



CSM Webinar Transcript

Transcript

Paul Smith

Hello, and welcome to SLCs Cost Management Webinar 2023.

I'm Paul Smith, Head of Partner Services. And in SLC, I'm accountable for ensuring we have complete and accurate course information available, to process student finance applications from your students.

I appreciate you taking time to join us today.

Our customers are your students, so it makes sense to work together to get this right. And the effort to fix mistakes during the early stages of course processing is bad enough, but it gets much worse if we have to correct errors after we have students already enrolled onto our system.

This presentation will run for around 45 minutes, and be followed by a question-and-answer session, which we've allowed 15 to 20 minutes for.

You can submit questions at any point during the webinar by entering them in the box underneath the video window. And remember to click Submit.

I'm now pleased to introduce two of our HE account managers, Bev McDonald and Sam Stokell, who will explain the course service for the next academic year.

Bev, over to you.

Bev McDonald

Thank you, Paul.

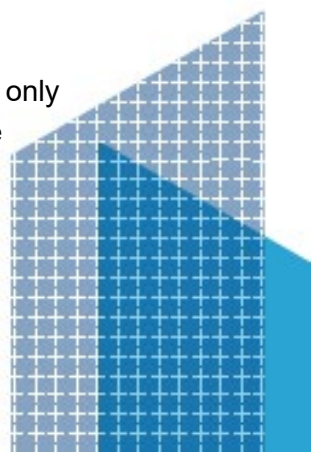
We will now cover the background to provide some context.

The courses management service or CMS, as we'll refer to it, is a single database for providers to submit their course information.

As this information is used to assess students for funding, it's vital that only designated courses are uploaded onto the database, and that all information relating to a course is accurate and meets policy regulations.

When students are making their application online for student finance, they will only be able to see courses that you have created or rolled over on to CMS. And we will look at this process in more detail shortly.

The information you provide on CMS links into our customer portal for student assessments, as well as the Student Information service and the Bursary Administration service too if you also subscribe to this.





We stagger our approach for collecting your courses and our course collection windows are related to the specific products we offer.

Each November, we're right to ask you to add your full time undergraduate courses to the system, along with Scottish postgraduate courses, if you offer these. We have a similar exercise around March and April, asking for both your part-time undergraduate and all your Postgraduate, Masters and Doctoral courses.

Once the courses are submitted to CMS, we carry out validation, where we check the integrity of the course information you've added to the system. If there is anything we need you to clarify or amend, our CMS team will contact you via email, so it's important that you review and respond as quickly as possible.

We will go through the validation process in more detail later.

Planning and working to our timeline is vitally important. It allows SLC to complete our checks and open the relevant applications to students to apply for the finance.

Like course collection, our application launches are staggered over a period of a few months.

The first to open, around mid-February each year, are for full-time undergraduate students. This is followed by part-time undergraduate applications, open around April to June. And lastly, postgraduate student applications soon after. These dates are always indicative and subject to change because they are set by the various devolved authorities.

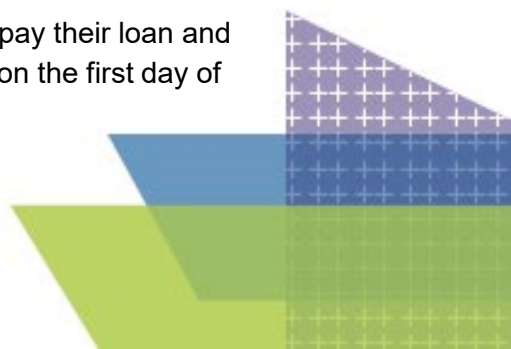
So what happens once all of this is in place?

Once students begin applying and their applications are approved, you will start to see students details appearing in SIS, the Student Information Service. It's important to note that you will only see applications that are at an approved state.

Through SIS, you can view this information and make amendments if needed, and it's here you are also required to administer the registration and attendance worklists. The registration worklist opens 30 days prior to the course start date.

From this point, you can start to check your student's application details are correct and begin to confirm your students are registered or not registered.

A positive registration confirmation allows SLC to schedule and pay their loan and grant funding, which is paid to the students in three instalments on the first day of each term.



You will also be required to take action on the first day of term when we open the attendance worklist for you to confirm whether or not a student is in attendance. This will then release your tuition fees, and as you can see, we pay these in three instalments to providers in October, February and May for autumn start courses.

There is a joint SLC-HEP service agreement that defines the service measures between SLC and providers for the administration of student finance. The service agreement includes service standards for both timeliness and for accuracy and right first time submission.

So let's have a look specifically at your obligations for CMS. To support the optimum customer experience, we require providers to submit 100 percent of their courses at least two weeks ahead of our full-time service launch. And for colleges, submission is required at least one week prior.

In recognizing that, on occasion, you may experience unforeseen factors such as later courses or genuine uncertainty around common first course structure, our service standard provides a 15 percent tolerance to allow for these scenarios.

Of these courses uploaded, likewise, we're striving for 100 percent right first-time accuracy by the initial deadline, but with a five percent tolerance for any changes that need to happen by the time the student applications open, usually around mid to late February.

This is vitally important, as once the service is open, and students have made applications, any amendments you make to your courses create reassessments, which can impact the students funding entitlement.

The service standard for your part-time undergraduate courses also provides a 15 percent tolerance level. Courses are to be submitted at least two weeks ahead of our part-time service launch date. As with full-time, it's also important to ensure optimum accuracy at the submission deadline and changes should be made no later than at the point of application launch.

For your Postgraduate, Masters and Doctoral courses, tolerances are the same at 15 percent and five percent levels, respectively. Your courses must be submitted two weeks before our postgraduate launch date. And again, avoid making any changes after this point.

Let's move on to look at the course validation exercise that we undertake as you submit your courses.

Before adding a course, you must make sure that all eligibility criteria are met. Only if you are an OFS registered provider are you able to access CMS to add courses. You must only add a course that leads to a recognised qualification and at least 50 percent of the teaching and learning must be delivered within a UK university or college. Tuition fees and fee loans must be paid direct to a UK bank account and can only be charged to the regulated amount. Course years cannot exceed 12 calendar months, and each one must be scheduled over three terms.

Full-time courses must provide an average of 21 hours of self and guided learning hours over a minimum of 24 weeks, and you must be able to define credit values for all courses.





For courses running over two years or more, full-time students must attend the university, college or other teaching location for at least eight weeks in the final year.

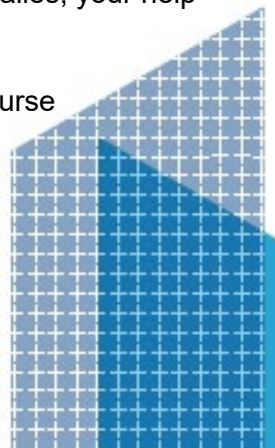
As you can see for our service standards, accuracy is key to ensuring student entitlement is correctly assessed. At the same time you are submitting your courses, our CMS team are reviewing the data. They're looking for anything that looks like an anomaly. This could include inconsistencies or significant changes in course information from the data collected in previous years, or perhaps where it doesn't comply with our guidance and the policy regulations or course eligibility.

If they find anything that requires further clarification from you, they will add it to a course tracker and send it to your CMS named contacts to review. As such, we ask you to ensure your contact details are up to date and regularly reviewed on the CMS tab within the main contacts page on SIS and on your provider profile page in CMS. It might not be that this information is wrong, but rather we need you to double check it and let the CMS team know whether it's correct or not.

Initial emails will be sent from the courses service management mailbox, and we really need your assistance to respond to these requests. So please review and update these trackers as quickly as possible and send them back to the team with any necessary amendments. We cannot allow courses to go live with inaccurate data or a question mark over its integrity. If we haven't had a response from you, the CMS team will set your courses to no students ahead of the application launch date to avoid awarding incorrect funding to your students. The teamwork through course validation is an ongoing process, as your courses are being updated. Therefore, your trackers will be updated regularly. It's a working document and the aim is to identify any potential issues and flag them to you before you add further courses to save you administrative time in the long run.

To put our need for validation into perspective, you can see on this slide that there are over 96,000 courses on the database. So it's a huge undertaking to review and validate all of them. We've seen a noted improvement in academic year 20/23 error rates, and we just wanted to thank you for all your continued efforts. It also emphasizes how much we need your support in firstly, striving for a first time accuracy, and secondly, having spotted any anomalies, your help in getting these resolved.

Now as we mentioned, we come to you in a staged approach to gather your course information. We will now show you the timeline of when to expect this to happen. We touched on this earlier in the presentation on the academic timeline. So this is just a reminder of the expected dates and the deadlines you will need to work towards.



We've made some minor changes so that deadlines now reflect the requirement to have your courses on CMS ahead of the application launch. We will contact you within the next week or so to let you know when to start submitting your full-time undergraduate courses for all domiciles, as well as your Scottish postgraduate courses. We don't have exact dates yet, but plan to open part-time collection mid-February, with Northern Ireland part-time courses possibly being a bit later, around mid-March, at the same time as your postgraduate course collection.

Now is a good point to remind you of the rollover process.


As we discussed in cross validation, we cannot stress enough how important it is to make sure all your courses are eligible and that the information is accurate. Please make sure you only add courses that are designated for support. Ultimately, whilst we do undertake validation to assist you, it's your responsibility as the provider to make sure that the course is eligible for students support, meets policy regulations and that you have added all of the required attributes. These attributes are used to determine funding entitlement for students. So it's important to make sure they're indicated on the course where applicable.

To begin with, it's important to note that you don't have to start from scratch each year. Any open saved courses that are already on CMS at the end of the academic year 23/24, will automatically appear on the new tab for academic year 24/25. You will see these listed on the new tab as unsaved, and you will have to review and work on each of these individually to update the information. As you do so, the course totals will change. So you will always be able to see how many unsaved courses you need to review.

The good news is you don't have to update all the information for each course. For example, once you have entered and saved the term dates for your first course submission these new term dates will pre-populate on the next course you start to work on.

The only exception to this will be if the start month of the course you were rolling over doesn't match that of the previous course you were working on. So it's a good idea and best practice to batch your courses together based on course start dates before commencing this exercise, and work through them in this order to save you a bit of time. Students will only be able to see courses that have been saved and are open on CMS when they are making their application. Also a recent change to our systems, this means that going forward, they will no longer be able to see any course that has been set to no students. For any course that you are not running in the academic year 24/25, you should leave these as unsaved. Additional validation will prevent courses being closed which still have students attached to them. If there are any students approved on the course you are trying to close in the current or previous academic year, CMS will not allow you to close the courses.

We're still seeing attempts to close courses. In many cases, this was multiple attempts to close the same course, with some of you not realizing that the course would automatically reopen if it had student applications attached. CMS will also append the closure for 30 minutes and check to see if there are any student applications from the current or previous year before allowing the closure and if it need be, it will reopen the course too.



So far, we've given you an overview of the fundamentals of rolling over your courses and your obligations.

Now let's look at some of the areas that cause issues if information is captured incorrectly and share some best practice and key information with you.

Term dates not only drive the student payment dates for maintenance support, they also affect the amount of entitlement. So it's extremely important that these are captured accurately. We appreciate that many of you only work with two semesters. However, for the purposes of ensuring student finance is administered in line with student support regulations, we still do require three terms. When working out your three terms, you must make sure that you tie in with your scheduled holiday breaks and only take into account actual teaching weeks. For example, when your students are attending lectures, undertaking coursework or taking exams, and try to mirror the study patterns as closely as possible.

The academic year has four seasons starts, autumn, winter, spring and summer. As you will see from the screen, each season start has specific parameters that determine the earliest a term can start. This was one of the most common errors that we picked up last year. So it's a good idea to refresh yourself with this guidance before entering your course submission.

Through course validation, we identified quite a few areas that generated a lot of queries, also, we think it would be good worth highlighting what to watch out for. Firstly, when adding freshers weeks into your term dates, they should only be where there is some form of active engagement with the student, usually classed as an induction week. Examples of this would be tutor meetings, induction sessions, timetabling or lectures.

Make sure you take any holiday periods out of the overall duration of your courses. Often Easter breaks are tricky, particularly with the regulations around an autumn start term three commencing no later than the first of April. Exam periods can be included in your teaching weeks, but don't include the time waiting on results or for any external resits. Using bank holidays and weekend dates caused the highest error rate in previous years. We do realize that there may be certain courses that might have to start at the weekend and that's absolutely fine, but most courses won't. In this case, it skews your student payment dates as SLC do not make transfers on non-working days.

And lastly, you need to be aware that courses that are longer than 30 weeks and three days attract additional funding for students.

Now, I'd like to hand over to my colleague Sam who is going to take you through some of the specific areas that you need to be aware of when adding your courses.





Sam Stokell

Thank you Bev.

We are now going to have a look at some of the specific areas that can cause issues if information is captured incorrectly, and share some best practice and key information with you.

There is a calculator on CMS that automatically works out the length of your courses. If you enter dates that exceed 30 weeks and three days, CMS will alert you to this and ask you to confirm that this course is a long course and that you are happy to proceed on this basis.

Like long courses, there is now an alert for weekend term dates. When you enter term dates that start on a weekend, CMS will ask you to confirm that this is correct. You will then be permitted to continue to add your course details.

We highlighted earlier the importance of correctly applying attributes to your courses. These are all assessing factors that need to be considered and can impact on a student's entitlement. Remember to indicate which year a placement applies to and adjust the fees for that year, which are often lower too. Placement indicators can be added to multiple years if need be.

Distance learning students only receive tuition fee loan support. So it is really important that this is flagged up to us with the indicator. We have found quite a few instances where providers have listed distance learning in the course title, but haven't flagged it in the attributes, so it doesn't get picked up correctly by assessors. Students may receive maintenance funding that they are not entitled to, which when rectified will put them into over-payment and cause unnecessary distress and worry.

There are also a series of different attributes to cater for the Allied Health Professions. Support varies depending on the course and the level of NHS support available. It is important to identify these for assessors so they can accurately calculate the students entitlement. Just one point to remember here is not to use the NHS bursary attribute at the same time as medicine/dentistry. We know that the students do receive NHS funding for certain years of their course. But this is picked up when you flag the medicine/dentistry attribute so you don't need both.

Please ensure that courses are correctly updated to reflect where students have the option to intercalate and achieve more than one qualification. This attribute relates only to undergraduate courses. Lastly, HTQ attributes must also be added where appropriate. We must stress the importance of contacting us if you forget to add the flag prior to serving the course, as we will be able to quickly update this to make sure students are correctly assessed.

The available courses years functionality gives you flexibility to offer your courses to particular groups of students. So for example, if you want to offer a new course and don't want to risk continuing students applying to it in error, ensuring it's only visible to new student applications, simply set all years, except year one to no students. This also works the same way for phasing out courses, and it's the preferred alternative to closing a course.

Closing courses is impact all years of that course, so it could affect previous years reassessments and once closed, it cannot be reopened. You will need to indicate on your courses each of the locations you offer delivery of that course. This could be different campus locations, or maybe when you work in partnership with a franchise provider.

Before you can add locations to a course itself, they must be set up under the Locations tab on CMS. When adding your locations, you will be asked to provide a postcode and this helps us determine the additional London funding element for students. Likewise, it is important that you notify us of any location address changes, especially where the uplift element is impacted and student reassessments are necessary. Once locations have been set up, you will be able to select the relevant locations when creating your course.

Unfortunately, at this point in time, you cannot add or delete a location from a course once it's active. Please bear in mind, you will need to create a new version of the course to cater for your change to course locations.

We are aware of some providers that have reached or are close to reaching the current maximum of 36 locations. Work is currently underway to increase this limit, so please look out for future updates. You can also speak to your account manager if you require help in the meantime.

Franchise arrangements are used when a lead provider, the franchiser, enters into an agreement with another provider, the franchisee. Under this agreement, the franchisee will deliver a course on behalf of the lead provider. The franchisee may deliver all or part of a program that the franchiser, the lead provider, approves and owns. The lead provider keeps overall control of the program's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance. The lead provider must add the course on CMS. Students will apply for funding at the lead provider and all Tuition Fee Loan payments will be made to the lead provider. Going forward for any new franchise partnership arrangements, we'll organize a meeting with you and the franchisee to outline the service standard requirements and ensure that there's a general understanding of dependencies and accountability.

When adding a new course, you will see a drop down list showing you all the available qualification types. Please make sure to select the relevant qualification. There are a couple of qualifications in particular we wanted to highlight to you as these have caused quite a lot of confusion.

Firstly, you will see there are several different education qualifications. The postgraduate ITT with QTS qualification must only be used by school centered initial teacher training providers. All of the providers should select one of the options shown on the screen as most appropriate.





Secondly, English domiciled students studying a pre-registered full-time in attendance level seven Allied Health Profession course that is at least two years long are now entitled to undergraduate support. As English domiciled students are classed as undergraduates, you will need to ensure you only set the course up at undergraduate level of study, not postgraduate.

When we come out to you for full-time undergraduate courses collection, you will be able to add these at the same time. Look for the qualification type, postgraduate healthcare, in the drop down box. But remember, this does not apply to your students from other domiciles who will still need to apply as postgraduate students.

We want to take the opportunity to highlight some changes to the existing initial teacher training or ITT qualifications that relate to teaching in the further education sector. Currently, the Diploma in Education and Training or DET qualification, as we will refer to it as, has been eligible for HE student funding, and this is where the qualification is validated by an awarding organisation.

From academic year 24/25, The Secretary of State will publish a list of recognised further education initial teacher training courses to indicate courses that are eligible for HE students support. This list is expected to be made public in early 2024.

If validated by a provider with degree awarding powers, qualifications that are equivalent to debt have also been made eligible.

The DET qualification is being replaced with the Diploma in Teaching, otherwise referred to as DIT, further education and skills qualification. Providers with degree awarding powers can validate their own further education, initial teacher training qualifications at level five, six and seven. To attract funding support, these courses must have content equivalent to the new DIT framework.

The proposal is that the new further education initial teacher training qualifications will now be designated as either a DIT qualification if validated by an awarding organisation, or is one of the appropriate listed qualifications, if validated by your provider with degree awarding powers.

PGDE and PGC will not be added to CMS as qualification options for course collection. Instead, providers should map these courses to the existing PGDE level six, PGCE level seven ITT qualification options, including the appropriate PGDE reference in the course name.

The new FE ITT qualifications will attract the same funding, so there is no change to the support package. The Secretary of State will publish the new qualifications if approved in January.

To ensure a smooth transition rather than serving your full-time debt qualifications for academic year 24/25, you should create replacement courses using the new DIT qualification option. If DET courses are saved in error, providers should amend to no students and they must arrange for CLC transfers to link them to courses with the new DIT qualification.

It is important that new students do not have registration or attendance confirmed on DET courses. Part-time courses with the DET qualification also need to be phased out on CMS for returning students. To do this, providers need to save DET courses for 24/25 academic year and set them to returners to allow only returning students to link their application. DET courses can continue to be rolled over into future academic years to allow all DET students that started their course prior to the 24/25 academic year to finish their course.

No new part-time students should be accepted onto courses with the DET qualification and instead, should be applying against courses with the DIT qualification. Again, it is important that new students do not have registration or attendance confirmed on DET courses. If there are new students linked to them, providers must arrange for CLC transfers to link them to courses with the new DIT qualification. Once ministerial approval of DIT qualification is granted in January 2024, full-time students can apply for student finance on these courses.

Now we will move on to look at higher technical qualifications.

For academic year 22/23 HTQ approval was given only to 30 digital subject courses. All were existing level four or level five courses such as HNDs, HNCs, or Dip HE qualifications. This year however, the approval was extended to also cover courses in construction, health and science. It has been confirmed that for academic year 24/25, HTQs will also be available in Business and Administration, Education and Early Years, Engineering and Manufacturing and Legal, Finance and Accounting.

HTQ courses can either be existing level four and five courses that are already eligible for HE student finance such as foundation degrees, diplomas of higher education, HNCs or HMDs of certain level four and five courses that are not currently eligible for HE student finance. For example, ones which advanced learner loans are available, such as certain level four diplomas. They should be a minimum duration of one academic year with maximum tuition fees no more than 9,250 and the usual standard fee cap rules apply. And for courses which don't meet the criteria, they may instead qualify for advanced learning.

We also want to mention what needs to happen in terms of an existing 23/24 HTQ course being rolled over. For this scenario, the HTQ attribute flag should still be ticked for the rolled over course. If it's a two year program, the 23/24 version of the course must be set to no students for year two, as only new students are eligible.



In terms of funding, full-time SFE students can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan, Maintenance Loan, Grants for Dependents and Disabled Students Allowance. Part-time SFE students are eligible for the fee loan and part-time Maintenance Loan. And for former Advanced Learner Loan funded courses now with HTQ, new students can also apply for the full package of funding support. All courses must be set up correctly with the HTQ attribute and this is especially important for part-time students to ensure they receive the correct funding support.

Another area that you will need to review and update each year is your fees. Your provider fee cap is set by the relevant designatory authority and a limit is set for both full-time and part-time courses. You cannot amend this, nor can you add course fees higher than this at any time. However, you can and must amend the fees downwards if need be where policy regulations limit the amount you are entitled to.

This can be the case with final year caps, uncertain placements, Study Abroad courses. CMS captures your fee cap, which is presented to students on their online application form. If you charge fees higher than the fee cap, it is your responsibility to inform the student of the variation in fees being charged.

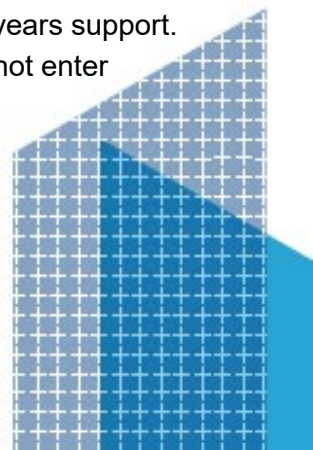
There may also be instances where you as a provider, offer the course at a lower fee. Maybe for years zero or foundation years, or where an internal decision has been taken. You can alter the fee for the course or a specific year of the course is required. When amending the fees, it will apply to all students on this course or course year. So in cases where you are making an exception, or an adjustment to a fee that you have only agreed with a specific student, remember, these will need to be adjusted via a fee COC not via CMS.

Remember that in academic year 22/23, we add an enhancement to automatically roll over any generic DSA courses. So you do not need to do anything further. These will not appear on CMS, but will be used behind the scenes for DSA only applications.

Next, we are going to take a look at where there are differences for your part-time undergraduate students and how to upload this information on to CMS.

Before you upload a part-time course, you might be asking, what constitutes as a part-time course? As a general rule, a full-time course normally requires students to study for at least 24 weeks. Full definitions are on the practitioners website and by process of elimination, if the course does not meet the guidance of a full-time course, then it is considered to be a part-time course. To be eligible for a part-time tuition fee funding, a student must be studying at a minimum intensity of 25 percent. The course duration is captured on CMS as the full-time equivalent. So think about the length of the full-time course and set it up on CMS like this. For example, if the student is studying a four-year degree, they can have up to 16 years support. But you show this on CMS as a four-year full-time equivalent duration, you do not enter the number of years that the student is planning to study part-time.

As a guide, the table displayed illustrates the most common durations for full-time courses. This should help you when entering your part-time courses.





When it comes to Maintenance Loan and Grant Support for part-time students, the assessment is based on their intensity of study. So we need to work out the number of credits the student is studying. However, we pick this up from their application form. For the purposes of entering the credits on CMS, we actually need to know the number of credits for the entire course. For example, if you have a three-year degree, it is normally 360 credits. Please don't enter the number of credits for an individual year of study, or that you expect any particular student to be studying in that year, part-time.

Now, let's move on to postgraduate masters courses.

Postgraduate masters courses need to be added to CMS differently dependent upon domicile and the relevant policy regulations. English and Welsh students need only apply once for funding for the duration of their studies and will receive a loan as a contribution towards their costs. There is no fee loan available for providers.

English and Welsh postgraduate courses can be added together on CMS for full-time courses. But we will need separate English and Welsh versions for the part-time masters courses, and we'll explain the reason for this shortly. Scottish postgraduate courses attract a partial Tuition Fee Loan and a partial Living Cost Loan. You may remember that Scottish postgraduate courses used to be added as undergraduate level of funding. However, please remember, these must now be added as postgraduate. Northern Irish Postgraduate Support Package is a tuition fee loan only product.

When you select the England-Wales radio button during the initial course setup, the designation is automatically selected for both domiciles. Please check the policy regulations before saving a course to ensure this works for your specific course.

As we have said, the Postgraduate Loan is payable to the student. So the term dates drive the payment dates for their three instalments of each year of study. We realize that a lot of these full-time courses run for less than two years. So to cater for this, we have amended the drop-down duration to months. This gives you the flexibility to accurately reflect your course duration.

In cases where year two of study is a shorter period, you should still set three terms split evenly across that shorter period. So for example, a 15 month course only leaves three months to be studied in year two. So you could have three one month terms. From the students perspective, they will still receive 50 percent of their funding in year one and 50 percent split across three payments in the remaining three months of study in year two. You also have the option to add up to 12 intakes for each course, again to

give you flexibility in offering various start dates to suit your students. However, remember that once you have added intakes and the course has been saved, they cannot be amended, so you won't be able to delete or add any further intakes. This may result in you having to create new courses.

The qualification is quite straightforward. You only have to indicate whether the student is studying a taught or research masters. Duration is more complicated. Full-time is treated the same for both England and Wales. The duration of an eligible courses can either be one or up to two years long. However, as we said earlier, for part-time courses due to the different policy regulations you will have to add these courses on CMS separately.

For English domiciled students, the part-time duration is treated in the same way as that of your part-time undergraduate courses. The duration is captured as the full-time equivalent. You only need to think about the equivalent full-time course that you offer and enter the duration as either one or two year full-time equivalent. For Welsh students, the duration is the number of years the student is actually studying part-time. So there is no requirement for full-time equivalent. For example, in this case, a student studying the equivalent of a one-year full-time course would be allow two years to study this part-time. So enter this as two years duration, no full-time equivalent.

Something else we wanted to highlight that we discovered this year. Our CMS team picked up some errors where providers offered a full-time version of a course, but also added a part-time course over three years duration with no full-time equivalent. This is in breach of policy regulations and all students on these courses were made ineligible for funding and the courses had to be closed. Please note, you cannot offer this option if you have a full-time version of the courses.

Finishing off postgraduate masters for England and Wales, we want to share some best practice. It's important to remember that although a student only applies once at the start of their studies for funding, to receive payments each year, we need to have the student linked to an open active course. Therefore, you must ensure that each year, you roll over the course to keep it active.

We have seen a large number of courses that have not been saved moving into 22/23 which means our CMS team have had to contact providers to advise the students they will not get paid until this happens.

Do not close a course. Even if you are planning to send a withdrawal for the only student remaining on that course, the course needs to remain open for SLC to action this COC. The best practice to ensure that no students apply to a course that you no longer wish to offer, is to set the available course years to no students. Any students currently linked to that courses will continue to receive funding, so it won't impact them.

As mentioned, the NI Postgraduate Loan policy differs as the loan is a Tuition Fee Loan payable to providers. It also has a wider selection in terms of qualification options, as both postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas are also eligible.





Course duration can be up to three years, either full or part-time. The main difference though when uploading a course is that we require you to enter the fees for the course. There is a loan of £5500 available per course, over the duration of the full course and this is paid to you, the provider, based on confirmation of attendance each year. Also, whilst this impacts your students, please remember, this is not an apply once product like England and Wales, so your students will have to make a new application for each year of study.

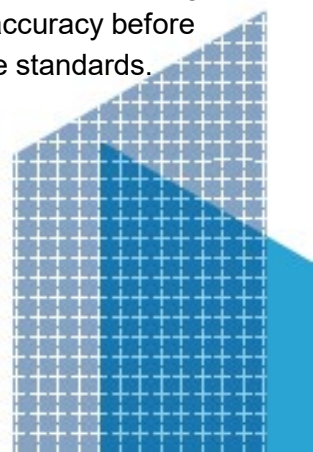
Postgraduate funding for Scottish students is available for postgraduate diplomas as well as research or taught postgraduate masters courses. In terms of duration, a postgraduate diploma would be studied over one year, and part-time can be either two years or three years. For postgraduate masters, either research or taught, a full-time course can be studied over either one or two years, and part-time can be studied over two, three or four years. There was a policy change for academic year 23/24, which involved a Tuition Fee Loan increase to £7000 and postgraduate support was extended to eligible courses in the rest of the UK, rather than just those where there is no equivalent available in Scotland.

Postgraduate support was also extended to courses at validated private providers throughout the UK. In terms of fees, enter the full course fee amount, and if your course is more than one year in duration, split your fees equally across all years of the course.

We can now look at postgraduate doctoral in a bit more detail.

These are only available in England and Wales, and when setting them up on CMS, you will find it's very similar to what you have to do for your masters courses. One of the biggest issues we found during course validation was the use of generic titles such as PhD. Please don't do this as it causes problems linking the students application. In fact, the policy regulations are very specific about this too and the importance of having dedicated courses setup. There is only one qualification type that you need to select, irrespective of study methods. So the main difference is the duration, as eligible courses must be between three and eight years in length. You will find more information on the policy criteria to determine this course length on our CMS guidance should you need it.

When we spoke earlier about the service standards, we reiterated the importance of submitting your courses within the specified deadline, but also, the need for 100 percent accuracy before the application launch dates. We know that you will all be striving to meet these standards. However, realistically, we appreciate that mistakes happen, and even with our validation, these errors might not always be picked up.



With the implications that this can have on a student's entitlement, we need you to be aware of the correct process to rectify these and notify us as soon as possible. In addition, we also know that sometimes internal decisions are made at institution level, which affect the course information you have already provided, and amendments may be required. Not all information can be edited once the course is live on our systems. It also varies depending on the product type and domicile, so you will find further guidance on editing courses on our website.

The main areas you will most likely need to change and can edit yourself are courses name, fees and term dates. Although we've term dates, please note you cannot amend the start month ever course. In the first instance, we would always advise you contact SLC before any changes are made.

Whilst course name changes themselves don't impact act on the student's assessment or entitlement, and they are not class ed as errors, it is worth highlighting that this year to date, there have been over 14,000 course name changes. This is an example of the late internal decision making, and it does create administrative work for you and SLC. Please try to only amend course names if it is absolutely vital.

It is best practice to have a discussion with your account manager, particularly if you are planning to make major changes, or if large volumes of courses are affected. Whatever changes you make, please ensure you complete a change log and email our practitioners team so they can have any affected students reassessed.

We have spent some time looking at the key information you need to be aware of, and pointers to look out for to add or update your courses each year successfully.

Now let's look at what you need to do, should you have to amend your course details. Where possible, all course changes should be made at least two weeks before the launch of the student application cycle, to ensure that entitlement is correct ahead of confirmation of registration or attendance. Otherwise, it creates an unnecessary distraction for students and may impact their overall experience. From now on, for changes that you are planning post launch, you must contact us beforehand, using the SSIN queries email address, and you will be asked to complete a separate form for review. We will review and consider the rationale for the change before coming back to you to agree on, for example, the best way to handle communications with students or any similar best practice advice.

We are nearing the end of our webinar presentation now. So before we turn to questions from the audience, we wanted to leave you with some helpful contacts. You will find guidance documents for CMS, as well as all our other services on our HEP services website at the address shown on the screen now. You can contact our partner support desk colleagues, either by telephone or email, and they will be happy to assist you.

And lastly, of course, please don't hesitate to get in touch with your regional HEP account manager at any time, should you wish to discuss any concerns or issues you may have. We are here to help you.



And that concludes our webinar presentation. I'd now like to hand back to Paul for the question and answer session.

Paul Smith

We hope you found the briefing very useful for understanding about our course collection service for academic year 24/25 of course. It's very good timing because we're launching the course collection service next week and there will be associated guidance published with it. So the timing is good. But we're now able to move into our question and answer session.

Can I just say that if we do run out of time and are not able to answer all the questions, then we will have questions and answers posted on the ATP Services website shortly after the webinar. It's possible there are one or two questions that relate to individual students and we'll handle those separately.

So now let's go over to our first question.

Thanks, Bev.

Bev McDonald

Thanks Paul.

So our first question has come from Justina. And Justina has asked, will skip courses be ready to roll over for teacher training courses in November just like HEPs?

Well Justina, we are aiming that for full-time undergraduate courses for skip providers, that they will be ready for roll over in November. We're just waiting for DFE confirmation and for all of those, and we will be in touch with you with a bulletin to let you know when that's ready to go ahead.

Sam Stokell

Thanks Bev.

So we've got a question from Annie and Annie has asked, if I change a course name, do I have to contact my SLC account manager?

So Annie, we will have covered this in the webinar briefly. And with any course change, we would encourage you to let your SLC account manager know. 2 But in terms of changing your courses name, we would really only ask you to do this if it's absolutely vital.





Because even though like we said in the webinar, a course name change isn't necessarily an error, it does get flagged to SLC and it might be that we do contact you to ask what's the change really necessary. So again, for any changes to your course once they have been saved and students have started to apply against them, please do let SLC know either via your account manager or HEP services. But with course names, unless it's necessary, we would ask you to try and avoid it.

Paul Smith

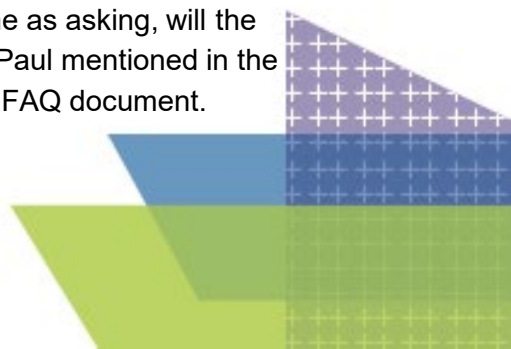
Thanks Sam, so the next question is from Frank. With all the SIS issues that are currently going on at the moment, are we confident that course collection won't be affected? And it's right, we have had some performance issues, quite a lot with a student information service in the last couple of months, a peak of activity, and SIS has certainly earned a long service award with this. Nonetheless, whilst they share different platforms, it is possible that now and again, to sort out SIS performance issues, we might need to bring the whole of the system down, or both SIS and Course Management Service and perhaps a bursary service. Otherwise, I'm not really expecting any impact. But we are monitoring both systems carefully. And I'm about to send out a bulletin to SIS users to articulate the short and long term resolution plans that we've got for SIS performance.

Bev McDonald

Thanks Paul, so we've been asked by Ian, when can I start adding my courses for 24/25. Hopefully, you've heard in the webinar presentation that we stagger course collection, and the first collection that will come out to you for within the next week or so. So watch out for that bulletin coming through. We'll be asking you to start submitting your full-time undergraduate courses and then we will stagger the rest of the approach as we go through into the spring. So as I say, keep an eye on that bulletin coming out, it will be with you very soon.

Sam Stokell

Thanks Bev, so the next question we have is from Jane and Jane as asking, will the slides be shared with us after the webinar? Yes, they will Jane. Paul mentioned in the opening, then that as well as the slides, we will be sharing a full FAQ document.



So again, if we don't manage to answer your question today within the time, along with the slides on our HEP services website, there will be a full FAQ document of all of the questions that have been asked on today's webinars.

Bev McDonald

Thanks Sam, so the next question we've got is from Liz, and Liz has asked or stated, we've reached the maximum number of locations. What do we need to do to increase this?

We have actually had this question Liz, and it's been raised previously from other areas in the sector. This is something that the CMS team are working on. But in the meantime, please do get in touch with your account manager directly to discuss this. And as I say, there's hopefully going to be some plans in place to change this going forward. Thanks, so next question is from Grant, it's about the Lifelong Learning entitlement, LLE for short, what course collection may look like. So our intention is to start collecting course information for LLE from academic year 25/26 of course, with the collection date in November next year.

So, some time for us to prepare for LLE course collection will look a lot different, as well as the fact we've got to gather courses related to module level learning at levels four to six. There will be requirements for new pieces of information we need for all courses, to support LLE administration. We hope to issue a service definition about the end of February, early March which will give the business rules and the course eligibility requirements to help providers develop courses into their curriculum that meet the eligibility requirements. But we will be inviting everyone to come along to one of our training and awareness seminar events through late spring, summer where we're going to go into a lot of detail about course structures, courses eligibility and the information we need and how CMS will be changed to support that.

Okay, the next question we've got is from Jack. And Jack has asked and said that he's new to CMS, adding courses is going to be a new part of his role, and how do I get access to the system?

Well Jack, welcome to the role first of all. What you would need to do in the first instance is, every higher education provider has what we call a user administrator, and they have the access to the system that can add new access, new users to the system. So first of all, find out who that is within your institution and they'll be able to set you up with the levels of access that you need. If you have any problems with that or your user administrator is also having issues, then you can contact our partner support desk and they'll be there on hand to help you.

Sam Stokell

Okay, thanks Bev.

So the next question is from Samantha and she's asking for changes post launch. Does this mean the CMS portal will be locked so we are unable to make changes?





So we covered this slightly in the webinar. Once you have saved a course, you are very limited to the changes that you can make. Once the courses are saved, and especially once we've launched the student's application and they start to apply against those courses, we put the funding in place based on the information you've added to CMS. So it's not that you can't make the changes Samantha, it's just that you will need to come to either your account manager or our partner support desk so we can discuss with you the changes that you need to make, fill out the necessary courses change log and liaise with our CMS team.

So again, any changes, like we've said, that you need to make to your courses, please contact SLC and we will take that forward with you.

Bev McDonald

Thanks Sam.

The next question from Mary is actually perfect for me to answer. Because Mary said that she's found it difficult to speak to someone in relation to her queries, and who was the best person to refer questions to as Mary's based in the Republic of Ireland.

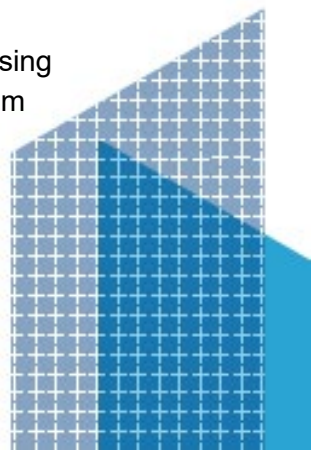
Well Mary, I'm delighted to tell you that I'm actually the Account Manager for higher education providers in the Republic of Ireland. I don't think we've had any communication previously, so it would be great to chat. I'll pass on my details if you can obviously get in touch with me as well. And then I'll be there and also the partner support desk, they're on hand, from nine till five to be able to help with your queries as well. We'll take this offline and make some contacts so we can get in touch, and then you'll have a direct contact going forward.

Sam Stokell

Okay, thanks Bev.

816

So the next one is from Rosalyn Greer. Hi Ros, I'm your account manager. Nursing students who are paying the 9250 fee and in receipt of a Maintenance Loan from SFE and the training grant from the NHS, do we indicate an NHS bursary as an attribute?



No you wouldn't because we're already aware that obviously the students attract the funding from SFE. So there's no need to list that as the attribute against those courses.

Paul Smith

Thanks Sam.

And from Lauren, we've been asked, will there be recording of this webinar provided as there was a lot of information? Yes, specifically on PG loans.

We know the webinar was very detailed, hopefully you found it very, very useful. But yes, we will make the recording available within a couple of weeks. It will be hosted on our website along with the questions we've been asked, and also any questions that we haven't been able to get to within the sessions. So yes, don't worry, all of the information and the recording will be there for you to refer back to.

Thank you.

Thanks Bev, thanks Sam.

Okay, so I think we'll just draw things to a close now. Firstly, thank you very much for listening and thank you for the questions you've posted to us. Just to go back on what we said before, if there are any questions we've not answered now, maybe they are about individual students or we need time to think, you should look at the ATP Services website in the next few days or so and we'll be posting the question and answers on there fairly soon. It's been really great to have so many of you involved today across the two sessions.

We've had over 300 people join and we hope, as I said earlier, it's been very useful for you. So thanks again for your time and look forward to working with you very successfully in rolling out and completing course collection from November onwards for academic year 24/25.

Thank you.





For more information:

events@slc.co.uk

www.slc.co.uk