

SLC PG Finance survey findings (in brief)

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Overview

The Universities of Leeds and Manchester worked with the Student Loans Company to create a survey to better understand the experiences of Masters students from WP backgrounds in relation to finance and funding at PGT level.

Survey

The survey was drafted (individually by institutions) and shared with PGT students from WP backgrounds, predominantly Masters scholars/bursary recipients. It was live for around 2-3 weeks and was incentivised to encourage responses.

Jointly, Manchester and Leeds received 46 responses to the survey.

Key points from both institutions were that:

- Most applicants use University webpages as their primary source of information for PGT finance/funding. It's important that the information provided by institutions is clear and accessible to all.
- Overall, there is still an IAG gap. Prior to starting master's study, there is still considerable uncertainty about what PG funding would be available to them. Even on course, students are still not clear on areas such as PG loan repayments – how much they need to pay, when they need to pay etc. Information provided to students may need to be improved.
- WP students who have already accessed various funding streams (e.g. a scholarship and the PG loan) are still having to work part time to continue with their studies, and in some cases are also still having to access hardship funds.
- There can be a vicious cycle for some WP PGT students, as working part time can stop them being able to obtain hardship funding. This means that some students who may have been eligible for hardship funds may be slipping through the net.
- There are gaps for PGT students in being able to fund certain items aside from living costs/fees i.e.
 - o 47 % have been unable to pay for books, study materials or field trips
 - o 45 % have been unable to participate in extracurricular activities due to funding
- Subsequent discussions at both institutions were focussed on whether differing PGT programme fees should be taken into account when assessing scholarship applications and the amount awarded, given the variation in these and the impact a flat scholarship amount will have on different students. There were also suggestions that PGT tuition fees should be capped in some way; some students were aware of planned fee increases for the coming year, and felt that this would have 'priced them out' if they had not started the course when they did.