

SLC offers support to students receiving exam results

Chris Larmer, Executive Director, Operations on the steps students need to take to get their student finance sorted after A-level results day.

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Congratulations to everyone around the country who is receiving exam results today. It's been a challenging academic year and you should be very proud of all you have achieved.

We know that right now many of you will be making important decisions about your future, particularly if your results are different to what you were expecting. You may be changing your course or university through Clearing and this has implications for your student finance application. To help you understand what action you need to take the Student Loans Company (SLC) has produced a [new Clearing guide](#).

The key thing to note is that if you haven't already applied for student finance, you must do so now to give yourself the best chance of having some funding in place as close to term start as possible. If you are applying late, you may get less money than you expect initially. This is because it can take 6-8 weeks to process a student finance application, which means that applications may not be fully processed by term start. We will do our best to ensure that all eligible applicants have some money in place by awarding the minimum maintenance loan amount first, followed by a top-up payment if students are entitled to more funding.

In addition, if you are changing your university or course through Clearing you must update the details on your online application form. We have produced a short film explaining exactly how to do this as part of our [Clearing guide](#).

[short film](#)

SLC is on track to process a record number of applications this year. This means that we are enabling more students than ever to invest in their futures through higher and further education, but it does present us with a challenge in ensuring the best service for our customers.

There is an extremely high demand for our phone lines which means it is taking longer than we would like for you to speak to us. We have responded to this by expanding the amount of information and guidance available [online](#) so that you can find answers to the most common student finance questions

without having to call us. If you simply want an update on your [application status](#) this can be easily checked via your online account.

You can also send us direct messages via the Student Finance England [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) channels.

Of course, we know that this can also be an anxious time for parents and partners who are supporting student finance applications and, to help, we have also made [resources available specifically for them](#). This includes information on providing evidence and what to do if their income has gone down.

To help with Clearing, SLC has put together the following top five tips:

- **Apply Now**

If you haven't already done so, please [apply online now](#) to ensure you have some funding in place as close to term start as possible – remember you may not get your full entitlement initially.

- **Update your application with any Clearing changes**

If you change your course or university during Clearing you must update the details on your online application form.

- **Don't call us, we'll call you (if we need to!)**

Applications can take six to eight weeks to process. Students do not need to contact SLC during this time. They will be contacted if any additional information is needed. Students can check their [application status](#) via their online account as well as a to-do list of any action they need to take. If your 'to-do list' isn't showing, this means you have no actions.

- **Provide evidence promptly**

Students and/or their parents or partners may be asked to submit evidence to support their applications. Please submit your evidence promptly, you can watch our short film which explains how to do this. Please don't upload evidence to your account unless we've asked you to in your 'to-do list'. If you upload evidence when nothing has been requested, it will take us longer to process the details you submitted.

[short film](#)

- **Stay up to date with the latest student finance information**

Follow Student Finance England on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for

all the latest student finance information.

[Research: COVID-19: reported SARS-CoV-2 deaths in England](#)

Monthly report presenting the latest data on COVID-19 mortality in England in people with laboratory-confirmed SARS-CoV-2.

[Record numbers of students take up university places](#)

More than 210,000 18-year-old students in England have had their university places confirmed, with 192,000 at their first choice and increases in top grades for students from all backgrounds.

A record rate of students from disadvantaged backgrounds will be starting university courses, up 11% proportionately on last year.

Nineteen per cent of entries are at grade A, with 44.3% at grade A or above – up 4.6 percentage points (ppt) and 6.0 ppt on 2020 respectively. This is lower than the uplift seen between 2019 and 2020, where As increased 6.6 ppt and A or above 12.7 ppt.

The uplift in top grades reflects the fact the grading process gave all students a chance to do their best, only being assessed on what they had been taught across multiple pieces of work.

This helped bring fairness between students with different levels of disruption to their learning, and helped limit any increase in historic disparities between different groups of students and types of schools.

Statistics published today show:

- Comparison of grades between this year and last year showed no notable changes in historic disparities between groups of students and types of school; 88.4% of grades are A* to C at A level, compared to 87.8% in 2020.
- There was a 15.8% increase relative to last year in the proportion of grades at A and A* in academies, compared with 15.2% in independent

schools. That represents a 5.7pp increase in the proportion of grades at A and A* from last year in academies, compared with a 9.3ppt increase in independent schools.

- In real terms, this means there are 1.21 times more A and A* grades in academies, compared to 1.17 times more A and A* grades in independent schools, in 2021 compared to 2020.
- Maths remains the most popular subject at A level with a 3.8% increase in entries this year;
- 6.4% increase in STEM subjects, with 1.9% more girls taking A levels in Maths and 8.3% more in Physics, building on significant progress in this area since 2010.
- Over 340,000 certificates awarded to a wide range of students who have undertaken Level 3 vocational and technical qualifications, with results broadly similar to previous years.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Receiving results is always a huge milestone in people's lives and after a difficult year, every student should be incredibly proud of what they have achieved. The results are testament to young people's hard work and resilience alongside the commitment and expertise of their teachers.

It's fantastic to see a record number of disadvantaged students going to university. While there has been an increase in the number of top grades awarded, young people and their families can be confident grades carry the same weight as any other year and will allow them to progress to the next stage of education or work.

While exams remain the fairest and best form of assessment, recognising the unprecedented disruption the pandemic has caused to education, the Government and Ofqual decided it would not be fair for GCSE, AS, A level and many vocational and technical qualification exams to go ahead this year.

Teachers were able to determine grades based on a range of evidence, in-class tests, mock papers, coursework and optional questions provided by exam boards – giving students the greatest opportunity to show their knowledge and abilities.

Grades were subject to internal checks in schools and colleges and one in five schools had a sample of their grades checked by exam boards, helping to ensure students, parents, employers, colleges and universities can have confidence in the grades.

This ensured fairness for students, enabling them to progress on to their next stage of education, training or employment.

Many students will go on to one of the UK's world leading universities, and today's data shows there has been a record 20,240 total acceptances of students to nursing courses, and 8,560 acceptances on to medicine and dentistry, up 23% on last year.

As in previous years, the government has been working closely with universities ahead of results day to ensure as many students as possible can progress if they get the grades they need.

STEM degrees offer some of the highest earnings returns for female graduates, and the further increases in girls studying STEM A Level subjects this year builds on the 31% increase in entries from women and girls between 2010 and 2019.

The Government intends GCSE, A level and VTQ exams to go ahead next summer, and together with Ofqual recently ran a consultation on arrangements for the assessments to recognise the disruption to students' education during the pandemic. The proposals include choices about the topics students will be assessed on for some subjects, and giving schools and colleges advance information about the focus of content of the exams for other subjects.

The Government has committed to an ambitious, and long-term education recovery plan, including an investment to date of over £3bn and a significant expansion of our tutoring programme to support children and young people to make up for learning lost during the pandemic.

Just as they do in any normal year, UCAS will help thousands of students to find places through Clearing if they did not receive the grades they were hoping for, and there is also the option of sitting exams this autumn for those students looking to improve their grade.

[1.8 million couples benefitting from extra tax relief](#)

Press release

Married couples and those in civil partnerships could reduce their Income Tax by up to £252 a year by sharing their Personal Allowances.



Nearly 1.8 million married couples and those in civil partnerships are using Marriage Allowance to save up to £252 a year in Income Tax, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has announced.

Summer has always been a popular season for weddings, and newly married couples or those in civil partnerships could be eligible for the tax saving. And even if they have been married for years, a change in circumstances could also mean they are newly eligible.

[Marriage Allowance](#) allows married couples or those in civil partnerships to share their personal tax allowances if one partner earns an income under their Personal Allowance threshold of £12,570 and the other is a basic rate taxpayer.

They can transfer 10% of their tax-free allowance to their partner, which is £1,260 in the 2021 to 2022 tax year. It means couples can reduce the tax they pay by up to £252 a year. Couples can backdate their claims for any of the four previous tax years, which could be worth up to a total of £1,220.

It is free to apply for Marriage Allowance and the easiest way for taxpayers to [check eligibility and make a claim](#) to receive 100% of the relief they are entitled to is via GOV.UK.

Angela MacDonald, HMRC's Deputy Chief Executive and Second Permanent Secretary, said:

Marriage Allowance lets eligible couples share their Personal Allowances and reduce their tax by up to £252 a year. Nearly 1.8 million couples are already using the service – it is free, quick and easy to apply, just search 'marriage allowance' on GOV.UK.

Married couples may have experienced a change in their circumstances which could now mean they are eligible for Marriage Allowance, including:

- a recent marriage or civil partnership
- one partner has retired and the other remains working
- a change in employment due to COVID-19
- a reduction in working hours which means their earnings fall below their Personal Allowance
- unpaid leave or a career break, or
- one partner is studying or in education and not earning above their Personal Allowance

If a spouse or civil partner has died since 5 April 2017, the surviving person can still claim by contacting the [Income Tax helpline](#).

Marriage Allowance claims are automatically renewed every year. However, couples should notify HMRC if their circumstances change.

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