

STUDENTS' DEPENDENCY ON THEIR PARENTS

Students in western Europe tend to wait longer to start a family. It is presumed that one of the reasons for this is dependency on their parents. The degree of dependency differs considerably among countries. These differences depend on the role society has given to students and who the state has entrusted with the task of financing the students.

In southern and western Europe and Ireland, students do not comprise an independent social group. Instead they are seen as part of the family. Parents are financially responsible for their children until they begin working. This idea is based on a principle of subsidiarity according to which the parents' financial responsibility for the support of their children as students takes precedence over that of the state. In this case state child benefits (see Table) are still granted and distributed to the parents, who use them for the financial support of their children. Only a small portion of students are given scholarships from the state, and the amount the students receive is not very high. Whether a student qualifies for a scholarship and how much he receives is dependent on the income of the parents. Whether a student lives at home or not does not affect the amount of the scholarship. Financing studies by taking out a loan is not usually done.

To a certain degree France has a special position within this group of countries. Here, too, the parents are responsible for the support of their children during their studies. When students decide to have children, however, the state provides direct support to the students. The scholarships are then increased. Students also receive an interest-free loan to start their own households, which is to be paid back only in part if a child is born. The French system is based on a different idea of growing up than in other countries of southern and western Europe. While in the latter group of countries the professional independence is the criterion for independent adulthood, in France having a child is seen as the criterion for independence and severance from parental care. Like France, the Netherlands also has a slightly different position. As the financing of students is financed there partially by the parents and partially by the state, it falls somewhere between the model of southern and western Europe and that of Scandinavia.

Although in the Scandinavian countries students are seen as an independent social group, they are not responsible for the financing of their studies. This is the task of the state. The parents of the students do not receive child benefits from the state. A large portion of the students receive substantial state scholarships. Qualification for and the amount of the scholarship are independent of the parents' income. Students who no longer live with their parents are usually given special support. In Norway and Sweden student loans are available.

The Anglo-Saxon countries (here: the United Kingdom) also see students as an independent social group. In contrast to the Scandinavian countries, however, the students themselves are responsible for the financing of their studies. The parents receive no child benefits from the state. Scholarships are only available to a limited degree, but 40 percent of the students receive loans. These can be as much as €595.00 per month.

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Reference

Ochel, W. (2005), "Familiengründung trotz Studium", *ifo Schnelldienst* 59 (4), 7–11.

Financial support of students^{a)}

	Financing of studies	Parents' entitlement to child benefits from the state
Southern and western Europe		
Greece	Task of the parents; scholarships for 1% of students; entitlement dependent on parents' income	For students up to 22 years of age
Italy	Task of the parents; scholarships for gifted students (=7% of students); up to EUR 342 per month; entitlement dependent on income of parents	Up to 18 years of age
Portugal	Task of the parents; scholarships up to EUR 617 per month; amount dependent on income of the parents and on whether students live at home	Up to 24 years of age
Spain	Task of the parents; scholarship for 23% of students; up to EUR 348 per month; entitlement dependent on student's success in their studies and income of parents.	Up to 18 years of age
Austria	Tasks of the parents; scholarships for 17% of students; up to EUR 606 per month; dependent on parents' income	For students up to 26 years of age
Switzerland	Task of the parents; scholarships for 15% of students; in the city of Basel, for example, up to EUR 602 per month; dependent on parents' income	For students up to 25 years of age
Germany	Task of the parents; scholarships for 22% of students; up to EUR 292 per month (in addition to loans); dependent on income of parents	For students up to 27 years of age
Belgium (Flanders)	Task of the parents; scholarships up to EUR 234 per month depending on students living situation, number of siblings and income of parents	For students up to age of 25
France	In principle task of the parents; scholarships for 25% of students; up to EUR 292 per month; dependent on number of siblings at school/university, distance to place of studies and income of parents. Amount of scholarship also dependent on number of own children	For families with two children up to 20 years of age and income of children under 55% of minimum wage
Netherlands	Task of the state and of parents; basic scholarship of EUR 233 per month independent of parents' income for those students not living with parents; additional EUR 233 per month dependent on income of parents' (in addition to loans)	Up to 17 years of age
Scandinavia		
Denmark	Task of the state; scholarships for 93% of students; up to EUR 478 per month; independent of parents' income	Up to 18 years of age
Finland	Task of the state; scholarships up to EUR 259 per month dependent on family status, age and living situation of students; in addition living allowance of up to EUR 172 per month; independent of parents' income	Up to 17 years of age
Norway	Task of the state; scholarships for 69% of students; up to EUR 372 per month; independent of parents' income; (additionally loan of EUR 557 per month). Students who live with their parents receive EUR 929 per month as a loan	Up to 18 years of age
Sweden	Task of the state; scholarships for 67% of the students; EUR 233 per month (as of 25 years of age EUR 533 per month); additionally loan of EUR 133 per month; independent of parents' income	For students up to 20 years of age
Anglo-Saxon countries		
Great Britain	Students responsible; scholarships only in limited number; 40% of students receive loans up to EUR 595 per month (75% basic entitlement, 25% dependent on income)	For students up to 19 years of age
Ireland	Task of the parents; scholarships for 36% of students; up to EUR 245 per month; dependent on parents' income	For students up to 19 years of age
^{a)} 2003/2004.		

Source: Compilation of Ifo Institute.