or under
- The majority of successful full time applications were from younger age groups; 54% of applications were from 19-24 year olds.

Chart 4: Successful part-time applications by age, 2020/21



Source: Student Loans Company

- In 2020/21, 24% (50) of successful part-time applications were from students aged 21 or under
- The majority of successful part time applications were from older age groups; 61% of applications were from over 24 year olds.

Successful applications by gender

Table 3: Successful applications by gender

Academic Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Female	3790	3290	3110	2945	2650	2,235
Male	2200	2105	2035	1840	1785	1,490
Total	5990	5395	5145	4785	4435	3,725

Notes

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Source: Student Loans Company

- In 2020/21, 60% (2,235) of successful applications for WGLG were from females, but this should be considered in the context of learner demography: in 2019/20 (the [latest figures](#) available), 61% of post-18 learners were female

Successful applications and amount paid

Table 4a: Successful applications by household income and mode of study

	Number			
	2019/20		2020/21	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
£0 - £6,120	3,035	235	2,570	150
£6,121 - £12,235	720	60	645	40
£12,236 - £18,370	330	30	285	25
Total	4,085	325	3,500	210
Percentage				
£0 - £6,120	74%	73%	73%	70%
£6,121 - £12,235	18%	18%	18%	19%
£12,236 - £18,370	8%	9%	8%	11%

Notes

Source: Student Loans Company

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

- 2,570 (73%) of successful full-time applications and 150 (70%) 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)(b)

	Amount Paid (£000s)			
	2019/20		2020/21	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
£0 - £6,120	4,060	165	3,545	100
£6,121 - £12,235	500	25	445	15
£12,236 - £18,370 (b)	130	10	115	5
Total	4,690	195	4,105	120
Percentage				
£0 - £6,120	87%	84%	86%	81%
£6,121 - £12,235	11%	12%	11%	14%
£12,236 - £18,370	3%	4%	3%	5%

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+"

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

- £4.2 million was paid in WGLGs to FE students in 2020/21, a decrease of 14% compared to the £4.9 million paid in 2019/20

Successful applications by type of institution

Table 5: Successful applications by institution and mode of study

Academic Year	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Full-time	Part-time	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	4,071	320	3,490	205
<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%	99.7%	100.0%
Other Learning Centres	1.0%	4.1%	0.5%	5.0%	0.6%	2.6%	0.2%	1.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%
English Institutions	20	*	30	5	15	5	15	*	15	5	10	10
Total	5,405	445	4,940	365	4,760	350	4,430	250	4,085	325	3,500	210

Notes

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) Care should be taken if comparing with previous releases as these percentages also included English institutions before 2015/16

* 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 2020/21, 99.7% of successful full-time Welsh institution applications were from students attending FE Institutions, with the remainder from Other Learning Centres (which include Community Colleges and Community Education Centres). English Institutions continue to show low numbers.
- 100% of successful part-time Welsh institution applications were from students attending FE. English Institutions continue to show low numbers.

Successful applications by local authority

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

Academic Year	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Full-time	Part-time	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	80	*
Gwynedd	130	20	130	20	135	5	110	10	125	10	110	*
Conwy	275	15	210	25	210	20	170	10	165	5	145	10
Denbighshire	260	5	220	10	220	5	175	10	160	10	120	*
Flintshire	330	*	260	*	230	*	225	*	145	*	140	*
Wrexham	250	5	240	*	195	10	165	10	140	15	150	*
Powys	105	10	95	*	105	5	90	*	115	*	95	*
Ceredigion	95	10	80	*	105	*	85	*	70	*	40	0
Pembrokeshire	130	*	105	*	95	5	105	*	100	*	95	*
Carmarthenshire	220	25	210	20	220	30	185	25	190	30	200	25
Swansea	340	95	350	65	340	70	310	55	325	65	300	50
Neath Port Talbot	250	15	215	25	205	15	220	10	215	25	155	5
Bridgend	240	5	240	*	235	*	210	*	190	*	155	0
Vale of Glamorgan	200	10	185	*	180	10	195	5	150	*	115	5
Cardiff	825	115	720	105	720	90	670	25	595	30	515	15
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	510	20	470	10	445	10	395	*	375	5	315	5
Merthyr Tydfil	165	15	130	15	115	10	130	20	105	15	75	*
Caerphilly	290	10	310	10	295	*	260	5	250	5	195	15
Blaenau Gwent	125	10	120	0	100	*	105	5	80	35	75	10
Torfaen	150	15	150	10	125	10	145	10	120	10	110	10
Monmouthshire	75	*	75	5	60	*	55	5	55	10	45	5
Newport	340	20	335	20	325	15	345	15	340	25	265	35
Wales	5,390	445	4,930	360	4,740	345	4,425	250	4,080	325	3,480	210

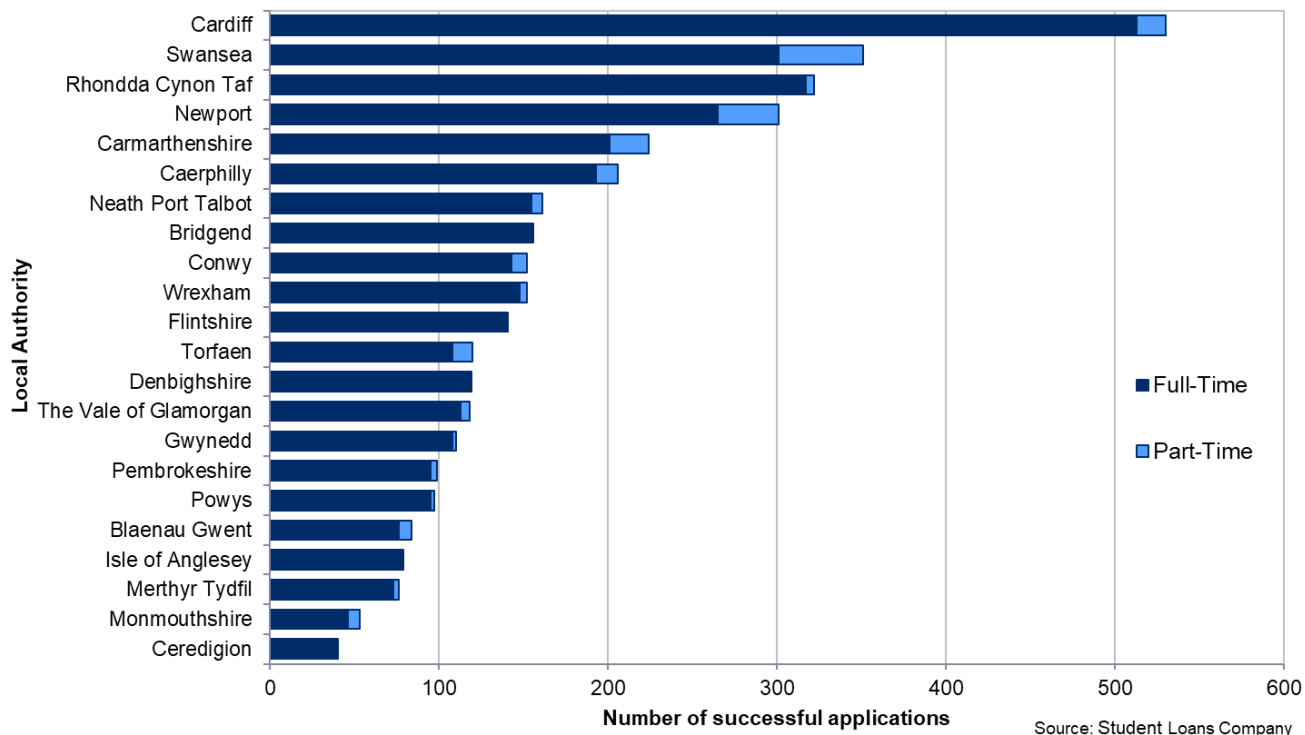
Notes

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, 2020/21



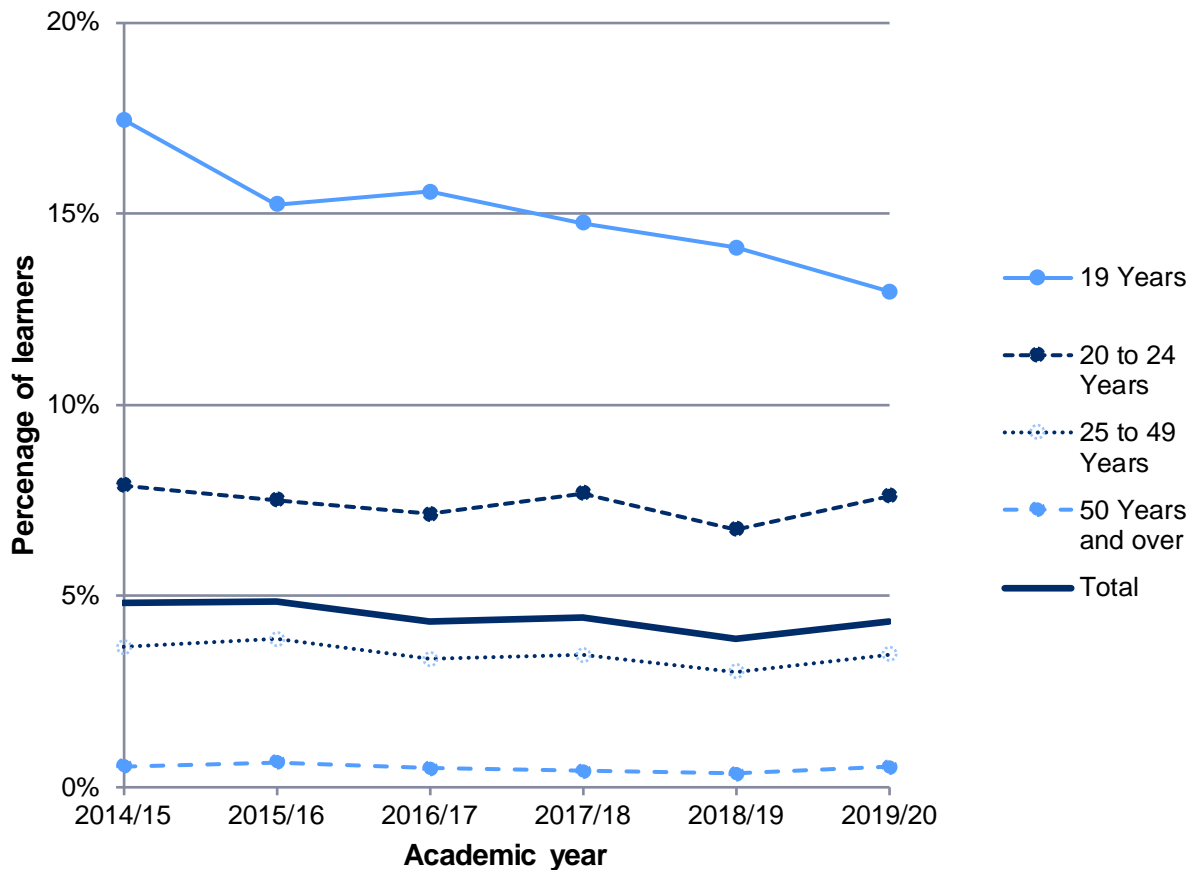
In 2020/21:

- The number of successful applications (including both full-time and part-time) ranged from 40 in Ceredigion to 530 in Cardiff
- Cardiff accounted for 15% of all full-time successful applications
- Swansea accounted for the largest share of part-time successful applications at 24%
- The local authority with the highest proportion of part-time learners amongst their successful applications was Swansea, at 14%

Percentage of learners receiving WGLG

Chart 6 shows the proportion of learners in further education that receive WGLG. This chart uses the Life Long Learning Wales Record (LLWR) for student numbers. The latest year available in LLWR is 2019/20. This data is available on [StatsWales](#).

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



- The total number of successful applicants in 2019/20 was 4,410
- Since 2014/15 the percentage of post-18 learners receiving WGLG has generally declined by a small amount from 4.8% in 2014-15 to 4.3% in 2019-20
- By age group, the highest proportion of learners receiving WGLG in 2019/20 was 19 year olds (13%) and the lowest was those aged 50 and over (0.5%)

Notes

1. Welsh Government Learning Grant for 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 Welsh Government Learning Grant for Further Education scheme has various student and course criteria, including:

Student criteria

1. Nationality and residency: UK citizens living in Wales may be eligible for WGLG. Students living in Wales who are not UK citizens may still be eligible to get WGLG – more information can be found on the [Student Finance Wales](#) website.
2. Age: 19 or over on 1st September

Course criteria

Students do not have to study in Wales to get WGLG, but must be studying at a school or college involved in the WGLG scheme.

The course must:

- require attendance for at least 275 hours during the academic year
- be at a participating school or college
- lead to a nationally recognised qualification, up to and including Level 3 qualifications

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 Cumulative contact hours in the academic year	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 applications and payments are administered by the [Student Loans Company](#) (SLC). Data held on WGLG students is entered by SLC staff onto an administrative database for the purpose of assessing and paying WGLG 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 18 October 2021. All information is based on applications received by 31 July 2021.

Further information including the numbers of WGLG 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:

Academic Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Awaiting Evaluation	640	395	420	400	380	330

3.3 Mode of study 'unknown'

Data provided by the SLC on applications for WGLG showed approximately 15 successful applications in 2020/21 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

2,415 Equal Opportunities monitoring forms were received in 2020/21, which equates to 54% 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 2021 show that of the applications for which an equal opportunities form was completed:

- 17% classed themselves as disabled and 2% did not confirm their disability status.
- 5% said they were Black or British Black
- 11% made up the groups who were of Mixed ethnicity, Asian or Asian British and Chinese or other ethnic group
- 83% classed their ethnicity as White
- 1% did not confirm their ethnicity

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 Official 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 2020/21 academic year (31 July 2021), and are correct as at 18 October 2021.

3. Timeliness and punctuality

The data in this statistical release is available in September and the release is published in October to allow sufficient time to compile and quality assure the data. 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, 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 WGLG 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 2020 in the statistical first release '[Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2019/20](#)'.
- Data provided by the SLC on applications for WGLG from students at Further Education institutions showed approximately 15 successful applications in 2020/21 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 Official 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 Official Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Replaced pie charts with bar charts making comparisons within and between charts easier.
- Introduced chart showing the successful applications by gender.
- Introduced a chart showing proportion of all learners successfully claiming WGLG over time.
- Introduced a description and link to the Well-being of Wales report.
- Improved accessibility by including alt text for charts and tables.
- Improving age categories to include "22 to 24" and "25 to 49" in place of the age category "22 to 49".
- Added graphics to the key points.

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 2022

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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