



Skills Funding
Agency

Provider Briefing: Accessing 24+ Advanced Learning Loans

August 2014

Of interest to colleges and training organisations

Introduction

The Skills Funding Agency (Agency) has announced that it wishes to increase the number of providers eligible to engage with the 24+ Advanced Learning Loans (Loans) programme to improve learner opportunities and enhance the programme.

This briefing provides further information about the Loans programme and what is involved in becoming an Agency-approved provider of Loans-funded provision.

Provider eligibility

To be eligible to receive any funding from the Agency, providers must be entered on the Agency's Register of Training Organisations (the Register). Entry on the Register does not automatically entitle a provider to funding, but it means providers will be eligible to be invited to compete for future funding opportunities.

The Register has three distinct purposes.

- To confirm the providers with an existing funding agreement are suitable for the Agency to continue to fund.
- To provide the Agency with a list of providers that are eligible to be selected to be invited to tender for providing education and skills training services.
- To enable the Agency to identify which subcontractors and prime contractors need to be asked to undertake a higher level of due diligence, monitoring and review.

The Register is open for applications from Friday, 1 August 2014 and closes on Friday, 26 September 2014 at 5pm.

The Agency will be inviting providers who are already on the Register and providers in the process of making an application to the Register by 5pm Friday, 26 September to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) for the delivery of Loans-funded provision.

This EoI will run from 1 September 2014 to 5.00pm on 14 November 2014. You can find [further details](#) about the Register, including how to apply to be included on the Register and [how to search](#) for this particular EoI on our website. This expression of interest is for loans funding only.

Working with the Skills Funding Agency and Student Loans Company

Loans are managed and administered on behalf of government by the Agency and Student Loans Company (SLC). If your organisation is approved on the Register and is successful in the Expression of Interest process, the Agency will offer you a Loans Facility Conditions Agreement (agreement).

Under this agreement your organisation will be able to offer eligible learners the opportunity of accessing Loans funding for eligible qualifications. If the learner chooses to finance their learning with a Loan, they will apply, be assessed and if successful will agree to the terms and conditions of the Loan as part of their agreement with the SLC. The SLC will make payments on behalf of the candidate to you as the Agency approved provider.

The agreement from the Agency will show the maximum value of Loans funding your organisation can receive in a funding year (in this case in 2014 to 2015, covering the period from the start of the agreement through to 31 July 2015). The amount will be calculated with regard to the overall budget available for Loans and your response to the EoI process, including your capacity for delivery. The statement of requirements within the EoI documentation to be published on 1 September 2014 will provide further detail about the minimum and maximum values of the Loan facilities the Agency expects to offer for the 2014 to 2015 academic year.

The value of the Loans facility is not guaranteed; funding will be paid by the SLC based on the number of learners with approved Loans attending your organisation.

The amount of income you will receive will depend on a number of factors. These include the type of qualification undertaken by a learner, the amount of Loan they apply for and whether they complete the course.

The agreement will be completely separate from any other Agency contracts you currently hold or wish to be considered for in future. If you are successful in the EoI process this will not entitle you at this stage to be eligible for an Adult Skills Budget, Apprenticeship contract, or contract for any other Agency funding stream.

In entering a Loans Facility Conditions agreement with the Agency you will be required to:

- comply with the terms of the agreement (a draft will be made available to you if you take part in the EOI process)
- abide by the [Agency's Funding Rules 2014 to 2015](#). The Rules form part of Loan Facility Conditions agreement and the Rules and the agreement combined contain the full set of requirements which you as a provider must meet. The Rules also set out the learner record evidence you must retain for audit purposes
- send Individualised Learner Record ([ILR](#)) data to the Agency by uploading an XML file to The [Hub web portal](#). This can be done either from your own MIS systems or through a data entry form provided by the Agency
- Confirm learner attendance and any changes of circumstances to the SLC in order to receive loans payments in respect of learners who have taken out loans to attend the eligible provision that you offer through a secured data portal.

The Agency will also:

- monitor your performance against the value in your Loan facility conditions in accordance with its [performance management rules](#)
- monitor and publish the [qualification success](#) of the learners funding provision with a Loan

Entering a subcontracting arrangement

An alternative to becoming an Agency-approved provider for the delivery of provision funded with a Loan is to explore entering a subcontracting arrangement with a provider which is already an Agency-approved provider. This would be a private/commercial arrangement between your organisation and the Agency-approved provider. The Agency has no role in this arrangement. The Agency-approved provider has to comply with the Agency's rules on subcontracting, as set out in the Funding Rules 2014 to 2015.

You can find a [list of the providers](#), which are already approved to deliver provision funded by Loans on our website.

Learner eligibility for a Loan

Loans are available for eligible learners who:

- are aged 24 or over at the start of their course (with no upper-age limit)
- are resident in the UK and undertaking eligible provision at an Agency-approved college or training organisation in England in receipt of a Loans facility
- have not previously had a Loan to do the same qualification type and level of qualification

Loans are not means tested (or subject to credit checks) and any individual, who meets the criteria will be able to apply for a Loan, regardless of their current employment status.

Loan payments are made monthly by the SLC, directly to the approved provider and not to the learner.

Qualification eligibility and maximum loan amounts

The following types of qualification are eligible to be funded by a Loan.

- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Access to Higher Education Diplomas
- A Levels (up to a maximum of four)
- Level 3 Certificates
- Level 3 Diplomas
- Level 4 Certificates
- Level 4 Diplomas
- Tech Levels
- Early Years Educator Courses

The precise qualifications within these categories, which are eligible to be funded with a Loan are identified in the Agency's [Simplified Funding Rates 2014 to 2015 spreadsheet](#) (see column headed "available for 24+ loans").

Learners can apply for a loan up to the maximum of the Agency's funding rate for the qualification in question (see the Simplified Funding Rates spreadsheet column

headed “weighted funding rate”). The minimum amount of Loan a learner can apply for is £300.

Further information

You can find further information about Loans on:

- [the Loans page of Gov.uk website](#)
- [24+ Advanced Learning Loans Practitioner Site](#)
- [Student Loans Company Learning Provider Services website](#)



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