



Advanced Learner Loan  
Learning Provider Seminars  
**Questions & Answers**



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# Application Process/Evidence

**Some of our learner with EU Settled Status or Pre Settled Status have had to obtain another share code as by the time their application was assessed, the code had expired. What can they do to ensure this doesn't happen going forward?**

If a learner indicates they hold status awarded under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) we will send them an email to request their share code. The learner will need to generate their share code on gov.uk. We must receive the specific "Something Else" share code for student finance purposes.

This code now remains valid for 90 days, as opposed to the previous 30 days.

**Should we confirm attendance for learners whose surnames mismatch their enrolments due to not updating their passports e.g., got married but haven't yet updated their passport?**

The information should match, and the learner would need to provide evidence of their change of name. We can accept photocopies of evidence e.g., marriage/divorce certificate.

**We have had quite a few Access to HE learners apply for the wrong funding. Is there anything we can do to make sure they select the correct pathway?**

Once a learner registers online, they then have to select which type of student finance they want to apply for. The customer portal lists the courses that fall under Further Education (Advanced Learner Loans), including Access to HE Diplomas. They should select this pathway to ensure they complete the correct application.

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK 'Student finance account' interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'GOV.UK' and 'Student finance account'. Below this is a feedback link: 'We are always trying to improve our service — [your feedback \(opens in a new window or tab\)](#) helps us to do this'. The 'student finance england' logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Your profile', 'Your finance', 'Letters & emails', and 'Logout' are on the right. The main heading is 'Apply for student finance', with a breadcrumb 'Home > Apply for student finance'. Below the heading is the question 'What type of student finance do you want to apply for?'. There are two selection boxes: 'Higher education' (blue border) and 'Further education : Advanced Learner Loans' (purple border). The 'Higher education' box lists: a degree (BA, BSc, teacher training), foundation degree, HNC or HND, postgraduate qualification (Master's or Doctoral degree), and another higher education course. The 'Further education' box lists: GCE A levels and/or AS Levels, QAA Access to HE Diploma, further education Certificate, Diploma and vocational qualifications at levels 3-6, BTEC Professional awards (Subsidiary Diploma, 90 Credit Diploma, Diploma, or Extended Diploma), and NVQ, level 3-6.



## Confirming Attendance

### **If I mark a learner as Not in Attendance will they still be reported on?**

If you are unable to mark a learner as 'in attendance' by the draw down date, you have the option to mark them as 'not in attendance'. This removes the learner from the Attendance Worklist and they re-appear on the Change of Circumstance (CoC) Worklist. Because they are no longer awaiting attendance, they will not be included for attendance reporting purposes and will not count as a fail.

Please ensure that if you use the 'Not in Attendance' option, you regularly monitor the CoC Worklist as these learners require follow up action. They will either need to be suspended or withdrawn accordingly.

### **If I mark a learner as 'Not in Attendance' but they re-engage on their course what action should I take?**

'Not in Attendance' is not an application state in itself, it is simply a means of flagging that a CoC may need to be submitted. If the learner has been marked as 'Not in Attendance' and remains on course, you can simply use the attendance drop down menu then mark them as 'in attendance' and outstanding payments will be made in the next payment run.

### **What evidence should be kept in learners file to confirm learning and attendance/engagement has taken place for online/hybrid delivery?**

Providers should have robust internal attendance monitoring procedures in place. As the SLC do not carry out audits with providers, we rely on accurate attendance confirmations to ensure you are paid correctly. The ESFA audit providers and therefore require documentary evidence that the learner has attended, and that teaching / learning has taken place.

We have asked the ESFA to provide guidance on evidencing online learning provision in the 23/24 Advanced Learner Loans Funding Rules.



# Submitting Changes

**If a learner is a non starter, is it best to submit a cancellation CoC or should I set the initial attendance to 'not in attendance'?**

Setting the initial attendance confirmation to 'Not In Attendance' will automatically cancel the application so this is the quickest option. However, if you prefer you can also submit the pre-liability CoC 'Cancel Application'. Both of these actions will cancel the application.

**One of our learners resumed following a period of suspension, but their application was made ineligible. They had changed courses but was at the same level and type. Why would this have happened?**

Policy does allow for a learner to change learning aim post-liability, but it has to be at the same level and type. Also, it is important that the new learning aim is approved for Advanced Learner Loan funding from the learner's original start date. If not, the application will be made ineligible and the learner will have to submit a new loan application.

**Can a learner suspend more than once?**

A learner can have multiple agreed breaks in learning, as long as each period does not exceed the current maximum duration of 18 months.

**When submitting a suspension, does the reason have to fall under a specific category to enable it to be authorised i.e. health, bereavement, pregnancy etc?**

The policy states that a suspension has to be agreed between the provider and learner but there is no requirement for a reason to be given for it to be accepted.

**If I submit a Resumption CoC once a learner returns from a suspension and push out the end date, are there any rules governing how far into the future this date can be set?**

When you resume a learner, the total duration of their course (in terms of payment periods) should not exceed the maximum set for this type of learning aim. For example, for a course of maximum 3 years' duration, the total number of payment periods (i.e., from start date to suspension date plus resumption date to end date) should not be more than 36 (3x12) in total.





### **If a withdrawal is submitted in error, can this be reversed?**

A withdrawal is the final change of circumstance that a provider is permitted to submit on the portal and so you should ensure that everything else is correct before doing so.

If an error has been made (incorrect effective withdrawal date submitted, withdrawal submitted in error etc) please contact the Partner's Support Desk to request a reversal. We may request evidence to confirm the error.

### **If a learner has stopped attending and we are unable to confirm attendance (we are trying to re-engage learning) when should the loan be suspended/withdrawn?**

It will be up to you to determine how long your organisation spends trying to re-engage the learner but be mindful that to be compliant against the service standards, you should notify us of a suspension or withdrawal within **60 days** (60% within 60 days, 99% within 90 days). You can suspend a learner on the portal whilst you try to establish their enrolment status. SLC do not require you to enter a proposed end date. You should agree a return date with the learner for ILR purposes, but this can be provisional and can be changed. Please refer to your ILR guidance.

### **If I set a learner's fee amount to zero so there is no loan liability, will this enable a learner on an Access to HE course who has withdrawn to take out a further loan for the same course if they wish to return?**

The policy rules state that learners are only entitled to one loan for Access to HE. If there are Compelling Personal Reasons (CPR) we can disregard the previous loan to enable a learner to re-apply for a further loan for Access to HE, providing we receive sufficient evidence. However, if a learner withdraws and there is no CPR, the learner will not be able to take out another loan for an Access to HE course. Setting the fee amount to zero will not enable CPR to be applied.

# Funding and Growth

**The cost of living crisis means we are seeing a dip in learners taking out an ALL. Will a provider's allocation be reduced if they don't utilise it this year?**

Allocation statements will be published at the end of March 2023 and the ESFA expect that they will be reflective of the highest approved, attended, and paid loans applications in the previous year.

**Are we able to query our allocation for 23/24?**

There is a six week window within which you can challenge your initial allocation, which is due to be published early Spring 2023. You should contact your ESFA Territory Manager for further information and to request an exceptions case form.

**Within our group, we manage several loan facility contracts. During the financial year is it possible to vire (or transfer) allocations between the contracts?**

Each loan contract is separate and it is therefore not possible to vire allocations.



# Policy

## **What further information is there to help providers navigate the complex Level 3 offer?**

The ESFA have produced a flowchart to help providers which can be found on the AEB rules landing page on gov.uk [Adult education budget \(AEB\) funding rules 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2022-to-2023) and there is also a link to it in the ALL funding rules [Advanced learner loans funding rules 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advanced-learner-loans-funding-rules-2022-to-2023).

## **We don't hold an AEB funding agreement, but we have a learner who wants to study with us as there are no equivalent courses in the local area. Are we able to accept the learner as loan funded even though they have not exercised their legal entitlement to full funding for a first full level 3?**

if a learner chooses to apply for a loan rather than exercising their entitlement to AEB funding with an alternative provider, you must make them aware that this may mean that they give up their right to exercise their entitlement to AEB funding in future and evidence this in their learner file.

## **Are learners still able to take a break in learning for up to 18 months?**

The maximum period of suspension remains set at 18 months. This will remain for 22/23 but is likely to revert back to 12 months from academic year 23/24.

## **If a learner is unable to finish their Access to HE course due to issues outside of their control, for example the provider ends the course, how does this affect their eligibility to apply for another ALL to fund an Access to HE course in the future as will they have used their one entitlement?**

As it currently stands, CPR can only be applied in situations where the learner had to previously withdraw from their Access to HE course due to reasons personal to the learner's circumstances. This example would not currently entitle the learner to a disregard of the previous course. However, we have asked the Department for Education (DfE) to give consideration to such scenarios that potentially disadvantage the learner through no fault of the learner.

We will share any updates with the sector.





**We have had some learners who have taken out four Advanced Learner Loans and are not eligible for the level 3 free courses for jobs offer. Will the policy be reviewed to extend the maximum number of loans?**

The standard entitlement for an eligible learner is a maximum of four fee loans (with the exception of Access to HE and a programme of A level study). There are no plans to amend the policy.





**For more information:**

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