

Learning Aims – Levels and Types

Overview

The Advanced Learner Loan (ALL) is available to support learners who are studying any one of the following types and levels of ESFA-designated Learning Aims at an ESFA-approved Learning Provider in England:

- A Programme of A Level(s) (AS, or A Levels);
- An Access to HE Diploma; and
- General and technical qualifications at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Course Duration

There are maximum time periods of eligibility where a fee loan can be paid and before a learner can enter repayment. The time periods of eligibility are determined by the type of FE course:

- A programme of A levels (AS or A Levels) – two years for each A Level or AS
- An Access to HE Diploma – two years
- General and technical qualification at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 – maximum period of three years

The minimum duration period for a Learning Aim is two weeks, ensuring that all learners meet the initial two-week liability period.

Distance Learning

Loans are available for distance learning courses, which are defined as courses delivered outside of the classrooms, etc. of the provider's hub and bespoke locations, but these must be based within England except in exceptional circumstances agreed with the ESFA, e.g. Armed Forces.

Intensity

There is no distinction between full-time and part-time learning in FE and, therefore, the ALL is available to eligible learners regardless of their intensity of study, but are paid over a maximum of three years.

Previous and Concurrent Study

Learners are entitled to a maximum of four loans for the same type of Vocational Qualification. A learner can study the four Learning Aims in any order, or at the same time, and is not required to progress through the Learning Aim levels. For example, a learner may want to study a certificate in a specific trade after completing a diploma in management.

Learners will, however, only be entitled to one ALL for a Programme of A Levels (up to eight separate loans if studying four AS Learning Aims followed by the corresponding four A Levels) or an Access to HE Diploma as these Learning Aims are focussed on a particular outcome that is related to progression. This applies regardless of whether the qualification is achieved or not, and the only exception is where a learner has had to withdraw from their studies due to Compelling Personal Reasons (CPR).

Learners will be entitled to an ALL while they are in receipt of an HE loan, including Postgraduate Master's, Doctoral or just maintenance. Similarly, a HE applicant will be entitled to an HE loan while they are in receipt of an ALL.

Change of Learning Aim

The learner or provider must advise SLC when the learner changes to a different Learning Aim within the same Learning Provider as this may affect their eligibility.

If the learner's initial attendance has not been confirmed, they are **pre-liability** and can change to a Learning Aim of the same level and type or onto a Learning Aim of a different level or type.

However, once the learner's initial attendance has been confirmed, they are **post-liability** and can only transfer to a Learning Aim of the same level and type. If a learner decides to change Learning Aim type or level, they must withdraw from the current Learning Aim and make a new application (even when the units already achieved are part of the rules of combination of the new Learning Aim).