

SLC launches application service for part-time and postgraduate study

The Student Loans Company (SLC) has launched its application service for postgraduate and part-time undergraduate study for the 22/23 academic year.

And the message to students is to get their applications in early to ensure they have their finance in place at term start.

Part-time undergraduate students in England can apply for funding to pay for their tuition fees and some students may also be able to apply for a Maintenance Loan to help with their living costs. Postgraduate students can apply for either a Postgraduate Master's Loan or a Postgraduate Doctoral Loan to help them with tuition fees and living costs.

Chris Larmer, SLC Executive Director, Operations said

"SLC exists to support people to invest in their futures through further and higher education by providing trusted, transparent, flexible and accessible student finance services. It's an important milestone in our organisation as we launch the service for part time undergraduate and postgraduate students. We know many students will have been waiting for this to happen and we want to encourage students to get their applications in early so they can start the new academic year with funding in place."

The easiest way for part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students to apply is online at <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk> Applications can take six to eight weeks to process and students will be contacted if any additional information is needed.

Chris added: "We know that the next few months will be an exciting but busy time for students, as they prepare for the Autumn term. Whether they are planning to study part-time, or are embarking on a postgraduate course, applying for student finance now will give them a head start as they begin to get organised for the year ahead. It's quick and easy to do and once they've submitted their application they can relax – we will contact them if there is anything else we need."

To help part-time and postgraduate students with their applications for funding, SLC has produced the following key facts:

Key facts about funding for part-time undergraduate students

- Part-time undergraduate students can apply for Tuition Fee Loans. If your course started on or after 1 August 2018 you can also apply for a Maintenance Loan. Part-time distance learning students are not eligible for Maintenance Loans unless they cannot attend their course in person because of a disability.
- The amount of Maintenance Loan you get depends on: Where you live while studying Your household income Your course intensity (we measure this by

asking you how many module credits you will study – check with your university or college if you are not sure).

- You need to reapply for funding for each year of your course.
- You start repaying your loan the April after you finish or leave your course or the April four years after the start of your course (even if you are still studying), whichever comes first. You repay 9% of what you earn over the repayment threshold.
- Watch our short film for more information on part time funding:

[Introduction to student finance for part-time students](#)

Key facts about the Postgraduate Master's/Doctoral Loan:

- You can get funding to help with course fees and living costs
- The amount you get is not based on your income or your family's
- You only need to apply once even if your course is longer than a year. The loan is divided equally across each year of the course.
- You start repaying your Postgraduate Master's or Doctoral Loan the April after you finish or leave your course. You repay 6% of what you earn over the repayment threshold. If you have other student loans you repay these at the same time.
- Students can find out more about the Post Graduate Doctoral and Master's Loans by watching the following short films:

• [Postgraduate Doctoral Loan Explained](#)

• [Postgraduate Master's Loan Explained](#)

Students can also stay up to date with all the latest information by following Student Finance England on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

[Countering IEDs with novel electronic technologies](#)

- DASA has launched a new Innovation Focus Area (IFA) called Countering IEDs by Novel Technology and Techniques.
- Seeking novel electronic technologies that can counter Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)
- Between £150k – £400k per proposal

It is vital that UK military and security users can continue to deploy new countermeasures and technologies to outpace IED threat evolution, to protect service personnel, emergency services and the public against the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

To address the UK's need for IED threat detection, the [Defence and Security](#)

[Accelerator](#) (DASA) is pleased to launch a new IFA, [Countering IEDs by Novel Technology and Techniques](#). This IFA aims to find and develop innovations that use either the Radio Frequency (RF) spectrum or provide an understanding of the RF spectrum in order to detect and disrupt the functionality of IEDs.

Funding available

Between £150k – £400k is available per proposal for this IFA. Proposals are expected to last between 6 – 18 months, and should deliver solutions at a minimum of [Technology Readiness Levels \(TRLs\) 5/6](#).

The IFA is open for proposals now until further notice.

Have an innovation? [Read the full competition document and submit a proposal](#).

Effective IED countermeasures: Key challenges

An important part of countering an IED threat is the detection of devices along with understanding the electromagnetic environment. This will help inform situational awareness and determine threat from non-threat, and inform the configuration of other countermeasures.

What is an IED?

An IED is an explosive device fabricated in an improvised manner, but with varying degrees of professionalism. An IED typically comprises of the following component types:

- a power source
- wires
- electronic circuitry
- an explosive initiator
- an explosives charge
- shrapnel products to increase fragmentation
- trigger mechanism
- various enclosures

The trigger mechanisms used to initiate IEDs are often adapted from commercial products. Examples could include modified Radio Controlled (RC) toys or the use of communication networks.

Challenge areas

There are three challenge areas of interest for the IFA, and proposals are expected to meet at least one of the below challenges.

Challenge 1

To capture and analyse RF signals using novel spectrum survey techniques, which may include, but is not limited to:

- signal analysis techniques and classification algorithms, which identify and distinguish between multiple technology standards and protocols, while being able to operate across a wide spectrum in real time
- generating methods or data analysis techniques to provide an understanding of the RF environment, which can be used to inform tactical decisions; for instance, the ability to identify abnormal changes in the environment

Challenge 2

Approaches to permanently or temporarily disable commercial communications links and/or the electronics within a Remote Controlled Explosive Device. Examples include techniques that:

- disable communications links to prevent a trigger signal being received. Examples of communication links of interest include those used by push-to-talk radios, wireless doorbells, cellular devices, Wi-Fi and any other readily available communication devices. This may include approaches against the RF signal or the wireless transceivers themselves
- disable multiple communication types simultaneously across a wide spectrum, preventing devices from switching to alternative RF bearers that they may have access to
- disable the electronics within a Remote Controlled Explosive Device, preventing its detonation. Examples include RF techniques to affect the operation of microcontrollers or cause permanent damage

Challenge 3

New or novel hardware and ancillaries (system components), which may include but is not limited to:

- novel antenna concepts to improve performance and lower the RF and visual signature of the service person or vehicle with respect to the ECM system and its ancillaries
- advancements in hardware design, such as tuneable filters, efficient ultra-wide band amplifier designs
- optimisations in size, weight, or power, or efficiency optimisations in wideband RF signal generation technologies (in the order of several GHz)

- novel signal and data processing hardware technologies and techniques, that offer advancements in efficiency, parallelism or dynamic configurability

[Read the full competition document to learn more about the challenge areas.](#)

Submit a proposal

If you have a solution or technology that may help us discover better ways of countering IEDs and protect service personal and the public, DASA would like to hear from you. Read the full competition document to submit a proposal.

[Submit a proposal.](#)

Trade deal with Australia helps Northern Ireland manufacturer secure landmark deal

- Ballymena bus manufacturer Wrightbus secures major deal to sell zero-emission buses in Australia.
- Ground-breaking zero-emission buses will be the first of their kind built in Australia, with hydrogen-powered chassis shipped from Northern Ireland.
- Wrightbus received government funding to develop hydrogen fuel cell technology, and is set to directly benefit from the UK-Australia trade deal that will slash tariffs on bus parts.

Northern Ireland bus manufacturer Wrightbus has secured a major deal with Australia's largest bus manufacturer, which could open a significant export market and drive jobs and growth at the Ballymena-based firm.

Companies like Wrightbus, which is leading on the development of next-generation green tech, are set to benefit from the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement, which was signed last year and slashed tariffs on electric vehicles to 0%. The UK Government introduced a bill this week to help bring the free trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand into force later this year.

Wrightbus has partnered with Volgren to provide its ground-breaking hydrogen fuel cell technology for the manufacture of two bus models, which will be the first of their kind built in Australia.

As well as leading the way in addressing climate change, Wrightbus is

supporting jobs in Northern Ireland and the wider Northern Ireland economy, as well as jobs across the UK through its supply chain. Wrightbus currently employs over 900 permanent members of staff at its Ballymena headquarters, and it is hoped that this new deal will lead to the creation of even more permanent jobs at the site and across the local manufacturing supply chain.

Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Northern Ireland is home to one of the UK's most dynamic manufacturing sectors, and I'm proud of our work helping companies like Wrightbus get export wins like this. They are paving the way for others to make in the UK and sell to the world.

Our historic trade agreement with Australia is tailored to the UK's strengths, and delivers for businesses, families, and consumers in Northern Ireland. By slashing tariffs and cutting red tape we are ensuring brilliant products and services reach global markets – creating jobs, boosting wages right and growing our economy.

In March 2021, Wrightbus received £11.2 million investment from the UK Government to develop low-cost hydrogen fuel cell technology, boosting the Northern Ireland economy and highlighting the Government's commitment to a net zero future.

The Volgren deal also supports future green growth by ensuring the UK and Australia work closer together to drive the development and commercialisation of low-emissions technology.

UK vehicle exports to Australia were worth £490 million in 2021 and will further benefit from all tariffs being cut to 0%.

Buta Atwal, Wrightbus CEO, said:

We're incredibly grateful to the DIT for its support in assisting Wrightbus to secure this important initial deal with Volgren in the Australian market. The UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement has helped to open up the market for us at a significant time in our continued growth.

With thousands of buses needing to be replaced in Australia over the next decade, this deal and its potential represents a fantastic opportunity not only for Wrightbus, but for the wider Northern Irish economy. We believe it could support the creation of green jobs both here in Northern Ireland and across our entire supply chain, which we're proud to say stretches across 47 counties in the UK.

Wrightbus was advised by DIT's team in Australia as they sought to break into the local market. DIT has also recently established a new trade and

investment hub in Belfast to bring more investment, jobs and export opportunities into Northern Ireland. DIT will work hand-in-hand with businesses of all sizes in Northern Ireland to help them to succeed in the global marketplace through a first class-export support framework which includes the expansion of DIT's Export Academy to businesses across Northern Ireland for the first time.

The UK-Australia agreement is expected to unlock £10.4 billion of additional trade, boosting our economy and increasing wages across the UK, while eliminating tariffs on 100% of UK exports.

[PM meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Andersson: 11 May 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Swedish Prime Minister Andersson in Harpsund, Sweden.



The Prime Minister was welcomed to Harpsund by Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson today, to discuss long term security collaboration between the UK and Sweden.

The leaders agreed that the aftershocks of Putin's abhorrent invasion of Ukraine had fundamentally changed international security architecture. They underlined that relations with Putin could never be normalised.

The invasion had also sharpened the focus on European security, the Prime Minister said, adding that the United Kingdom deeply valued its already close defence and security relationship with Sweden.

The leaders discussed how British and Swedish forces could increase their military cooperation in the coming months, and the Prime Minister said he believed today's security declaration would not only bring them closer

together but allow both forces to adapt to the challenges of tomorrow, side-by-side.

Sweden has advanced, cutting-edge military technology and world leading Armed Forces, and the closer collaboration between both countries will benefit wider Euro-Atlantic security, the Prime Minister added.

Speaking about energy security, the leaders discussed closer collaboration on renewables, including wind farm technology.

Both agreed to stay in close touch in the coming weeks and months.

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[350,000 households supported to buy a home through Help to Buy](#)

Press release

Over 350,000 young people and families have been helped into homeownership with Help to Buy since its launch in 2013.



Over 350,000 young people and families have been helped into homeownership with Help to Buy since its launch in 2013.

The major milestone was reached as the official Help to Buy statistics were published today (11 May 2022). The statistics show:

- 355,634 properties have been bought with a Help to Buy: Equity Loan since its launch.
- First-time buyers account for 83% of total purchases.
- The total value of Help to Buy: Equity Loan stands at £22 billion and the value of the properties sold under the scheme total £99 billion.

Housing Minister Stuart Andrew MP said:

Giving everyone the opportunity to own their own home is central to our levelling up mission – to spread opportunity and prosperity equally across the country.

It's fantastic that this milestone has been reached on the day we introduce our Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which sets out our plans to deliver more homes and give everyone the opportunity to own their own home.

Alongside other government initiatives such as the mortgage guarantee scheme, Help to Buy has boosted the annual number of first-time buyers to a 20 year high.

Chair of Homes England Peter Freeman said:

It's brilliant to see the impact that Help to Buy has had to date. With the help of the equity loan, more than 350,000 young people and families, many of which are first-time buyers, have now been able to buy their own home.

The new Help to Buy: Equity Loan for first time buyers started on 1 April 2021 and will continue to help thousands more people to own their home until March 2023.

Purchasers can borrow up to 20% of the cost of a new build (40% in London), funding the balance via a mortgage and repaying the loan when they sell.

Help to Buy is just one of the ways the government is making homeownership more achievable and affordable. Shared Ownership, First Homes and the Mortgage Guarantee Scheme are supporting many more people into homes of their own.

The mortgage guarantee scheme statistics also published today show 12,388 mortgages have been completed since the scheme's launch in April 2021 to 31 December 2021, with the total value of mortgage loans at £2.2 billion. The majority of mortgage completions under the scheme were outside London and the South East (86%) with the highest proportion of property completions in Scotland (24%) and North West (12%).

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