

Anonymous Submission

Dear Sir/Madam

Student Support

I am writing to submit my views on bursary and loan support in higher education.

This year I completed an undergraduate degree at a Scottish university, and decided that I wanted to study the two year graduate entry law degree, with a view to entering the legal profession. Unfortunately, as this is classed as a second undergraduate degree, the tuition fees are not funded by the Scottish Government and are prohibitively expensive (up to £9,000 per year, to be paid upfront). The Student Awards Agency for Scotland has confirmed that student loans are not available to cover these fees, although a maintenance loan of £5,000 (paid monthly) would be.

The Scottish Government, in response to my enquiry to them, has explained that graduate entry degrees do not qualify for tuition fee support as, in allocating limited public funding priority is given to supporting as many people as possible to attain a first degree. This is a fair point, but I feel that it imposes a significant barrier and goes against the principle that access to education should be based on 'ability to learn, not ability to pay'.

The government has admirably provided every Scottish student with a free first degree, but I consider that there is a gap for students who want to 'convert' to law. A fair compromise may be a tuition fee set at a reasonable level, but paid through the student loans system and repaid annually once income reaches a certain threshold.

I hope my comments are of assistance to the Committee. I would be happy to provide further information on request.

Yours faithfully

