

24+ Advanced Learning Loans

Monthly briefing: Edition 6 – October 2012

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From the 2013/14 academic year, loans will be available for learners in Further Education and training aged 24 and above studying at Level 3 and above, including Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships.

This is the sixth in a series of briefings from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, designed to provide colleges and training organisations and others with information about this policy. The briefings are produced jointly with the Skills Funding Agency (the Agency), the Student Loans Company (SLC) and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Further briefings will follow every month, published alongside the [BIS FE and skills e-newsletter](#). The earlier editions of these briefings can be accessed on the [24+ Advanced Learning Loans page](#) of the BIS website. In addition to the briefings, the page includes key documents such as the [market research](#) commissioned by BIS to inform the implementation of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans.

The Skills Funding Agency and SLC will be working with colleges and training organisations to help them prepare for the introduction of loans. We want all providers to be informed, engaged and actively preparing. The Skills Funding Agency has issued an updated version of its [Guide to 24+ Advanced Learning Loans and FAQs](#).

Key dates – things to look out for

- Communication resources for providers to use with learners are now available, and dedicated information for learners has gone live on Directgov. See below for details.
- Indicative loans facilities and bursary allocations for the 2013/14 academic year have been issued by the Agency, alongside the first draft funding rules and FAQs. See page 3 for details.
- October 2012 – LSIS prospectus and a toolkit on strategy and planning released. See page 5 for details.
- November/December 2012 – the Agency will be holding a further round of events to help providers prepare for the introduction of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans, following the successful provider events held in July (see page 3 for more details).
- December 2012 – final confirmation of loans facilities to colleges and training organisations for the 2013/14 academic year.
- January/February 2013 – SLC will hold seminars to prepare providers for the administration processes between providers and SLC (see page 4 for more details).
- 1 April 2013 – learners can begin to apply for a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan for courses starting in the 2013/14 academic year.

Communications resources now available

Resources are now available online for providers to use in conversations with learners about 24+ Advanced Learning Loans.

The resources can be accessed via the Further Education page on the [Practitioner site](#) hosted by the SLC. Here you will find:

- a learner factsheet and frequently asked questions. These documents have been tested with learners
- briefing and frequently asked questions to help you when talking to employers
- the learner journey storyboards which were used at the Agency and SLC joint events in July
- links to sources of support, including the Agency enquiries email account and regionally based Student Finance Advisers.

Other items to be added to the site later this month include:

- case studies

- resources for providers to use, such as posters
- a link to the briefing and frequently asked questions on the Skills Funding Agency website.

Learning Provider Services website

On the SLC's [Learning Provider Services website](#) you will find information covering the business to business systems and processes between providers and SLC, including learner application information, attendance confirmation, payments and financial reports.

Funding – loans facilities, bursary allocations, rules and guidance

On 4 October 2012, the Agency issued fFunding statements for indicative loans facilities and bBursary allocations to eligible colleges and training organisations.

Alongside these statements, it published on its website updated Policy Overview and Frequently Asked Questions documents, giving details of the process used to calculate these statements.

In preparation for the launch of the loans application system in April 2013, the Agency is committed to sharing with the sector, at an early stage, the funding rules that will apply to loans-funded provision in 2013/14. In order to meet this commitment, and to ensure that the final rules are both robust and clear to all, the Agency has produced a first draft of the rules and background information on processes and procedures.

If providers identify any specific areas within the funding rules which require further clarification, please direct these to the Funding Systems Team by 6 November 2012. The final funding rules for 2013/14, of which specific funding rules on loans will be a chapter, will be published by the end of January 2013.

Further round of information events for providers

In July the Agency and SLC ran a series of workshops to help the sector prepare for the introduction of loans, in partnership with the AoC and AELP. These were well attended, with over 600 representatives from colleges and training organisations, and feedback was very positive. The events also allowed providers to directly inform the first edition of the funding rules and further developed the FAQs.

Further provider events will take place in November and December. The morning sessions will be led by the Agency and will cover:

- policy and context (refresh)
- Agency information and update to include:
 - facilities
 - bursary fund
 - budget management
 - loans funding rules
 - course offer
 - communications

- sector readiness and support
- SLC update.

During the afternoon LSIS will be running a workshop to help providers take stock of the potential impact on their organisation of the introduction of loans. The session will draw on new support materials being developed by LSIS and activities to assist providers prioritise and plan for the implementation.

The dates and locations for events are shown below. Further information and registration for the seminars can be found on the 24+ Advanced Learning Loan seminars [website](#).

DATE	AREA	VENUE	REGISTRATION CLOSING DATE
19 Nov 2012	Central Eastern	Cambridge Belfry	7 Nov 2012
23 Nov 2012	South Central	Macdonald Botley Park Golf & Country Club	14 Nov 2012
26 Nov 2012	London	Victoria Park Plaza, London	16 Nov 2012
26 Nov 2012	Yorkshire and Humberside	Park Plaza, Leeds	16 Nov 2012
27 Nov 2012	East Midlands	The Nottingham Belfry	16 Oct 2012
29 Nov 2012	Liverpool, Cumbria and Lancashire	Marriott Hotel, Preston	19 Nov 2012
3 Dec 2012	Thames Valley	Blue Mountain Golf Centre, Binfield	22 Nov 2012
3 Dec 2012	Manchester, Cheshire/Warrington and Staffordshire	Portland Thistle, Manchester	22 Nov 2012
4 Dec 2012	South East	Thistle, Brands Hatch	23 Nov 2012
10 Dec 2012	South West	The Rougement Hotel by Thistle	29 Nov 2012
11 Dec 2012	West Midlands	Maple House, Birmingham	30 Nov 2012
11 Dec 2012	North East	Village Newcastle	30 Nov 2012

SLC events for colleges and training organisations

The SLC has announced the dates for the programme of information and training seminars for colleges and training organisations accessing 24+ Advanced Learning Loans. This seminar programme aims to provide delegates with comprehensive information on the administration systems and processes delivered by SLC to providers which will support the delivery of payments of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans. The seminars will provide an opportunity to gain

clarity on the business to business interactions with the SLC, alongside the administrative requirements which will include best practice advice. Please click [here](#) for further information.

LSIS prospectus and toolkits

The LSIS prospectus setting out the support available to providers for the introduction of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans will be available by the end of October. LSIS will also be making available on the Excellence Gateway the following toolkits:

- strategy and planning – October 2012
- finance and data – November 2012
- communications and collaboration – November 2012
- quality and the learning experience – March 2013.

National promotional activity

Last month we explained that we had engaged a strategic marketing company, Oxford Strategic Marketing (OSM) to advise on suitable national promotional activity to support and reinforce the activity undertaken by colleges and training organisations. OSM recommendations included the following:

- develop more interactive and extensive collateral that providers can use, including videos and web tools
- enhance the content on the National Careers Service website to provide more tailored support for prospective learners
- work in partnership with external/independent sources of information and key influencers
- develop partnership marketing with specific sectors.

Proposals for communications and marketing activity across government has to go to Cabinet Office to be considered. We now have to put these recommendations in a bid to Cabinet Office to approve the activity and associated budget. We will provide a further update in due course.

Key contacts

If you have any questions about Government policy on 24+ Advanced Learning Loans, please contact Andrew King (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) on 0207 215 1585. If you have any questions about the implementation of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans, please contact your Skills Funding Agency relationships manager in the first instance. Or you can email questions to: advancedlearningloans@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk. If you have any questions about the administration systems and processes being developed by the SLC, please email LPservices@slc.co.uk.

Also look out for the Skills Funding Agency's Update and further issues of this briefing for details of: regulations; loans funding rules; more detail on loans facilities and its management; future operational implementation events for providers; and updated Frequently Asked Questions.

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URN 12/P141F