

**2021 No. 52**

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**The Covid-19 Study Disruption Payment Scheme Regulations  
(Northern Ireland) 2021**

*Made* - - - - *8th March 2021*

*Coming into operation* - *10th March 2021*

The First Minister and deputy First Minister, acting jointly, made on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 a determination under section 1(1) of the Financial Assistance Act (Northern Ireland) 2009(a); and, acting jointly, they have designated the Department for the Economy(b) as the relevant department under section 1(3)(a) of that Act.

Accordingly, the Department for the Economy, makes the following Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 1(2), 3 and 4 of that Act.

In accordance with section 1(4) of that Act, the Executive Office(c) approves the making of these Regulations.

**Citation and commencement**

1. These regulations may be cited as the Covid-19 Study Disruption Payment Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

**Covid-19 Study Disruption Payment Scheme**

2. The Department for the Economy makes the Scheme set out in the Schedule.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department for the Economy on 8th March 2021.



*Ms Heather Cousins*  
A senior officer of the Department for the Economy

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(a) 2009 c2.  
(b) Formerly the Department for Employment and Learning: see article 6(1)(c) of the Departments (Transfer of Functions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 (S.R. 2016 No.76) and section 1(3), (10) and (11) of, and Schedule 1 to, the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 c5.  
(c) Formerly the Office of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister: see section 1(1) and (11) of, and Schedule 1 to, the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 c5.

The Executive Office approves these Regulations.  
Sealed with the Official Seal of the Executive Office on 8th March 2021



*Mr Neill Jackson*  
A senior officer of the Executive Office

## SCHEDULE

Regulation 2

### Covid-19 Study Disruption Payment Scheme

#### **Citation and interpretation**

- 1.—(1) This Scheme may be cited as the Covid-19 Study Disruption Payment Scheme.
- (2) “The Department” means the Department for the Economy.

#### **Purpose of the Scheme**

2. The purpose of the Scheme is to provide financial assistance (a disruption payment) to eligible students to mitigate the effect on their studies of exceptional circumstances referred to in the determination made on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 by the First Minister and the deputy First Minister acting jointly.

#### **Payments by the Department**

3. The Department must pay each designated institution an amount equal to the total of the disruption payments that institution has advised the Department that the institution is to pay to its eligible students under the Scheme.

#### **Payments by designated institutions**

4. A designated institution must pay each of its eligible students a single disruption payment of £500.

#### **Eligible student**

5. An eligible student is a person who—
  - (a) is enrolled on a qualifying course provided by a designated institution,

- (b) to the satisfaction of that institution, was enrolled on such a course on any day of February 2021, and
- (c) to the satisfaction of that institution, is domiciled in the European Union or the United Kingdom.

### **Qualifying course**

**6.**—(1) A qualifying course is a course of full-time higher education which leads to a qualification equal to, or higher than—

- (a) a Regulated Qualifications Framework level 4 qualification;
- (b) a Framework for Higher Education Qualifications level 4 qualification.

(2) The “Regulated Qualifications Framework” means the framework launched by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation on 1 October 2015.

(3) The “Framework for Higher Education Qualifications” means the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland first published in 2001 by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

(4) A “full-time” course is one which the designated institution at which the eligible student is enrolled considers to be such a course.

### **Designated institutions**

7. The following are designated institutions for the purpose of the Scheme—

- Belfast Metropolitan College
- College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise
- Northern Regional College
- North West Regional College
- Queen’s University Belfast
- South Eastern Regional College
- Southern Regional College
- South West College
- St Mary’s University College
- Stranmillis University College
- Ulster University.

### **Payments made in error**

**8.** Any sum paid under the Scheme in error by a designated institution to a person, may be recovered as a debt due to that institution.

### **Tax and social security**

**9.**—(1) A payment under the Scheme may be taxable.

(2) Regulations 68 to 70 of the Universal Credit Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016(a) apply to a payment under the Scheme.

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(a) S.R. 2016/ 216

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Regulations)*

These Regulations provide for a payment (“Covid-19 study disruption payment”) to be made to eligible persons under the Covid-19 Study Disruption Payment Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Regulation 2 provides that the Scheme is set out in the Schedule.

The Schedule—

- (a) provides that the Department for the Economy must make a payment to each designated institution equal to the total disruption payment amount that institution has advised is required to pay to all of their eligible students under the Scheme;
- (b) provides that a designated institution must pay each of its eligible students for which it has received a payment from the Department, a single payment of £500;
- (c) defines eligible student, qualifying course and designated institution;
- (d) provides that payments made in error under the Scheme may be recovered;
- (e) provides that payments under the Scheme may be taxable and that regulations 68 to 70 (which deal with unearned and student income) of the Universal Credit Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 (2016 SR 216) apply to such payments.

A regulatory impact assessment has not been produced for these Regulations as they have no impact on the costs of business.

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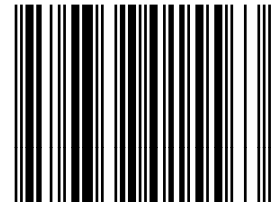
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