

Guidance for colleges and training organisations on providing a Learning and Funding Information Letter for offenders in custody

March 2016

Please note that this guidance is specifically for colleges and training organisations who deal with offenders in custody (offenders) or who are released on temporary licence. All materials and applications forms must be presented to this cohort of individuals as hard copies.

Background

Before applying for an Advanced Learner Loan offenders must speak to a college or training organisation and establish the availability of a place on an appropriate course.

The Learning and Funding Information letter is essential for prospective learners, who are considering investing in further education at Level 3 to 6 with a Loan. Colleges and training organisations must issue the letter, together with hard copies of the published materials specifically for offenders on Loans, as part of their discussion with offenders when considering their funding options.

Supporting the offender in custody

You must make all learners, including learners who are considering funding their course through a Loan, aware of your policy on fees and charging, before they decide on their payment method.

The availability of Loans for learners aged 19-23 at Level 3 does not replace the legal entitlement to full funding for a first full level 3 for learners aged 19-23 and you therefore

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should check the learners entitlement prior to providing information on Advanced Learner Loans.

The Learning and Funding Information letter gives offenders:

- an opportunity to take all of the necessary information away and spend time considering their options for financing their course; it is important that offenders are fully informed and do not feel pressurised to apply for a Loan
- the essential information they need to complete an application, should they decide to apply for a Loan.

Benefits for colleges and training organisations

The Learning and Funding Information letter can also:

- support the management of learner places, particularly when considering the capacity within the agreed Loans facility
- place some distance between the college or training organisation and the offender's funding choice.

Learning and Funding Information Letter: How to Create

To enable offenders to consider their options and equip them with the relevant information to complete an application, it is important that the data information on the Learning and Funding Information letter is **consistent with the data fields as they appear on the loan application form and in the same order**. It is also important that offenders know what to do next and where how to get hard copies of the information that is available to them.

The loan application will highlight to offenders where they can find the information on their Learning and Funding Information letter. You **must retain the format** as set out in this guidance and the **template**.

A copy of the letters are available at Annex A, you can also download the **template** from gov.uk. You can easily populate these with the relevant detail and you must issue them in

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hard copy to the offender. Alternatively, you may want to revise the letter to include specific information with regards the course offer, alternative payment options and so on. You must not change any of the text or the information in the tables.

Learning and Funding Information Letter: Information to Include

Tables 1 and 2 provide you with the specific definition and requirements of the information you will need to populate the letter.

Table 1: College or other training organisation information to be supplied about the College or Training Organisation:

Data item	Application Description	Information
Provider Name	College or training organisation name	This is the name of the lead college or training organisation that is in direct receipt of a Loans facility from the Skills Funding Agency. If a subcontractor name is provided we will decline the Loan.
UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN)	UKPRN	This is the UKPRN of the lead college or training organisation that is in direct receipt of a Loans facility.
Subcontractor Identifier	Course Trainer (up to eight digits)	This is an optional code for colleges and training organisations to use as appropriate. You can use this code to identify where an offender is undertaking learning with a subcontractor / other trainer.

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		If not applicable, please state this on the Learning and Funding Information letter, as it will be requested on the application.
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Table 2: Qualifications information

Data item	Application Description	Information
Learning Aim Title	Course name	The specific title as published by the Skills Funding Agency on the Learning Aims section of the Hub , which should match the data you will provide on the offender's's ILR.
Learning Aim Reference	Course code	The learning aim reference as published by the Skills Funding Agency on the Learning Aims section of the Hub , which should match the data you will provide on the offender's ILR.
Learning Start Date	Start Date	Required for assessment and profiling of payments and repayments. This information should match the data you will provide on the offender's ILR.
Learning Planned End Date	End Date	Required for assessment and profiling of payments and repayments.

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		This information should match the data you will provide on the offender's ILR.
College or training organisation fee	This is not required on the application but offenders will need to understand this.	Fee amount the college or training organisation is charging the offender following any reductions (taking into account recognition and/or accreditation of prior learning).
VAT (if applicable)	This is not required for application but offenders will need to understand this.	To be completed by 'for profit' organisations.
Total Fee	Total college or training organisation fee plus VAT.	College or training organisation fee + VAT.
Skills Funding Agency Rate	Maximum Loan Available.	This allows the offender to identify whether a Loan can fund the full cost.

Further Questions

Please raise any comments, suggestions or questions through our dedicated mailbox:

advanced.learnerloans@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

Annex A

Learning and Funding Information Letter

Learner's name

Course : enter course name

Name of prison establishment:

Name of provider:

Enter date

Dear <enter learner's name>

Learning and funding information letter

We are pleased to offer you a place on the following course:

Course: <enter course name> **at:** <enter course location/provider>

This letter provides you with the information about your course offer and the cost of your studies. It explains some of your options on how to pay for your course and where to access further information and advice. It also gives you essential information you will need, should you decide to apply for an Advanced Learner Loan.

Paying for your studies

The total cost of your course is <enter fee £0000.00>.

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You can pay us directly for the course. Alternatively you may have heard about Advanced Learner Loans, <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans/overview>, these government backed loans are available to help learners aged 19 and over pay their course costs for eligible courses at Levels 3 to 6.

If you are aged 19-23 and you have not previously achieved a full Level 3 qualification, you may be entitled to full funding for a level 3 course. Please speak to us directly or contact the National Careers Service on 0800 100 900 who will be able to help identify where you might access this funding and for what courses.

You can access impartial money advice from the Money Advice Service if the service is available within your prison.

Applying for an Advanced Learner Loan

If you decide to fund all or part of your studies with an Advanced Learner Loan we can provide you with an application form, together with copies of an offender fact sheet and offender frequently asked questions. Alternatively, you can ask the learning and skills representative or the National Careers Service Adviser at your prison to download an application form from the gov.uk website.

The completed application form must be returned to the learning and skills representative at your prison, who will then arrange for the Prison Governor (or his/her representative) to complete a Student Loans Company (SLC) Prisoner Application Proforma which will confirm and authenticate information such as your release date and authority to study. There will be a local procedure to follow to achieve this, so please speak to either the learning and skills representative or the National Careers Service adviser, they will then send the Proforma to the SLC.

The maximum Loan amount you can apply for is either the fee we charge, or the maximum set by the government, whichever is the lower. The government maximum Loan for this course is **<enter maximum for this course £0000.00>**. If the course costs are more than the government maximum, you will need to arrange to pay the difference directly to us.

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The minimum Loan amount you can apply for is £300.

The SLC will process your application and write to you to confirm if your application has been successful.

The SLC will pay the loan for your fee directly to your college or training organisation.

If you apply for an Advanced Learner Loan you will be asked for information about yourself, your college or training organisation and your course fees. The following information provides you with all the information you will need on the college or training organisation and your course fees:

Name of college or training organisation <i>You must enter this information on your application.</i> <i>This is the college or training organisation that is responsible for delivering your course</i>	<enter name of lead college or training organisation>
UK Provider Reference number	<enter UKPRN of lead college or training organisation>
Course Trainer code <i>(if applicable)</i>	<enter Course Trainer code if applicable. If not applicable state 'not applicable'>
Course name	<enter course name>
Course code	<enter course code>
Start date	<start date in format DD/MM/YYYY>
End date	<end date in format DD/MM/YYYY>

Annex A

Sub-total of college or training organisation fee	<enter fee before VAT £0000.00>
VAT <i>(if applicable)</i>	<enter VAT amount £0000.00>
Total college or training organisation fee <i>(Enter this amount on your application.)</i>	<enter total college or training organisation fee £0000.00>

Let us know what you decide

Please contact us by <enter date> to confirm your course offer and let us know how you intend to pay.

We may make/have made arrangements with another organisation to deliver your course, however we remain responsible to you for the delivery of that course. If you have any problems or concerns you should contact us directly.

Yours sincerely

<enter name of signatory>

<enter position of signatory at lead College or Training Organisation>