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Funding Agency

Correspondence

ESFA Update further education: 14 August 2019

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1. Action: how to claim exceptional learning support for 2019 to 2020

We have published the guidance and cost form for exceptional learning support for the 2019 to 2020 funding year.

Providers and employers must complete the estimated cost of exceptional learning support at the beginning of a learner's programme and submit the completed cost form by email to exceptional.learningsupportclaims@education.gov.uk.

We are responsible for paying exceptional learning support for:

- learners aged 19 and over with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) without an education, health and care plan (EHC) plan
- all age apprentices that have an identified LDD and are with or without an EHC plan
- advanced loans-funded learners with an identified LDD without an EHC plan as part of the Advanced Learner Loans bursary fund

The adult education budget funding rules 2019 to 2020 and the Advanced Learner Loans funding rules 2019 to 2020 provide for further information on exceptional learning support.

If you have any questions after reading our guidance please contact us via email at exceptional.learningsupportclaims@gov.uk.

2. Action: impact of McCloud judgement on colleges

In 2015 the government introduced reforms to public sector pensions, meaning most public sector workers were moved into new pension schemes. In December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled that the 'transitional protection' offered to members in these schemes amounted to unlawful discrimination. This case is known as McCloud.

The Supreme Court decision in June 2019 not to allow the government leave to appeal. This means the difference in treatment needs to be remedied across all relevant schemes, including the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

Colleges will need to assess the impact on their pension liabilities. Consequently college boards will need to agree actions that lead to an assessment of the impact of McCloud on pension liabilities and disclosures included in their financial statements for 2018 to 2019. If you haven't already done, we advise you discuss this with your external auditors early in the 2018 to 2019 audit process. A means of doing this will be to commission an assessment of the effect of McCloud in conjunction with your annual FRS102 actuarial valuation. This may be in the form of an estimate or a detailed analysis. You should discuss the options, and associated costs, with the fund actuary.

Further information can be found in the Association of College's college accounts direction handbook 2018 to 2019 and model accounts, updated versions of which will be published shortly.

3. Reminder: change in payment dates

We are changing the date on which we make payments from August 2019.

We will pay the following funding streams on the 14th working day of the month:

- adult education budget (AEB)
- apprenticeships
- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary
- European Social Fund (ESF)
- National Careers Service
- 16 to 18 traineeships

- career learning pilots

Any payments relating to these funding streams will reach bank accounts on 20 August 2019, and then on the 14th working day thereafter.

If you have any questions, please contact us via email at payment.queries@education.gov.uk.

4. Information: cyber crime and cyber security guide for education providers

We have published guidance to help education providers protect themselves from cyber crime. The guide also contains a checklist to help improve cyber security.

5. Information: 2019 to 2020 student transfer process for pre-existing qualifications

We have published guidance for providers of education and training that sets out the student transfer process for pre-existing qualifications.

You can use this process for students who begin a large qualification that we will stop funding for new starts from 1 August 2020, and who want to transfer to a smaller qualification 'nested' within the larger qualification.

If you have any further queries about this, please use our contact form.

6. Information: devolution of the adult education budget, effective from 1 August 2019

To support understanding of the devolution of the adult education budget (AEB) to mayoral combined authorities and the Greater London Authority, we have updated our published guidance.

You can read more about devolution of the AEB and arrangements put in place on our AEB devolution page.

7. Information: changes to the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS)

ESFA has appointed a new provider to deliver the SBSS. The SBSS is the online service that administers the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund claims for students in defined vulnerable groups. A new portal will be available on Monday 2 September 2019 to submit claims for eligible students for the 2019 to 2020 academic year.

User accounts have been set up for those education institutions that are eligible to claim from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. Users must activate their account before signing in to the new SBSS portal. Instructions on how to do this will be provided on the portal. A link to the portal will be made available on GOV.UK on Monday 2 September 2019.

8. Information: new feature in the 2019 to 2020 apprenticeship funding rules

We have added 2 new flow charts to the apprenticeship funding rules as part of our work to make them clearer and easier to use.

The flow charts are in the following chapters of the web-based and PDF versions of the 2019 to 2020 rules:

- 'what can be funded?' - to help you find out if an apprentice needs to do functional skills English and maths
- 'change of circumstance' - to help you find out what to do if your apprentice wants to take a break in learning

If you would like to share your opinions on the flow charts, please complete our survey.

9. Information: data returns for 2019 to 2020

Submit Learner Data officially launches at the start of R01 for 2019 to 2020.

You must make submissions for the 2019 to 2020 academic year via the new service – otherwise you will not be paid. Your payments will be based on the reports in Submit Learner Data.

The tools you use to gather data may have moved location too. From R01, the following tools will all be accessible from a tools and services menu on the Submit

Learner Data sign-in page:

- Funding Information Service (FIS) – the desktop tool that checks your files against the 2019 to 2020 validation rules and generates 8 provisional reports (we'll confirm the full functionality of FIS in the next edition of ESFA Update)
- Amalgamation tool – now called 'ILR FileMerge'
- ILR Learner Entry Tool
- Learning Aims Reference System (LARS) – while you can access LARS from the sign in page, you'll be taken back to the Hub, as this tool will remain there for now.

For the remainder of 2018 to 2019, you can submit files through the new service or the Hub. Many providers are choosing to use Submit Learner Data now, so they're familiar with the service for the new academic year. We'll transfer your information to the Hub automatically, and you'll find the reports your 2018 to 2019 payments are based on in the Hub.

10. Information: apprenticeship service opens for small and medium sized apprenticeship employers and supporting training providers who have signed up to test the service

Following a popular expression of interest exercise to take part in testing the system functionality of the apprenticeship service for employers who do not pay the levy, successful apprenticeship employers and supporting training providers are now able to register on the service. This expression of interest process is now closed. Successful applicants will have received instructions on how to register via the email address they used in their application.

This test phase applies to starts for August, September and October 2019. The purpose of this functional test, is to help make sure the service meets employer and provider needs, ahead of opening to a wider audience.

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