

FINANCING SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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***Abstract.** Financing can be a challenge for students, but also for young people. This aspect creates problems that need to be solved, starting with university fees, daily living expenses, teaching materials, to which can be added the possibility of studying in an educational institution abroad. Solving this problem was and is possible as a result of the financing opportunities offered by a number of banks interested in this aspect. The research methodology of this article is based on information obtained from the websites of banking institutions in Romania, but also by studying specialized publications.*

Keywords: banks, study financing, student loans

INTRODUCTION

The Romanian banking system continues to support students and young people, by providing loans or other financial products that are advantageous for them [1,5].

Credit, considered an essential pillar for the economy and modern personal life, is a stimulus for economic growth and support for the personal aspirations of individuals. However, when accessing any type of credit, users must approach it with all responsibility and understand the implications very well. [2, 4]Managing credit with great responsibility will help maximize benefits and contribute to a balanced financial life [3].

There are several credit options for students and young people in Romania, including government programs with subsidized interest and standard bank loans.

Government Programs: Student Invest and Family Start were designed to facilitate access to financing and offer advantageous conditions, including interest subsidies by the state.

The Family Start program has as beneficiaries, individuals (or families) aged between 18 and 45 years old.

The purpose of these loans is to pay tuition fees, accommodation fees in student dormitories, rent in some cases, down payment for the purchase of housing or a car, through the program initiated by the Romanian Government, "StudentInvest". Other needs that can be covered can be: expensive study materials and other expenses necessary for studies. Also, banking institutions grant, in addition to loans and cards, to all students, but also to young people who attend a form of education.

In addition to government programs, banks also offer regular personal loans or loans dedicated to studies.

Study Loans (Ex: BRD, BCR): Some banks have specific products, with the possibility of financing student fees and expenses (books, rent, equipment) and may include grace periods (when you only pay interest) during studies. For example: Study Loan or Credit 10 from BRD; StudyUP Credit from BCR Social Finance.

Personal Needs Loans (Standard): These can be used for any purpose, but usually require a stable income (salary, pension, other accepted income). Students without their own income can access such loans only with a co-borrower (usually a parent or a relative with income). For example, banks that offer these products: BCR (Creditul George), Banca Transilvania, CEC Bank, UniCredit.

With numerous advantages is the student card that is made available to students by a series of banking institutions through attractive offers for young people. In order to obtain this type of card, certain conditions must be met by those who wish to obtain it.

The possibilities of obtaining loans by students did not exist until 2022, in Romania. From studying the banks' websites, they did not have such loans for young people and students in their portfolio, as indeed not all institutions currently offer such loans.

Students and young people did not have access to such loans implicitly due to the criteria imposed by banks, which affected lending [14].

The objective of this article is to present financing solutions for students and young families in Romania through banking products offered by the banking system and access to state-guaranteed loans, through the programs in the "Support for Romania" package also carried out through banks.

The authors presented credit opportunities offered to students and young families. We identified the credit institutions that carry out and offer this opportunity: Banca Transilvania, Libra Internet Bank, Banca Romana de Dezvoltare-Groupe Société Générale, Techventures Bank, CEC Bank, Exim Banca Românească and Banca Comercială Română. Also Raiffeisen Bank, which gives students the opportunity to benefit from dedicated cards with certain facilities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Romanian banking landscape has suffered a reduction in the number of banks from 33 to 30 as a result of mergers and acquisitions [19].

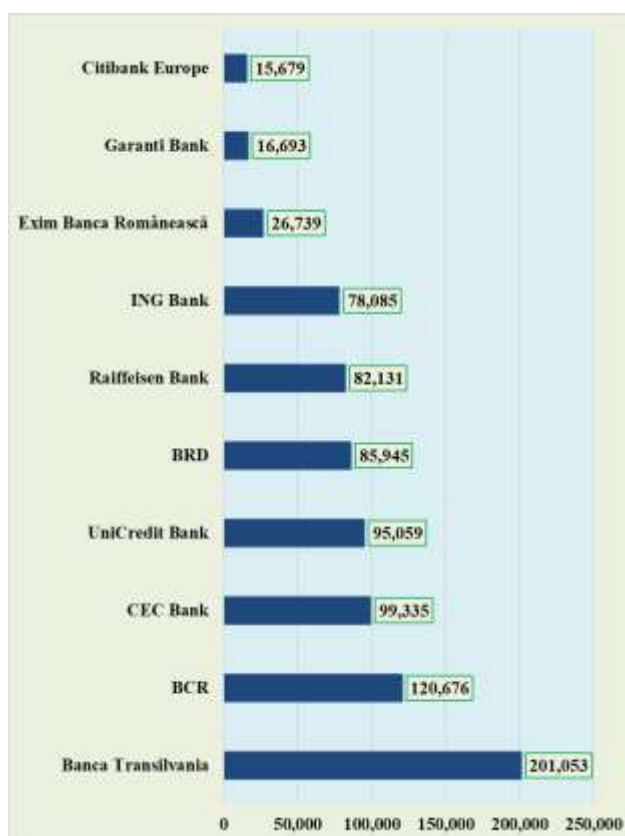


Figure 1. Top 10 credit institutions in the Romanian banking sector by assets (millions of lei) in August 2025

Source: Developed based on [19]

Banca Transilvania is a top financier for the economy, population and state. The bank occupied and occupies the top place (Figures 1 and 2) in the ranking presented in

figures 1 and 2 by assets (201,053 million lei and 23% market share) in 2025, especially since in 2024 it acquired OTP Bank Romania [12].

BCR is ranked second as a financial player in the banking market, with a market share in August 2025 of 13.69% (120.676 million lei).

In 2025, CEC Bank remains on the podium as a banking institution controlled by the Romanian state through the Ministry of Finance, which contributes to the development of the economy, with a market share of 11.27% [20].

2025 was also a year of growth for UniCredit Bank (fourth place), recording assets of 95,059 million lei, a market share of 11% after the acquisition of Alpha Bank in November 2024 [19].

BRD Groupe Société Générale, fifth place, dethroned by UniCredit Bank, recorded a market share by assets of 9.75% in 2025, down from 10.1% in 2024.

Raiffeisen Bank, the top banking institution, by market share, was in sixth place in 2025, 9.31%.

ING Bank, ranked 7th in 2025, and reported assets of 78,085 million lei and a market share of 8.85% net assets.

A final transaction in 2025 will be the merger between Intesa Sanpaolo and First Bank [19,20].

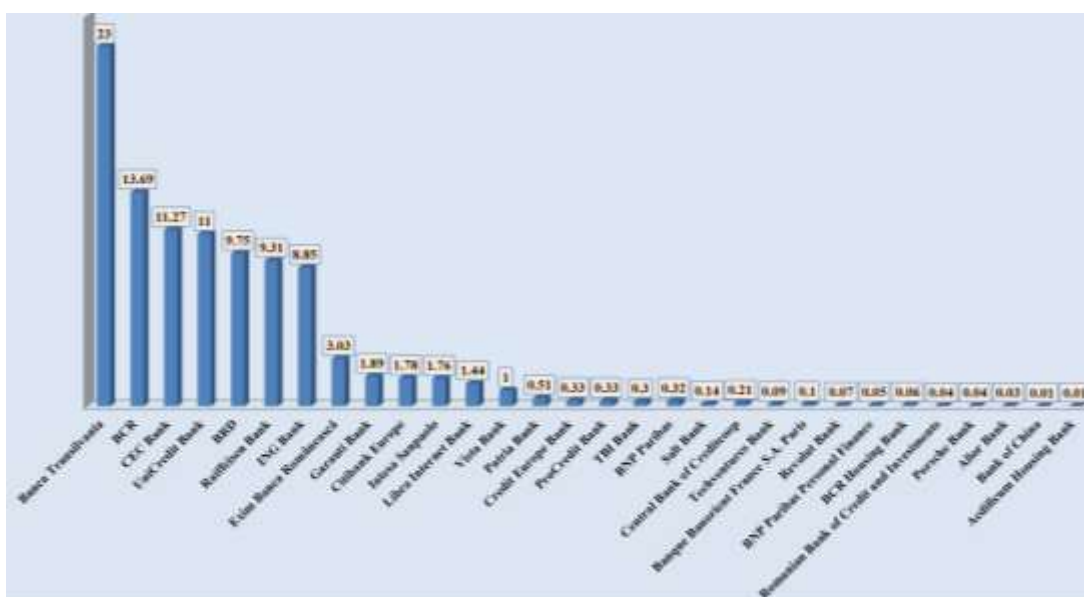


Figure 2. Romanian banking ranking by market share - total assets (%) in August 2025

Source: Developed based on [19]

The information collected and analyzed was obtained from the websites of banks and those specialized in economic and banking analysis, along with studying specialized publications and articles.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In Romania, there are several lending solutions for students and young people, including government programs with subsidized interest and standard bank loans.

Starting in mid-2022, when the two Programs, Student Invest and Family Start, were included and approved by the Government, lending became a possibility even if until then they were unknown to students and families.

Among the banks interested in such loans addressed to young people (between 18-40 years old Student Invest, respectively 45 years old, Family Start) and opened are Banca Transilvania, Exim Banca Romaneasca, BCR, Libra bank and CEC Bank [8,13].

As a novelty of these loan categories, the state guarantee coverage (interest is zero or low and partially paid by the state) for lending is represented.

Starting in March 2024, StudentInvest and FamilyStart were launched, and a new stage of bank lending began by providing financial support for students and young families, beneficiaries of these programs. Through the two programs, affiliated banks are authorized to offer amounts of up to 75,000 lei through StudentInvest and 150,000 lei through the second FamilyStart program.

The starting year, 2024, included credit programs that were carried out through the banking institutions that signed up: Central Cooperative Bank CREDITCOOP, and 26 partner cooperatives, Exim Banca Românească, CEC Bank, Libra Internet Bank and Techventures Bank.

From the data provided by the Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities in 2024, the amount of the guarantee ceilings for these programs in the amount of 250 million lei allocated to the StudentInvest Program, and 250 million lei for the FamilyStart Program were not sufficient. As a result, the FamilyStart Program was supplemented with 45 million lei [12,16].

In the two programs, it was established that from the maximum fund, 5556 applicants through the StudentInvest program and 4375 through the FamilyStart program would benefit.

In 2025, the allocated amounts were increased above the ceilings by 500 million lei for FamilyStart and 300 million lei for StudentInvest.

Changes were made in 2025 to both programs. In the StudentInvest program, eligible expenses were introduced for the purchase of computer components, expenses for medical examinations along with complex treatments for family members of the student applying, along with faster partial/full reimbursement for a mortgage loan that was previously contracted, as well as expenses for the purchase of a car and expenses for the purchase and adaptation of a car for people with disabilities.

An important change is the increase in rent expenses from the amount of 300 euros/month, as it was in 2024, to a maximum of 500 euros/month, BNR exchange rate on the day of payment.

In Family Start in 2025, the expression "of which at least one of the beneficiaries falls within the age criterion" (18-45 years old not yet fulfilled) is eliminated [18].

Students have multiple options for financing their studies. Among these are subsidized government programs, such as "Student Invest", which provide loans with interest fully covered by the state, but also banking products dedicated to young people, such as "Creditul 10" from BRD or the "Student Free" package offered by CEC Bank (Figure 3). Each type of loan has specific conditions regarding eligibility, financing limit, repayment period, interest rate and the possible need for a co-borrower.

The basic general conditions for obtaining credit are those related to age: usually at least 18 years old; citizenship/residence: Romanian citizenship and residence in Romania (for government programs); income, for classic loans or as an applicant/co-debtor in government programs, a demonstrable income is required (salary, pension, dividends, rent, etc.). The minimum amount differs from one bank to another.

Banca Transilvana	BRD – Groupe Soci�t� G�n�rale	BCR	Raiffeisen Bank	CEC Bank	UniCredit Bank	ING Bank	Libra Bank
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
-Work and Travel Loan -Study Loan	-Study Loan -10 Loan -BRD-ISIC Card	GeorgeStudent Online Account -GeorgeYoung Online Account StudyUP	Student Card	-Student Free Package -Personal Needs Loan with State Facility, StudentInvest Package -Family Start Loans	Master Card Young	Free@ING - card and account for young people	Credit for medical students

Figure 3. Banking products offered by credit institutions to students and young people

Source: Developed based on [6,7,9,10,11,15,17,18]

In addition to the lending offered by the banking system, there are also the government programs, Student Invest and Family Start.

The “Student Invest” program is a financing solution intended for young people aged between 18 and 31, providing access to financial resources necessary for their educational and professional development. The state takes over 80% of the loan guarantee, and the costs of interest and guarantee fees are fully covered by the public budget, which makes the financial product extremely advantageous for beneficiaries.

An extended version of the same program is aimed at the same age group, but allows for a higher amount, while maintaining the essential facilities: the interest remains fully borne by the Romanian Government. The initiative aims to increase access to education, training opportunities and faster integration into the labor market.

Romanian banking institutions have created financial products adapted to the academic and personal needs of young people in university studies.

The Work and Travel loan is aimed at students and young people who attend a public or private educational program. The applicant must also provide the bank with proof of acceptance to the program. It can be used to pay the Work and Travel program registration fee, other fees, airfare, and other out-of-pocket expenses up to approximately 15% of the loan amount.

CEC Bank offers the “Student Free” package, a loan for young people aged 18–24, accessible through a simplified procedure, including online. The product allows for a substantial amount of money for current expenses associated with student life.

BRD offers students the “Credit 10”, a flexible financial solution aimed at covering needs such as the purchase of teaching materials, housing payments, or technical equipment necessary for study. Repayment can be spread over an extended period, adapted to the applicant’s financial capabilities [7].

BCR Social Finance offers the “StudyUP” program, created especially for those without their own income or without the support of a co-borrower. The product includes a generous grace period, which allows you to focus on your studies before the actual start of the loan repayment. BCR also addresses students by offering the George Student online account for ages 18 to 22.

Libra Bank grants loans to medical students in their 5th and 6th year of study, for a period of one year, including veterinary medicine students, to pay tuition fees and other student expenses [15].

Choosing the right financial product requires a careful analysis of the conditions imposed by each institution. First, it must be verified whether the applicant meets the access criteria, such as age, student status and citizenship.

An important step is the assessment of the loan amount and repayment duration. There are products designed for current needs, which are paid in a relatively short period, but also variants that allow access to superior financial resources, with an extended repayment horizon. It is also essential to analyze the associated costs. Some programs benefit from public support in covering the interest, while others apply competitive interest rates, set by the bank. In addition, there may be grace periods, during which repayment is postponed, offering the student a financial breathing space. Additional facilities should not be ignored either. Simplified digital procedures, the lack of the need for a co-debtor or the elimination of material guarantees can considerably transform the experience of accessing a loan for studies [15].

Eligible expenses for Student Invest and Family Start were presented in Figures 4 and 5.

Housing Advance	down payment for the purchase of own homes, for young people's access to housing and long-term stability
Car Purchase	buy a car, new or previously used, with a maximum of five years of use
School taxes	payment of university fees for a bachelor's, master's (including MBA) or doctorate degree.
Participation in scientific competitions and events	costs associated with participation in academic events, including transportation and registration fees.
Transportation for international scholarships	travel expenses related to international study programs, such as Erasmus scholarships
Technological equipment	purchase of computers, printers, or computer applications
Accommodation	Payment for places in student dormitories or other forms of accommodation
Preschool education	Payment for daycare, kindergarten, school, or extracurricular programs, thereby supporting family integration and the education of students' children.
Medical services	Dental procedures or other medical treatments.

Figura 4. Student Invest loan destinations

Source: Developed based on [15, 16]

Costs for certain events	Civil or religious wedding, ceremony – maximum amount of 20,000 lei.
Payment of medical expenses	hospitalization in case of childbirth
Preschool education	Payment for daycare, kindergarten, school, or extracurricular programs, thereby supporting family integration and the education of students' children.
Purchasing a car	Purchasing new or used cars
School taxes	payment of university fees for a bachelor's, master's (including MBA) or doctorate degree.
Participation in scientific competitions and events	costs associated with participation in academic events, including transportation and registration fees.
Advance for housing	purchase or construction of a home, expenses related to home modernization, increasing energy efficiency, purchase of furniture
Technological equipment	purchase of computers, printers, or computer applications
Rent payment	up to 500 euros/month (at the NBR exchange rate on the day of payment)
Medical services	Dental procedures or other medical treatments.
Energy	Purchase of solar panel systems, wind turbines, or other energy solutions
Electronic household appliances	limit of 10,000 lei in both cases

Figura 5. Family Start loan destinations

Source: Developed based on [15,16]

Expenses covered by Family Start must be incurred on Romanian territory and various eligible expenses of the program can be combined, when the destination of the loan can be justified, within the individual limits.

Loans are granted for a duration of 10 years and a grace period of up to 5 years can be benefited from, from the date of granting.

CONCLUSIONS

The year 2022 is the debut year for granting loans to students through banking institutions. These have the advantage of being guaranteed by the state, including for loans to students who do not meet the condition of having an income and/or a job.

These loans provide a chance for the future for those who wish to continue their academic training. They offer the opportunity to study, without worrying about the amounts needed to cover the costs associated with education.

Based on the amounts obtained, it will be possible to cover various types of expenses, related to schooling and other needs.

The banking products designed benefit from sufficiently extended grace periods, with the possibility of extending payments.

A number of large banks in Romania from the top 10 by assets have special offers in their portfolio for students, especially in the form of student cards.

For most eligible students, the Student Invest Program is the most advantageous option due to fully subsidized interest and fees.

The conclusion that emerges from the analysis is that through the products offered to students, but also to young people and their families, the banking system will obtain small gains in the short term, but in the long term it will win by expanding the volume of customers.

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