

COVID Student Support Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

NOTE: Page 3 includes Student FAQs

10th December 2020

Why is this credit being provided by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Skills?

In recognition of the challenges facing full time third level students the Minister has announced once off funding of up to €50m to provide additional financial assistance in this academic year.

The funding, which was provided as part of the Budget 2021 announcement, in recognition of the significant upheaval they have experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic will offer financial assistance to all EU full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students attending publicly funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The scheme will ensure students;

- Who avail of the SUSI grant, including students studying abroad, will receive €250 top-up in their grant;
- Students who do not avail of the grant but attend publicly funded Higher Education Institutions in the State will receive a €250 credit note for their institution;
- In a small number of cases, alternative arrangements will be made to facilitate a payment to students, at the discretion of individual institutions.

This builds on a range of specific student supports in response to Covid, including the provision of additional access supports including a doubling of the Student Assistance Fund, additional funding for wellbeing and mental health services and a €15 million technology fund for devices for students in further and higher education to assist with difficulties in accessing technology to facilitate their course work in a blended capacity.

Who is eligible for the €250 credit?

- All students in receipt of SUSI grants including fee only grants (including Higher Education undergraduate and postgraduate students, students studying abroad and PLC)
- All current registered full-time Irish/EU undergraduate and postgraduate students who would ordinarily be registered as such as at 1st November 2020 in publically funded higher education providers under the remit of DFHERIS.

What is the process for allocation of payment/credit to eligible Students?

Information regarding SUSI Students

- Students in receipt of SUSI do not need to contact SUSI unless they need to update their bank account details and this information is all available on the SUSI FAQs.
- SUSI are collecting bank account details from students on fee-only grants, since no such details were held by SUSI.
- All SUSI recipients (including those studying abroad) are eligible for the payment.
- This funding will be processed through existing systems, legislation and financial controls already in place and tax implications do not arise.
- Anyone receiving any SUSI support will be paid by SUSI and **not by their HEI** and instructions to HEIs have issued in this regard.
- Some students will be paid in 2021 as there are still applications being assessed and appeals under consideration as per current statistics.
- Any student who is currently awaiting a decision on SUSI eligibility and is ultimately not successful in their SUSI application will receive the credit through their HEI following receipt of the decision. Successful applicants will receive payment through SUSI.

Information regarding NON SUSI Students

- Higher education institutions will contact eligible students as soon as practicable.
- Students do not need to contact their college or apply for the credit it will be automatically applied by the institution.
- Assistance is not available to part time students or international students.
Only available to Further Education and Training students who are in receipt of SUSI supports.
- All higher education institutions have been asked to apply a credit note in the name of the registered students as soon as practicable. The Department is working with providers to finalise this process .
- In a small number of cases where a credit cannot be applied a payment may be facilitated at the discretion of the institution.

What can the credit be used for in an institution?

- This credit for students can be used as an offset against a range of services provided by each individual Institution including but not limited to student contribution fees, registration fees, photocopying, other higher education campus services etc. for the academic year 2020/21 or against outstanding student contribution charges which are payable in 2020 or within the year 2021, or other costs which arise and would otherwise be payable to institutions during this period. Your institution will provide details of applicable services available.

FAQ's and potential queries from students:

I am not eligible for a SUSI grant. How do I apply for the €250 payment?

The €250 payment will be made to all full-time EU undergraduate and postgraduate students in publically-funded institutions and there is no requirement for these students to apply for the payment. Your higher education institution will be in contact with you directly to inform you about how they intend to credit you the amount of €250, which can be used against future payments of the student contribution or other paid-for services provided by the institution during 2020 or 2021. The credit will be distributed to students before the end of the 2020/2021 academic year.

I receive a SUSI grant. Do I have to apply for the €250 payment?

If you receive a fee grant, tuition grant or maintenance grant from SUSI then there is no requirement for you to apply for the payment. SUSI will be in direct contact with any grant recipients who they require bank account details from.

I receive SUSI funding for a fee grant of 50% and have already paid €1,500 to my HEI, how do I apply for the €250 payment?

There is no requirement for you to apply for the payment. Your HEI has been informed that SUSI will make the payment to you. SUSI will be in direct contact with any grant recipients who they require bank account details from.

I'm an apprentice attending off the job training once a week in a HEI. Can I apply for the €250 payment?

The €250 payment will be made to all full-time EU undergraduate and postgraduate students currently registered in publicly-funded institutions and apprentices will not receive the payment.

I am a final year student and have paid full fees, can I receive a payment in lieu of the credit?

In a small number of cases where a credit cannot be applied a payment may be facilitated at the discretion of the institution.

I am a higher education student experiencing challenges what additional support or advice may be available for me to access?

Students who may be experiencing challenges or difficulties are encouraged to text 50808 . This is a 24/7 helpline to assist students with any issues they may have.