



Learning Provider FAQs

What is the Learning Provider Portal?

The Learning Provider Portal is the online service accessible through the Learning Provider website (www.lpservices@slc.co.uk). The portal allows providers to:

- View details of learner applications
- Confirm their ongoing attendance, in order to release payment of the loan.
- Complete Change of Circumstance notifications
- View financial reports
- Bulk import information – for attendance confirmations and Change of Circumstance.
- Export data – for managing learner application and financial data in line with your organisation's needs.

When and how will I get access to the portal?

When the Education & Skills Funding Agency confirms that you are an approved Provider with a loans facility, SLC will contact you and give you the access you need to use the portal. SLC will establish who the primary and secondary business contacts are for administration processes, and these contacts will be given user administration access. Providers will then have visibility of their learners' application information.

What are the different levels of access?

User administration access will be granted to the nominated primary and secondary business contacts at each provider and they will determine what level of access individuals will need within the organisation.

There are separate user roles for those who require read-only access, and for those who require the authority to perform certain administration functions such as confirming attendance, notifying SLC of changes of circumstances, and viewing financial reports.

A user can have any combination of roles and there is no limit to the number of roles a user can have.

Please see the Learning Provider Portal User Guide for more information:

<https://www.lpservices.slc.co.uk/support-materials-and-resources/user-guides>

What information will I see for each learner in the portal?

Users at your organisation will have visibility of application data for learners who have made applications; this will be at both pre- and post-approval workstate. The learning aim fee, the amount of loan the learner has requested, their entitlement and balance to pay will also be available.

You will also be able to update fields including the learners ULN, Additional Learner Reference number (this is optional if your organisation has its own reference numbers assigned to learners) and the course trainer and location codes, which are also optional. Details for learners who make applications after this point will then be made available to providers upon submission of application. All information can either be viewed on screen via the portal or exported for your own data management purposes.

What is a Customer Reference Number and what is it used for?

The Customer Reference Number is assigned to the learner by SLC when they make an application. The learner will use this to identify themselves when they contact SLC. It is on the portal for information only and there is no obligation on the provider to do anything with this.

What do I need to do to receive loan payments?

Once the learners' loan application has been approved and they have started their study, the provider must confirm this to SLC in order to start receiving payment. This can only be done once the learner has been in attendance for at least two weeks. This will either be two weeks from the learning aim start date or two weeks after the learner has started their studies (when they start at a later date); this is referred to as the 'initial liability point'.

Thereafter, you will need to confirm attendance on a quarterly basis to continue releasing payments. Attendance is assumed in the months between quarterly confirmations and providers must notify SLC if a learner withdraws or takes a break in learning.

When can a learners' Start Date be moved?

If a learner is not in attendance on their planned start date, the provider should use their current procedures to determine if the start date needs to be moved to a later date than captured on the application.

If it must be moved then a Change of Circumstance can be submitted to change the learner's start date. When the change has been submitted, a new liability point will be created. On this date the learner will re appear on the attendance confirmation work list. Depending on what the start date is changed to, payments may also be rescheduled.

Please note, the start date cannot be moved after attendance has been confirmed.

How do I identify who needs an attendance confirmation?

You will be provided with a worklist of learners whose attendance needs confirming and so you will not need to search for these learners.

When and how will I be paid?

Loan payments to providers will be made against a flat monthly profile based on the initial liability point and the learning aim end dates. Therefore, if a learner takes out a loan of £900 for a learning aim that will be delivered over nine months, a provider will receive nine separate monthly payments of £100. Payments will be made on the third Wednesday of each month. SLC can only make payments within a maximum period for each type of learning aim.

To ensure payment can be made, attendance confirmations need to be made by close of business the Thursday before the third Wednesday of the month. If a learner's attendance isn't confirmed in time for the instalment to be paid on the third Wednesday, the payment will be made the following month.

What are the maximum periods for each learning aim type?

There is a limit to the period over which a loan can be paid. A learner can still study longer than these periods but SLC can only pay within the maximum length. These periods will be based on the type of learning aim. For example:

- A-level(s) – maximum period of two years
- QAA Access to HE Diploma – maximum period of two years
- Level 3 Certificate – maximum period of two years
- Level 3 Diploma – maximum period of three years
- Level 4 Certificate – maximum period of two years
- Level 4 Diploma – maximum period of three years

Do I have to notify SLC through the portal when a learner's circumstances have changed from that on their original application?

Yes. SLC must be notified as this may have an impact on a learner's entitlement and liability for the loan.

The following reasons may result in a learner's details or circumstances changing from the original information supplied at the point of initial application:

- Change to learning provider
- Change of learning aim details
- Change to loan amount or stated fee charged by the provider
- Cancellation
- Re-instatement
- Withdrawal
- Break in Learning/Suspension
- Resumption of Learning
- Early completion

Is there a limit to the length of a suspension/break in studies that a learner can have?

Yes. The learner can only suspend their learning aim for twelve months and if this is exceeded the loan application will be automatically withdrawn.

Providers have to confirm that a learner is 'In Attendance'. What does 'In Attendance' mean?

To allow SLC to release payments a provider has to confirm the initial attendance of the learner after the two-week liability point, and then actively on a fixed quarterly basis. Providers should use their own current procedures to determine if a learner is in attendance or not.

What happens if a learner makes an application after they have started their study?

If a learner makes an application for a loan after the learning aim has commenced, the loan payments will be aligned proportionately to the duration of the learning aim. The provider will receive back-dated payments for any months passed, and remaining payments will be profiled for the remainder of the period of study (up to the maximum durations stated previously).

For example:

- A learner applies for a loan of £1000 during the fourth month of a Learning Aim which they anticipate to complete in ten months. Once the learner has been confirmed as in attendance, the provider is paid £400. £100 is scheduled to be paid for the remaining six months of the learning aim.

Can I change our bank account details?

SLC is given provider bank account details by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

If you want to change provider bank account details you should inform the ESFA by submitting a BAN1 Form to DfE.StandingData@education.gov.uk.

The form can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/efa-suppliers-bank-details-form>.

Can I use a different bank account to the account my ESFA payments are paid to?

No, these accounts must be the same.

How do I change our Provider/Contract Manager details on the portal?

If the information displayed in the live system is incorrect, for example, Provider Name or Address, please update your details on the UK Register of Learning Providers website (www.ukrlp.co.uk). These will then be automatically updated on the ESFA's systems and issued to SLC via the monthly update file (on the Second Tuesday of the month).

The automated system doesn't pick up Contract Manager/Email Address changes, so you should also send an email to Loans.BUSINESSOPS@education.gov.uk, copying in your ESFA Territory Manager, with the correct information. The details will then be pulled through manually by the ESFA and issued to SLC via the monthly update file.