

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition [PE2036](#): Write off student loan debts for paramedic students

Background

The petition calls for the Scottish Government to write off student loan debts incurred by students studying Paramedic Science courses prior to the introduction of the £10,000 bursary.

Paramedic, Nursing and Midwifery Student Bursary (PNMSB)

Bursary support for eligible students studying Paramedic Science courses was introduced in July 2021 ahead of the 2021-22 Academic Year.

Following a campaign by students, which included a [petition to the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee during Session 5](#), the existing Nursing and Midwifery Student Bursary was opened up to paramedic students. It is now known as the Paramedic, Nursing and Midwifery Student Bursary (PNMSB).

The bursary provides support of £10,000 per year for the three years of study and an additional £7,500 if completing an honours year.

The bursary is available to students living in Scotland who meet the eligibility criteria for student support. This is set out on the [Student Awards Agency Scotland \(SAAS\) website](#).

Students receiving the bursary [may also be eligible for additional support](#) such as Dependant's Allowance, Single Parent's Allowance, Childcare Allowance, Disabled Students' Allowance.

Debt write-off

The petition calls for the student debt of those who studied Paramedic Science prior to the introduction of the bursary in Academic Year 2021-22 to have their student debts written off.

Prior to their inclusion in the PNMSB criteria, eligible students living in Scotland who did not receive the bursary did qualify to have their tuition fees of £1,820 per year paid for them by SAAS. Students with household income of up to £33,999 per year were eligible for bursary support of between £500 and £2,000 per year.

Students who did not qualify for bursary support could apply for a repayable student loan. [The maximum student loan available in 2020-21 was £4,750.](#)

Student loan repayment conditions are set out in the Repayment of Student Loans (Scotland) Regulations 2000 and the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) Regulations 2009, as amended.

Under current legislation, [student loan debt can only be cancelled](#) 30 years after the loan holder became eligible to repay or if the loan holder dies or becomes permanently unfit for work.

Courses and student numbers

There are five universities running Paramedic Education courses in Scotland: Glasgow Caledonian, Queen Margaret, Robert Gordon, University of Stirling, and the University of the West of Scotland.

A [Scottish Government news release](#) stated there were 996 students studying Paramedic Education courses in 2021.

[Target intake figures from the Scottish Funding Council](#) show a projected intake of 335 year one students each year from 2023-24 to 2025-26.

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The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

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