

Supporting students with first payments

This week marks the start of a new academic year for many students. For most, it will undoubtedly not be the start, or return, to education that they expected. The coronavirus pandemic has created a great many challenges but, throughout all the uncertainty, we have continued to do everything we can to ensure that as many students as possible receive their Maintenance Loan payments at the start of term.

We estimate that this month we will make payments to approximately 1.1 million students, and as of today 27,500 students have received their payments. At present, we anticipate that 21 September will be the biggest single payment date as most new and existing students return to their university or college at this time.

Students who applied before the deadline two months ago, and whose applications have been approved, will receive their funding on their start date. If students want to check the status of their payment, they should access their online account and it is important to remember that payments can only be made after the student has registered their attendance. Some applications can be processed in as little as two-days but some, depending on individual circumstances, can take up to six weeks or more.

For those who applied after the deadline – and we appreciate there are a variety of reasons for this – we are working hard to ensure that their basic funding package is in place when their studies begin. If we request evidence to support an application, we ask that this is submitted quickly, and where possible through our online service. In addition, if there are any last minute changes to course, university or college, we urge students to make these via their [online account](#).

To provide additional support, Student Finance England has produced a short film explaining what each of the payment statuses mean.

[Youtube](#)

We are also hosting a Facebook Live session on 15 September at 13:00 where our team of student finance experts will be available to help with any payment related queries. And remember, the team are also available to help with queries via social media so follow [Student Finance England's Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) channels.

UK-Switzerland Financial Dialogue 2020: joint communiqué

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Three new benzodiazepines to become Class C drugs

News story

Crime and Policing Minister Kit Malthouse has today announced that 3 benzodiazepines will be made Class C drugs.



Flualprazolam, flunitrazolam and norfludiazepam will be controlled as Class C drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and placed in Schedule 1 to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001, following a recommendation from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD).

Crime and Policing Minister Kit Malthouse said:

Illegal drugs ruin lives and corrode the foundations of our society.

It's clear from the expert advice that we have received that these drugs can cause serious harm, which is why we are taking this action.

Unlawful possession of Class C drugs is an offence which carries a maximum sentence of 2 years' imprisonment or a fine, or both. It is also an offence to unlawfully supply or produce Class C drugs, and these offences carry a maximum sentence of 14 years' imprisonment or a fine, or both.

Benzodiazepines are sedative and anti-anxiety drugs that are used clinically for the treatment of anxiety, insomnia, muscle spasms and epilepsy.

They can be misused in a number of ways, and are often taken with other illicit drugs to increase their effects, combat the effect of opioid withdrawal or to ease the after effects of stimulant use.

Especially when used in conjunction with other illegal substances or alcohol, benzodiazepines can cause serious physical and psychological harm. High doses may cause loss of consciousness and breathing difficulties, especially if used in combination with alcohol or other sedatives. As of March 2020, there had been 12 flualprazolam-associated deaths in the UK.

The government keeps drug control under constant review, working in consultation with the ACMD to consider any new evidence of misuse, harms and diversion.

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[Winners of the European Tech Women Awards announced](#)

The UK Department for International Trade (DIT) announced the winners of the first edition of the European Tech Women Awards. This took place virtually during London Tech Week on 2 September.

The event recognised the accomplishments of 24 women from 12 countries who delivered revolutionary projects in the UK and Europe. It celebrated the UK's diversity, openness and willingness to champion female leaders.

The winners

The winners' fields of expertise include: mathematics and computer science, IT, artificial intelligence, tech apps, Internet of Things, engineering, sustainability, energy, telecommunications, legal tech, science and research, mobility, 3D technologies and specialised talent placement.

The winners from the UK are:

- Career Recognition Award: Anne-Marie Imafidon, STEMettes
- Career Recognition Award: Sheila Flavell, FDM Group
- STEM Pathway Award: Amanda Heslop, Rolls Royce

The winner from the Czech Republic is:

- Business Revolution Award: Sara Boutall, Innovation Disrupt House

The winners from the Israel are:

- Visionary Tech Leader Award: Maya Gura, Missbee
- Leadership for Change Award: Hillary Harel, Serenus.AI
- Disruptive Digital Entrepreneur Award: Orit Hashay, Brayola
- Green Innovation Award: Inna Braverman, Eco Wave Power

The winners from the Denmark are:

- Data Innovator Award: Camilla Ley Valentin, Queue-it
- Innovation for Change Award: Natasha Friis Saxberg, IT-Branchen – The Danish ICT Industry Association

The winners from the Slovakia are:

- Tech Inclusion Award: Petra Kotuliakova, Aj ty v IT
- One to Watch Award: Maria Vircikova, Matsuko

The winners from the Italy are:

- International Clean Energy Award: Sabrina Malpede, ACT Blade
- Corporate Innovation Award: Elisabetta Romano, Telecom Italia Sparkle
- Talent Booster Award: Eva Ratti, Find your Doctor
- Academic and Research Award: Graziella Pellegrini, Holostem Therapie Avanzate

The winners from the Spain are:

- Technology Leadership Award: Laura Lozano Lominchar, Chargy
- Legal Tech Award: Laura Fauqueur, CEU IAM Business School

The winners from the Austria are:

- Start Up Founder Award: Lisa-Marie Fassl, Female Founders
- Professional Tech Services Award: Sophie Martinetz, Northcote.Recht/Future-Law

The winner from the Ireland is:

- Social Responsibility Award: Iseult Ward, Foodcloud

The winner from the Germany is:

- Future Mobility Award: Tamy Ribeiro, Wunder Mobility

The winner from the Hungary is:

- Tech Good Award: Andrea Pánczél, Women in Energy in Hungary Association (WONY) and White Paper Consulting

The winner from the Swizerland is:

- Smart Solution Innovator Award: Anne Mellano, Bestmile

Keynote speakers

Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon, Co-Founder of STEMettes said:

It is really important for all of us to realise that the change starts with us and it's us changing our attitude towards digital things and technology that helps influence those around us.

All of these technologies are exciting and they are trends but ultimately they need the creative minds of many, they need the many perspectives of many to ensure that we are building technology that actually solves problems and helps people.

That is why it's important to have women in technology, to have great people in technology, to have disabilities in technology and to have all kinds of people working and taking their rightful place as innovators.

Sheila Flavell CBE, Chief Operating Officer of FDM Group, said:

Now is the time for us current and future women leaders to show up as the very best version of ourselves. As we have moved forward out of this crisis, there has never been a more urgent need for women to step forward and lead our great STEM industries into the future.

It's not about women being better than men, it's about being different to men, bringing different values and ways of working to the table. If decisions are increasingly executed by algorithms, we better make sure that the teams that design, build and test them are diverse, otherwise we will create a digital world that doesn't work for everyone.

If we want more women into technology, then we have to empower and

enable more role models to inspire them. If you can see it, you can be it.

Oriel Petry, Director for Technology and Advanced Manufacturing, UK Department for International Trade said:

Some of the most influential people in the British government responsible for technology are women, but we know that is not the case across the economy as a whole.

Too few women are shaping our future, too few women are writing the algorithms that are going to determine everything about our life in the years to come, too few women in fact are successful in raising capital.

This to me is inexplicable. So, these are important issues that the British government cares about. These awards celebrate the wonderful diversity, creativity and innovation that women bring to tech.

Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Europe Richard Burn said::

Whether building businesses in a range of sectors including healthcare, mobility and renewable energy, creating social enterprises or putting together programmes designed to support and empower women and girls. We have seen some truly inspiring stories of how women across Europe are powering the tech revolution.

These awards are hugely important to DIT and to DIT Europe as they highlight the role of women in Tech and the important contribution of tech to the British economy. I hope that the amazing stories we have heard from our winners will encourage more women to join tech businesses and that tech leaders will work harder to ensure that women play a bigger part in their companies, which will of course drive their success.

London Tech Week provides DIT Europe with a launch pad for our own pan-European Technology campaign designed to showcase the UK's expertise across many different sub-sectors.

Europe Technology Campaign

Over the next 3 years, the DIT Europe Technology Campaign will deliver an innovative programme of landmark ministerial-led events. This will expand the impact of the UK presence at major exhibitions and focus on core UK strengths such as:

- big data and artificial intelligence

- cyber security
- smart Cities
- the Internet of Things

It will represent an innovative and exciting platform for the UK to deliver confident, consistent messaging on technologies where the UK is a global leader and supporting UK priorities in exports, investment and trade policy.

Scotland's tech sector going from strength to strength

- Edinburgh has 23% of workforce in digital tech roles, while Glasgow has 22%
- Edinburgh's median digital tech salary is at £44,938 – the second highest outside London
- more than 69,000 job openings in the tech sector were advertised in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 2019

New data analysed by Tech Nation for the Government's Digital Economy Council ahead of London Tech Week reveals that 69,000 jobs in digital tech were advertised in Edinburgh and Glasgow during 2019, making the tech sector one of the biggest employers – more than a fifth of the workforce of each city is now employed in digital tech.

Scotland's tech sector has been one of the strongest in the country, outside London and the South East, for several years now and showing encouraging signs of recovery in recent weeks with hiring announcements from several companies. Amazon said last week that it would create hundreds of new roles in Fife and Dundee.

This is in line with the national trend where the number of vacancies advertised in the digital tech sector climbed by 36% in the last two months (7th June – 9th August 2020), as tech companies gained in confidence after the challenges of lockdown.

Pre-lockdown, the digital tech sector was advertising over 150,000 jobs a week in the first three months of the year, according to data from jobs website Adzuna. Vacancies fell in line with all other sectors of the economy when the UK's lockdown began, but have since recovered to stand at 90,297 by the week commencing 9th August. Tech is the UK sector posting the highest number of vacancies, after healthcare.

The figures come from a Bright Tech Future report on jobs and skills in the nation's tech sector, to be published next month. Analysis from Tech Nation of Adzuna data, cross-referenced with ONS figures, shows the extent to which tech created job vacancies right across the UK in 2019 and into 2020.

Increased remote working will mean that roles become less location specific – offering the opportunity for people living in regions across the country to have access to high-paid, quality roles.

Edinburgh and Glasgow are two of nine cities, outside the capital, which now have more than a fifth of the workforce employed in tech. The other cities are Belfast, Cardiff, Newcastle, Leeds, Bristol, Reading and Cambridge. Of these, Cambridge and Belfast have the highest penetration of digital tech jobs at nearly 26%. Belfast had the highest proportion of digital tech vacancies in 2019, according to Adzuna.

Over the past two years, jobs across the digital tech sector have increased by 40% and it now employs 2.93 million people. The digital tech workforce now accounts for 9% of the UK's total workforce. The number of jobs advertised in tech in 2019 outweighed several other sectors, including legal jobs by 7 times; manufacturing by 8 times; and finance and accounting by 2.7 times.

During 2019 more than 113,274 vacancies were advertised in digital tech positions across Scotland. Just under half of these were in Edinburgh and Glasgow. According to Adzuna data, 16.5% of advertised roles in Scotland are now in the tech sector.

The median salary for digital tech roles across the UK in 2019 was £39,000. Average salaries range from £28,500 in the lower quartile to £55,000 in the upper quartile. Edinburgh's median salary is £44,938, while Glasgow's is £40,000 compared with a median salary of £30,000 across all roles.

Edinburgh's median salary is the highest outside London, where the median digital tech salary in 2019 was £55,000, growing 3% from £53,296 the previous year.

Factoring in the cost of living, cities outside London can have significant attractions for employees. Edinburgh and Glasgow are the third and fourth best value places in the UK for someone working in tech to live and work.

The role of software developer has remained in the top five most sought-after roles across UK cities, alongside key worker roles such as nurses and social care workers. Front-end developers are among the top 10 most-advertised roles in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Vacancies advertised for cloud skills in the UK have grown by 22% since 2018, while AI and cybersecurity grew by 44% and 22% in 2019 year-on-year.

There is considerable evidence of tech companies recruiting for non-STEM roles. AO.com, the online electrical goods retailer, recently announced it was hiring 650 technical and non-technical roles – such as delivery drivers and shift coordinators – across the country, to capitalise on the rise in demand for online shopping during Covid. Similarly, non-tech businesses are hiring tech roles, including Tesco which said it would hire 16,000 new staff for its online grocery business.

There has also been an increased growth in opportunities for employees with expertise in data ethics, up 31% year-on-year.

These areas of growth demonstrate the potential for the digital tech sector to offer an attractive destination for people looking to retrain and develop new skills as the economy recovers.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

It is fantastic to see our multi-billion pound digital tech sector not only continue to thrive but make a vital contribution to economic recovery as we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic. This report shows Scotland is a competitive choice for both companies and individuals creating high-quality, well-paid jobs.

We are at the forefront in pushing the boundaries in areas such as artificial intelligence, big data, cyber security, fintech and gaming. The UK Government is proud to champion the digital tech sector and will continue to support its growth in Scotland.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

These new figures demonstrate the strength and depth of our tech sector as an engine of job creation kickstarting our economy as we emerge from the pandemic.

We are a nation of innovators, entrepreneurs and inventors, and technology will underpin our infrastructure revolution of national renewal to unite and level up the UK. This government is backing people to succeed by investing heavily in cutting-edge research, digital skills and digital infrastructure to support our economic recovery.

Gerard Grech, chief executive, Tech Nation said:

For almost a decade the UK's tech sector has been on a steady growth path, creating more startups and scaleups and attracting more venture capital investment each year.

The pandemic threatened that trajectory and hit some parts of the tech sector, as well as non-tech industries extremely hard. However tech companies have, in the last few weeks, found the confidence to begin hiring again.

With digital adoption accelerating in every area of our lives, it looks likely that the tech sector will continue to be one of the best sources of new jobs this year and can provide the jobs of the future, right across the country.

Ronan Harris, MD, UK and Ireland, Google said:

In such uncertain times people across the UK adapted quickly to new ways of living and technology played a key role in allowing us to do this. Having the right digital skills could have a transformative impact on people's futures.

That's why we've committed to helping one million small businesses stay open by the end of 2021 by being found online and we've partnered with Digital Boost to offer 10,000 hours of free mentoring to help charities and small businesses adapt to operating in this post lockdown environment.

Sabby Gill, Executive Vice President and Managing Director, Sage UK said:

Covid-19 has shown how digitally enabled businesses are more resilient and agile, and 28 % of SMBs are starting to conduct business online in direct response to the pandemic. Government and industry must work together now to support SMBs on the digital transformation journey to fuel the economic recovery.