

## STUDENT FINANCE ENGLAND (SFE) TRAVEL GRANT

2019/20

### Eligibility

The SFE Travel Grant is available to students who are receiving student finance that depends on their household income (i.e. means-tested), and who are spending at least 50% of any qualifying period:

- studying at an overseas university or college (including Erasmus+ students);
- on an Erasmus+ work placement abroad;
- working as an Erasmus+ British Council Language Assistant (BCLA);
- undertaking unpaid research at a university abroad.

The Travel Grant is not available to students on a work placement abroad, unless the student is on the Erasmus+ scheme, or a *category d*) [Special Case work placement](#) (unpaid research at a university).

### Qualifying Periods

In order to claim the costs of flights in any period, the student must be away for 50% of the time in that period. The qualifying periods are:

1. 1<sup>st</sup> September\* to 31<sup>st</sup> December
2. 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March
3. 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June
4. 1<sup>st</sup> July to 31<sup>st</sup> August

*\*Where a student's year abroad starts before 1<sup>st</sup> September, the first qualifying period will be deemed to start from that date and not 1<sup>st</sup> September.*

Regardless of the total time away, students only can claim return flights for each period where they are away for 50% of that period. The grant is not based on the total number of days away throughout the year, but on the number of days in each period. Therefore, students at Universities with early start and finish dates can only claim **2 flights** if their academic year does not extend to over 50% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> period. The maximum number of flights that can be claimed is 3.

### How to Apply

SFE will automatically check students' eligibility for the Travel Grant when they assess their loan application. If eligible, SFE should send the student 2 forms:

#### • Course Abroad Form

This is used to verify the details of the student's time abroad for the purposes of claiming expenses. The student completes page 1 of the form with details of their placement. The form must then be posted to:

*Funding, Student Education Service, Level 9 Marjorie and Arnold Ziff Building,  
University of Leeds, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS2 9JT*

or scanned and emailed to: [Funding@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:Funding@leeds.ac.uk) to be signed and stamped for authorisation. Funding then sends the form to SFE.

The Course Abroad Form is only available from SFE. It is pre-printed with the student's name, date of birth, course details, and SFE account details, so forms are individual to each student. The Course Abroad Form is also used by SFE to calculate if the student qualifies for a Long Course Loan (extra weeks' funding).

**NB:** You need to provide the **term dates** of the host university if on study abroad, or **periods of work**, taking account of Christmas/New Year and Easter holidays, if working abroad. SFE will not calculate extra weeks funding if you only provide a start and end date for the year.

#### • Travel Grant Claim Form

The student completes this form and sends it to SFE along with all receipts for all expenses incurred. It is advisable to **keep copies of all receipts and paperwork**. The Travel Grant Claim Form can also be downloaded from the Gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-forms/y/uk-full-time/travel-grant>

*If you do not receive these forms automatically from SFE, please check that you have applied for means-tested funding. If you are sure that you are eligible, you will need to contact the SFE Helpline on 0300 100 0607 to request the forms.*

### Funding Available

The amount reimbursed depends on the household income, and covers reasonable travel expenses and costs during an academic year. Students must buy the most cost-effective tickets using the most economical and practical form of transport.

- The first **£303** of travel costs is disregarded, which means this is deducted from the total amount of Travel Grant claimed over the year.

- If the student's household income exceeds the threshold of **£39,796**, there is be a further £1 disregard for each additional £8.73 of household income which will reduce the Grant further.

### Acceptable Claims

- For a full year placement, up to 3 return journeys between the UK and an overseas institution;
- Any necessary daily travel costs while abroad for the purposes of attending the institution;
- The cost of medical insurance purchased for the purpose of studying abroad;
- 40% of a travel insurance premium, but this must include medical coverage;
- The cost of visas and medical tests that are a mandatory condition of entry to the host country;
- The cost of any vaccinations required.

Students can submit claims throughout the year, and do not have to wait until the end of their time abroad. You can print out multiple copies of the claim form to submit with any receipts.

### FAQs

*What's the earliest I can submit a claim?*

As soon as your loan has been approved and you have been sent the claim forms, you can submit receipts for any expenses.

*Is there a deadline for claiming?*

There is no deadline as such. You need to have applied for your loan for the year within 9 months of the start of the academic year. Once your loan is approved you can submit a claim at any time and there is no deadline for travel claims.

*Can I book two single flights instead of a return flight?*

Yes, this is acceptable. However, be aware that single journeys are often far more expensive than return journeys, but if it is the most economic option at the time booked then that's fine, e.g. if you don't have dates for your return at the time you book your outward journey. SFE may ask you provide price comparisons and we advise that you keep screen shots of the searches you do for flights as proof.

*Do I need to fly direct to my destination, or can I fly via another destination?*

The expectation is that you will fly direct to your destination. Where the usual route is via a hub then this should be acceptable. If it looks as if the route taken purposely deviates for the purposes of making a stop-over (e.g. a couple of days' holiday) somewhere on route to the destination, then SFE may query this. Any unusual travel arrangements should be checked with SFE for eligibility.

*I'm carrying equipment that can't go in the hold. Can I claim for an additional seat?*

No, you can claim baggage costs but you won't be reimbursed for an extra seat.

*Do I convert expenses in another currency into Sterling?*

No, you don't need to do this. Complete the claim form in the local currency. SFE will convert this based on the exchange rate at the date you made the payment. You'll be reimbursed in Sterling.

*Do I need to have receipts/invoices translated?*

It is not SFE policy to request professional translations with receipts/invoices, due to the additional cost students would incur for this. However, SFE do need to be able to identify which expenses the evidence relates to, so students may need to provide a translation. Where there are multiple receipts for the same repeat expense, it is fine to translate just one of these.

*My expenses were cash and I don't have receipts. Can I still claim?*

SFE will not reimburse you if you cannot provide receipts. Particularly, if you are claiming daily travel expenses, you must provide evidence of this expenditure. If you pay cash on local transport, you will need all the tickets. If you buy a travel card that you top-up with cash, you will need receipts for all the top-ups.

**All reimbursements are at the discretion of SFE. The University can provide general information based on SFE guidelines, but cannot confirm if SFE will accept particular expense claims or not. Students are advised to check any travel arrangements with SFE if they are unsure.**

Further information on placement years can be found at:

[http://students.leeds.ac.uk/info/21518/study\\_abroad\\_and\\_work\\_placements](http://students.leeds.ac.uk/info/21518/study_abroad_and_work_placements)

**SFW, SFNI, and SAAS** students should contact their loan provider for Travel Grant information.

The information and figures provided are for guidance only. The actual amount and terms of the Travel Grant and Long Course Loan will be determined by SFE. The figures quoted here have been obtained from Student Finance England:

<https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/products/full-time-undergraduate-education/full-time-travel-grants-for-students-studying-abroad-or-on-a-work-placement/> [accessed 09/01/2019]

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