CMS WEBINAR SCRIPT 2025

<u>**Amanda Thomson**</u>

SLIDE 1: WELCOME

Hello and welcome to SLC's annual Courses Management Service webinar for Academic Year 26/27. My name is Amanda Thomson, and I am the Account Services Manager for HE at SLC. I look after the Account Management team and together we are responsible for ensuring providers are ready and prepared for the forthcoming course collection cycle.

Although we've seen improvements compared to previous years, we are keen to maintain and build on these as we move forward into AY 26/27. Last year's course collection process worked very well, with over 95% of courses available and validated when the student finance application window opened. The majority of courses were validated successfully. However, downstream changes to course details still require us to reassess students' entitlement, which is undesirable for providers, students, and us. We also noted a slight increase in the number of students affected by course changes, so this remains a key area of focus.

SLIDE 2: INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

This broadcast will run for approximately 75 minutes and will be followed by a short Question-and-Answer session. You can submit questions during the webinar using the box below this video.

On screen, you'll see our agenda for the session. We'll cover each item as we move through the presentation.

SLIDE 3 LLE Update

Before we move into the detail of our routine CMS and course collection activities, we'll start with a brief overview of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) and the context that makes it relevant to today's session.

Our FAQs are a key resource, so please check them regularly and look out for updates. Finally, please ensure that your organisation has appointed an LLE lead. If you have any queries about this, please contact your HEP Account Manager. Otherwise, nominations can be sent to LLE_enquiries@slc.co.uk.

I will now hand over to Bev McDonald and later Sam Stokell. As experienced HEP account managers, they will guide you through the presentation and will be available for a short period afterwards to answer any questions during our live Q&A session. If we don't get through all the questions today, we'll take them away and publish them alongside the presentation in the coming weeks.

<u>Bev McDonald</u>

SLIDE 4: DfE Policy Context for LLE

Thanks Amanda, we will now begin with a reminder of the DfE policy context in relation to LLE.

The economy is evolving rapidly, requiring people to change roles and careers more often. This creates a growing need to support learning throughout life.

While traditional degree funding remains, the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) introduces flexible modular pathways. These allow individuals to return to education later in life or fit study around work and other commitments, building degree modules gradually.

This shift comes as skill requirements change, driven by technological advances and the increasing use of artificial intelligence.

Currently, student finance is based on a standard three-year degree and applies Equivalent Level Qualification or ELQ rules.

Under LLE, funding is provided as a single pot rather than being tied to course length, and ELQ restrictions do not apply.

Based on current fee limits, this pot is equivalent to £39160, which is four years at £9790

SLIDE 5: Phased delivery of LLE

The Lifelong Learning Entitlement will be introduced gradually, starting in the 2026/27 academic year. The first group of students will apply for funding in September 2026—later than the usual February timeline—to allow for system and provider readiness. These students will begin their courses and modular study from January 2027, marking the official start of LLE-funded education.

SLIDE 6: LLE in Devolved Administrations

Education in the UK is devolved, and the government is working closely with the devolved administrations to prepare for the rollout of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) in the 2026/27 academic year. The aim is to ensure students can move seamlessly between institutions across the UK.

If an English-domiciled student already has funding under the current higher education finance system to study in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland, that funding will continue. From January 2027,

all eligible English students starting study anywhere in the UK will apply for LLE student finance. Higher Education Providers (HEPs) in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland will offer LLE funding for English students on their courses. However, HEPs outside England will not be able to offer LLE-funded modules.

SLIDE 7: Key Milestones

For the 2026/27 academic year, there are two critical course collection points that providers need to prepare for. The first is in January 2026, which covers undergraduate courses for new English students starting in the autumn term, returning students across all cohorts, and both new and returning students from devolved administrations.

The second collection happens in June 2026, and this is to support the opening of the LLE application cycle in September. This round will include courses starting from January 2027, part-time courses transitioning to LLE, Advanced Learner Loan (ALL) funded courses approved for transfer, and newly approved modules.

These milestones are essential for ensuring accurate data and readiness for the phased rollout of Lifelong Learning Entitlement.

SLIDE 8: Academic Year Timeline

SLC have a timeline each year for Course Collection, Application Launch and Payments. First let's look at Course Collection. We stagger our approach for collecting your courses and our course collection windows are related to the specific products we offer.

This year, we will write to you in January to ask you to add your Full Time Undergraduate courses to the system and Scottish Postgraduate courses, if you offer these.

We will collect Postgraduate Masters and Doctoral courses in February/March, and Part-Time Undergraduate courses in May.

Once the courses are submitted to CMS, a validation exercise where we check the integrity of the course information you have added to the system.

If there is anything we need you to clarify or amend, our CMS Team will contact you via email, so it's important that you review and respond as quickly as possible. We will go through the validation process in more detail later in the presentation.

Planning and working to our timeline is vitally important as this allows SLC to complete our

checks and open the relevant applications to allow the students to apply for their Finance. Like course collection, our application launches are staggered over a period of a few months. The first applications open from March onwards, starting with full-time undergraduate students.

Part-time undergraduate applications are anticipated to follow in May, while postgraduate applications will open earlier, around February/March.

At this stage, these dates are always indicative and subject to change as they are set by the various devolved authorities.

So, what happens once all the above is in place…?

Once students begin applying and their applications are approved, you will start to see students' details appearing in SIS, the Student Information Service, it's important to note that you will only see applications that are at an 'approved' state.

Through SIS you can view this information and make amendments, if needs be, and it is here you are also required to administer the registration and attendance worklists.

The Registration worklist opens 30 days prior to the course start date, and from this point you can start to check your student's application details are correct and begin to confirm your students are registered or not registered. A positive registration confirmation allows SLC to schedule and pay their loan and grant funding, which is paid to the students in 3 instalments, on the first day of each term.

You will also be required to take action on the first day of term when we open the Attendance worklist for you to confirm the student is in attendance or not This will then release your Tuition Fees. And as you can see, we pay these in 3 instalments to Providers in October, February, and May for Autumn start courses.

SLIDE 9: Courses Management Service (CMS)
We'll now move on to the details of course collection. This section will cover policy, highlight key processes outlined in our guidance, and share best practice approaches.

We recognise that course collection is slightly later than usual this year, so please use the

additional time to gather all the information needed for the data entry process when submitting your course details.

Accuracy and timeliness are both critical, so we ask that you prioritise this with your programme planners and reinforce the direct impact that late changes to course information can have on students

SLIDE 10: DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF CMS

The Courses Management Service or CMS as we will refer to it, is a single database for providers to submit their course information.

As this information is used to assess students for funding it is vital that, only designated courses are uploaded on to the database, and that, all information relating to a course is accurate and meets policy regulations.

When students are making their application online for student finance, they will only be able to see courses which you have created or rolled over on CMS, and we will look at this process in more detail shortly.

SLIDE 11: COURSE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

The information you provide on CMS links into our Customer Portal for student assessments as well as the Student Information Service and the Bursary Administration Service too (if you also subscribe to this)

Based on the information you provide for each course, SLC can ensure that students are accurately assessed for student finance and that their funding is scheduled for payment at the right time.

And for yourselves as Providers, it gives you a central log of all your course information.

SLIDE 12: SERVICE STANDARDS

There is a joint SLC/HEP Service Agreement which defines the service measures between SLC and Provider's for the administration of Student Finance.

The Service Agreement includes service standards for both timeliness and for accuracy and right first-time submission.

So, let's have a look specifically at your obligations for CMS.

SLIDE 13: SERVICE STANDARDS – FULL TIME UNDERGRADUATE

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To support the optimum customer experience, we require providers to submit 100% of their courses, at least 2 weeks ahead of our full-time service launch date and for colleges, submission is required at least 1 week prior.

In recognising that on occasion, you may experience unforeseen factors, such as later courses or genuine uncertainty around confirmed course structure, our service standard provides for a 15% tolerance to allow for these scenarios.

Of these courses uploaded, likewise we are striving for 100% right first-time accuracy by the initial deadline, but with a 5% tolerance for any changes that need to happen by the time the student applications open, usually around mid-late February.

This is vitally important as once the service is open and students have made applications, any amendments you make to your courses create reassessments and this can impact the students funding entitlement.

SLIDE 14: SERVICE STANDARDS – PART TIME UNDERGRADUATE

The service standard for your part time undergraduate courses also provides a 15% tolerance level and courses are to be submitted, at least 2 weeks ahead of our part-time service launch date.

As with full time, it is also important to ensure optimum accuracy at the submission deadline and changes should be made no later than at the point application launch.

SLIDE 15: SERVICE STANDARDS - POSTGRADUATE

For your postgraduate masters and doctoral courses, tolerances are the same at 15% and 5% respectively. Your courses must be submitted 2 weeks before our postgraduate launch date and again, avoid making changes after this point.

SLIDE 16: COURSE VALIDATION

Lets' move on now to look at the course validation exercise that we undertake as you submit your courses.

SLIDE 17: GENERAL COURSE ELIGIBILTY

Before adding a course to CMS, you must ensure it meets all eligibility criteria.

First, the course must lead to a recognised qualification and be delivered by an OfS-registered provider or one designated by the devolved authorities.

At least 50% of guided learning must take place within the UK, and each academic year must not exceed 12 calendar months. Courses should be scheduled across three academic

terms.

Tuition fees and fee loans must be paid directly into a UK bank account and cannot exceed the maximum regulated amount. Providers must also comply with guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority.

Full-time courses must provide an average of 21 hours of self and guided learning per week over a minimum of 24 weeks, and credit values must be clearly defined.

Finally, make sure the course structure aligns with policy requirements, including term scheduling and fee limits, before adding it to CMS

SLIDE 18: VALIDATION PROCESS

As you can see from our service standards, accuracy is key to ensuring student entitlement is correctly assessed.

As you are submitting your courses our CMS team are reviewing this data - they are looking for anything that looks like an anomaly. This could include inconsistencies or significant changes in course information from the data collected in previous years or perhaps where it does not comply with our guidance and the policy regulations or course eligibility.

If they find anything that requires further clarification from yourselves, they will add this to a course tracker and send it to your CMS named contacts to review. As such we ask you to ensure your contact details on the CMS tab within the maintain contact page within SIS, and on your provider profile page in CMS, are up to date and regularly reviewed.

It might not be that this information is wrong, but rather we need you to doublecheck it and let the CMS team know whether it is correct or not.

Initial e-mail's will be sent from the courses service management mailbox, and we really need your assistance to respond to these requests, so please review and update these trackers as quickly as possible and send them back to the team, with any necessary amendments as required.

We cannot allow courses to go live with inaccurate data or a question mark over the integrity of its data so if we have not had any response from you the team will set your courses to 'No Students' ahead of application launch date to avoid this awarding incorrect funding to your students.

The Teamwork through course validation is on an ongoing basis, as your courses are being uploaded, therefore your trackers will be updated regularly.

It is a working document, so the aim is to identify a potential issue and flag it up to you before you continue to add further courses to save you administrative time in the long run.

SLIDE 19: COURSE ANOMOLIES – FULL TIME

To put our need for validation into perspective, you can see on this slide that there are over 96,000 courses on the database, so it is a huge undertaking to review and validate all these courses.

We have seen a marked improvement year on year, and we just wanted to thank you all for your continued efforts. However, for 25/26 similar error levels were recorded as for academic year 23/24 and these were predominantly relating to foundation year fees and bank holiday dates being input incorrectly.

This reiterates how much we need your support in firstly, striving for right first-time accuracy and secondly, having spotted any anomalies, your help in getting these resolved.

SLIDE 20: COURSE COLLECTION

Now, as we mentioned, we come out to you in a staggered approach to gather your course information.

We can now give you an idea of when to expect this to happen.

SLIDE 21: COURSE COLLECTION AY26/27

We did touch on this on the academic timeline earlier in the presentation so just a reminder of the expected dates and the deadlines you will need to work towards.

Course collection dates vary depending on the type of course and the student domicile.

For full-time undergraduate courses, collection starts in January 2026, and providers should aim to have 85% submitted at least four weeks before service launch.

Scottish postgraduate courses also begin in January, with a deadline of two weeks prior to launch.

Part-time undergraduate courses will be collected later, in June 2026, again with the four-week deadline.

Postgraduate Masters and Doctoral courses start collection in early March, and Northern Ireland postgraduate courses in mid-February, each with their respective deadlines.

The CMS team will notify you when the service opens and will send reminders as deadlines approach. Meeting these timelines is critical to ensure applications can open on schedule and students can apply for funding without delay.

SLIDE 22: Welsh Course Designation

From 1 August 2024, the duties of HEFCW have transferred to the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, known as Medr.

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If you're offering courses to Welsh students, you must not add them to CMS until specific designation has been granted for that academic year.

Providers need to apply to Medr for designation if their undergraduate or postgraduate courses do not meet the automatic designation conditions set out in Wales for Welsh student support regulations.

It's important to note that tuition fee rates differ for automatically designated and specifically designated courses. For specifically designated courses, Welsh students will need to self-fund the difference between the tuition fees charged and the tuition fee loan provided.

If you need to apply for designation, you can contact Medr at the email address on screen.

SLIDE 23: Who should apply to Medr for specific designation?

We will now explain which providers need to apply to Medr for specific course designation in Wales.

Courses that meet the automatic designation conditions in Welsh student support regulations can be added to CMS without additional steps. However, if your courses do not meet these conditions, you must apply for specific designation before adding them.

So, who needs to apply?

English providers offering courses to Welsh students through a franchise arrangement with a partner that is not registered with OfS or is an alternative provider must apply.

Likewise, any English provider in the Approved category with OfS, and any SCITT provider offering courses to Welsh students.

So too must Northern Irish providers that are alternative providers or those offering courses via a franchise arrangement with a non-OfS registered partner.

Scottish providers that are alternative providers or those offering courses via a franchise arrangement with a non-OfS registered partner must also apply.

And lastly, Welsh providers that are alternative providers or those offering courses via a franchise arrangement with a non-OfS registered partner.

In short, if your arrangement involves a partner that is not OfS-registered or is an alternative provider, you must apply for specific designation before adding the course to CMS.

SLIDE 24: CHANGES TO TUITION FEES

We will now take the opportunity to provide you with an update on the policy changes for AY 26/27 and specifically the changes to tuition fee charges ahead of course collection.

SLIDE 25: TUITION FEE CHARGES FOR AY 26/27

Let's now look at tuition fees for Academic Year 2026/27.For approved (fee cap) providers in England, the maximum tuition fees will vary depending on whether the provider has a TEF award and/or an Access and Participation Plan (APP).

Providers with TEF and an APP can charge up to **£9,790** for standard full-time courses and **£11,750** for full-time accelerated courses.

Providers without TEF or APP have lower caps, starting at **£6,350** for standard full-time courses.

Part-time courses also have capped rates, ranging from **£7,335** down to **£4,760**, depending on TEF and APP status.

These changes apply from 1 August 2026 and apply to English students. For AY 2026/27, Scottish and Welsh institutions can charge up to £9,790 for full-time undergraduate courses, matching the English cap. Scottish-domiciled students studying elsewhere in the UK will have access to the same increased tuition fee loan, and Welsh students will see a 2% uplift in maintenance support. Northern Ireland figures are still to be confirmed

Please note: For continuing students or where offers have already been made for 2027 entry, fees cannot be increased unless your terms and conditions clearly allow inflationary increases linked to your Access and Participation Plan.

We'll confirm best practice guidance before you add courses to CMS

SLIDE 26: Welsh Government Update

Now to cover the latest update from the Welsh Government for Academic Year 2026/27.Maintenance support for both undergraduate and postgraduate students will increase by 2%, in line with CPI.

The tuition fee cap for full-time courses will rise to £9,790, which is an increase of 2.71%, and the maximum fee loan available to students will match this amount.

For specifically designated courses, the maximum fee remains at £6,525.

The aim of these changes is to maintain student accessibility while supporting universities financially.

These updates are important for providers when planning course fees and ensuring compliance with Welsh regulations.

SLIDE 27: Full time fees at Approved (fee cap) Providers in England

On the previous slide, we looked at the maximum tuition fee caps for 2026/27.

Now will examine a detailed breakdown based on TEF status and Access and Participation Plans.

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You'll see that the fee limits vary depending on whether the provider has a TEF award and an APP. For example, full-time courses have different caps compared to foundation years, and there are separate rates for sandwich years and study abroad years.

Please note that these figures are rounded for simplicity, and the actual limits can differ slightly. For example, sandwich work placements were announced by DfE at approximately 20% of the maximum fee cap. 20% of £9,790 works out at £1,958, but you will see from the table it has been rounded to £1,955. Therefore, its important you use the table as guidance for all fees. For precise details, always refer to the official guidance – we'll share a link for the specific reference point after this session.

The key takeaway is that these variations matter when setting fees for different course structures, so make sure your CMS entries reflect the correct category and rate

SLIDE 28: Full Time fees at approved (FEE CAP)

We will now talk through the breakdown for accelerated degree courses, including how TEF status and Access and Participation Plans affect the limits.

You'll notice that the fees for accelerated courses are higher than standard courses because they are calculated as 20% above the full-time fee cap.

All these figures are calculated as a percentage of the full fee and then rounded to the nearest five pounds for simplicity.

There are also separate rates for sandwich years, study abroad years, and Turing years. These percentages are applied to the full fee and then rounded, so the amounts shown here may not always match exactly.

For precise details, please refer to the official guidance – we'll share a link for the specific reference point after this session

SLIDE 29: ROLLOVER PROCESS Now we thought it might be a good opportunity to remind you of the rollover process**.**

SLIDE 30: COURSE INTEGRITY

As we discussed in course validation, we cannot stress enough how important it is to make sure all your courses are eligible, and that the information is accurate.

Please make sure you only add courses that are designated for support – ultimately whilst we do undertake validation to assist you, it is your responsibility as the Provider to make sure that the course is eligible for student support, meets policy regulations and that you have added all the required attributes.

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These attributes are used to determine funding entitlement for students so it's important to make sure they are indicated on the course where applicable.

SLIDE 31: ROLLOVER PROCESS

To begin with, for new autumn term students, returning students, and new students from other domiciles outside England, you won't be starting from scratch.

Any open saved courses for these groups that are already on CMS at the end of Academic Year 25/26 will automatically appear on the new tab for Academic Year 26/27.

You will see these listed on the new tab as 'unsaved' and you will have to review and work on each of these individually to update the information.

As you do so, the course totals will change so you will always be able to see how many unsaved courses you still need to review.

The good news is you don't have to update all of the information for each course as, for example, once you have entered and saved the term dates for your first course submission, these new term dates will pre-populate on the next course you start to work on. The only exception to this will be if the start month of the course you are rolling over does not match that of the previous course you were working on.

So, it's a good idea and best practice to 'batch' your courses together based on course start date before commencing this exercise and work through them in this order to save you a bit of time.

Students will only be able to see courses that have been saved and are open on CMS when they are making their application. Also, a recent change to our systems, means that, going forward, they will no longer be able to see any course that has been set to 'No Students'.

For any course that you are not running in AY 26/27, you should leave these as unsaved.

SLIDE 32: Current CMS Phase out

As we prepare for the introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement from January 2027, it's essential that providers understand how to phase out existing courses correctly.

The rollover process is not just about carrying forward your current courses into the new academic year—it's about ensuring compliance with the new funding model. For English-domiciled students starting from January 2027, courses must be set up under the new LLE framework. This means you cannot simply roll over all courses as they are today.

SLIDE 33: Current CMS – Course Collection Changes

Due to LLE, for English-domiciled students, CMS will implement a tactical solution. This

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means Higher Education Providers will continue to add new courses and roll over existing courses in the current CMS, but you will not be able to add courses that should be set up as new LLE-funded courses.

The course collection for full-time undergraduate courses is expected to take place in January 26. Intercalated courses will be handled separately using the intercalation attribute. From January 2027 onwards, all new English-designated students must be enrolled on an LLE version of the course. This is a key change. Existing CMS courses cannot be used for these students.

The table on this slide shows the designation periods for students across the different intakes: Autumn, Winter, Spring, and Summer. These timelines will help you plan when to phase out current CMS courses and prepare for LLE courses.

SLIDE 34: Current CMS – Rolling Over Courses

We will now explain how rolling over courses will work in the current CMS as we prepare for the introduction of LLE.

From Academic Year 2026/27, when you roll over your existing CMS courses, you'll see an additional radio button in the 'Available Course Years' section. This new option is designed to help you manage English-domiciled students separately from other domiciles.

Here's how it works:

If the previous year was set as 'Designated – England' and 'Available Course Years – All Students,' the new radio button will default to Returners.

If the previous year was set as 'Designated – England' and 'Available Course Years – No Students,' the new radio button will default to No Students.

This functionality is critical because, from January 2027 onwards, new English students must be enrolled on LLE-funded courses, not on rolled-over CMS courses. The additional radio button ensures you can phase out courses for new English students while still supporting returners.

SLIDE 35: Current CMS – Adding New Courses

When you create a new course, the 'Available Course Years' radio button will initially show options for all students. However, if you select England as the designation, an additional radio button will appear under the header: 'Students from England from January 27'.

This option will default to 'No Students', and all other options will be greyed out. This is because new English students starting from January 2027 must be enrolled on LLE-funded courses, not on CMS courses.

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The only exception to this rule is for intercalated courses. If you select the intercalation attribute, the system will allow you to manage these students differently.

This functionality ensures that providers cannot mistakenly add new English students to courses that should be phased out under the current funding model. It's a key part of the transition to LLE

SLIDE 36: Phase Out Recap

So, just to summarise….

Course collection will still go ahead in January 2026 on the current CMS for all courses and domiciles, except for new English students starting from January 2027 onwards. These students must be enrolled on LLE-funded courses, not on rolled-over CMS courses.

The new 'Available Course Years' function will help you manage this transition. If English designation is selected, you will not be able to choose 'All Students' for courses starting January 2027 onwards. Instead, you'll only be able to select Returners or No Students.

Similarly, when creating a new course on CMS with a January 2027 start date and English designation, the only option available will be No Students, unless the intercalation attribute is ticked.

This functionality ensures providers can phase out courses correctly while still supporting returning students, and it prevents new English students from being added to courses under the old funding model.

Getting this right is critical for a smooth transition to LLE and to avoid errors that could impact student funding

I am now going to hand over to Sam; she will take you from here to cover course closures and the rest of our webinar presentation.

<u>**Sam Stokell**</u>

SLIDE 37: COURSE CLOSURES

Thanks Bev, that was really useful. We will now move on to consider additional validation when you are attempting to close a course, this will prevent courses being closed which still have students attached to them.

If there are any students approved on the course you are trying to close, in the current or previous academic year, CMS will not allow you to close the course. We are still seeing attempts to close courses– in many cases this was multiple attempts to close the same course, with some of you not realising that the course would automatically reopen if it had student applications attached.

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CMS will also pend the closure for 30 mins and check to see if there are any student applications from the current or previous year, before allowing the closure. And if need be, it will reopen the course too.

SLIDE 38: TERM DATES

We will now move on to look at term dates and the importance of right first-time accuracy. Changes to term dates are problematic and so we ask that you avoid making changes where possible.

SLIDE 39: TERM DATES

Term dates not only drive the student payment dates for maintenance support but also can affect the amount of entitlement, so it is extremely important that these are captured accurately.

We appreciate that many of you only work with two semesters however, for the purposes of ensuring student finance is administered in line with Student Support Regulations we still do require three terms.

When working out your three terms you must make sure that you tie in with your scheduled holiday breaks and only take into account actual teaching weeks, for example when your students are attending lectures, undertaking course work, or taking exams etc and try to mirror these study patterns as closely as possible.

SLIDE 40: TERM DATES

The academic year has four season starts - Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer.

As you will see from the screen, each season start has specific parameters which determine the earliest a term can start.

This was one of the most common errors that we picked up last year, so it's a good idea to refresh yourself with this guidance before entering your course submission.

SLIDE 41: TERM DATES

Through course validation we identified quite a few areas which generated a lot of queries and thought it would be worth highlighting what to watch out for.

Firstly, when adding Fresher's into your term dates - this should only be where there is some form of active engagement with the student, usually classed as an induction week - examples of this would be tutor meetings, induction sessions, timetabling and lectures etc. Make sure you take any holiday periods out of the overall duration of your courses.

Often Easter breaks are tricky, particularly with the regulations around an Autumn start Term 3 commencing no earlier than 1st April.

Exam periods can be included in your teaching weeks, but don't include the time waiting on results or for any external resits.

Using bank holidays and weekend dates caused the highest error rate in previous years. We do realise that there will be certain courses that might have to start at the weekend, and that's absolutely fine but most courses wont. In this case, it skews your student payment dates as SLC do not make transfers on non-working days.

And lastly, you need to be aware that courses that are longer than 30 weeks and 3 days attract additional funding for students.

SLIDE 42: KEY INFORMATION AND BEST PRACTICE.

So far, we have given you an overview of the fundamentals of rolling over your courses and your obligations.

Now we are going to have a look at some of the specific areas that you need to be aware of that can cause issues if information is captured incorrectly and share some best practice and key information with you.

SLIDE 43: LONG COURSES

There is a calculator on CMS that automatically works out the length of your courses and, if you enter dates which exceed 30 weeks and 3 days, it will present you with a message to alert you to this and ask you to confirm that this course is a 'long course' and that you are happy to proceed on this basis.

SLIDE 44: WEEKEND COURSE START DATES

Like Long Courses, there is now an alert for Weekend Term Dates. When you enter Term Dates that start on a Weekend, you will be presented with an alert to ask you to confirm that this course does start on a weekend, and you will then be allowed to continue to add your course details.

SLIDE 45: Bank Holiday Course starts

Now to pick up on an important enhancement within CMS for handling bank holiday start dates.Implemented in May this year, it's now the case that if you add or change a course in CMS and the term start date falls on a bank holiday, the system will display a validation message. You'll be prompted to confirm that the course genuinely starts on that bank holiday

before you can continue.

The bank holiday calendar is updated every academic year during rollover and is specific to the provider's domicile. For example, a Scottish provider setting up a course starting on 2nd January will see the confirmation message because it's a Scottish bank holiday, whereas an English provider would not.

This enhancement is designed to prevent common errors when entering term start dates and ensure accuracy in course setup. Always review and confirm these dates carefully, as they directly impact student entitlement and payment schedules.

SLIDE 46: ATTRIBUTES AND FLAGS

We highlighted earlier the importance of correctly applying attributes to your courses as these are all assessing factors that need to be considered and can impact on a student's entitlement.

Remember to indicate which year a placement applies to and adjust the fees for that year, which are often lower too.

Placement indicators can be added to multiple years if need be.

Distance Learning students only receive tuition fee loan support, so it is really important that this is flagged up to us with the indicator.

We have found quite a few instances where Providers have listed 'distance learning' in the course title but haven't flagged it in the attributes so this doesn't get picked up correctly by the Assessors. Students may receive maintenance funding which they are not entitled to which, when rectified, will put them into overpayment and cause them unnecessary distress and worry.

There are also a series of different attributes to cater for the Allied Health Professions.

As support varies depending on the course and the level of NHS support available, it is important to identify these for Assessors so they can accurately calculate the student's entitlement.

Just one point to remember here too is not to use the NHS Bursary attribute at the same time as Medicine Dentistry – we know that these students do receive NHS funding for certain years of their course, but this is picked up when you flag the Medicine/Dentistry attribute, so you don't need both.

Please also ensure that courses are correctly updated to reflect where students have the option to intercalate and achieve more than one qualification. This attribute relates only to undergraduate courses.

Lastly, HTQ attributes must also be added to IFATE approved courses only as appropriate.

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We must stress the importance of contacting us if you forget to add the flag prior to saving the course, as we will be able to quickly update this to make sure students are correctly assessed.

SLIDE 47: AVAILABLE COURSE YEARS

The available course years functionality gives you flexibility to offer your courses to particular groups of students.

So, for example, if you want to offer a new course and don't want to run the risk of continuing students applying to this in error you can ensure that this in only visible on the application to new students by setting all years other than Year 1 to 'No Students'

This also works the same way for phasing out courses and is the preferred alternative to closing a course too – Closing courses impacts all years of that course so could affect previous years reassessments and once closed, cannot be reopened.

SLIDE 48: LOCATIONS

You will need to indicate on your courses, each of the locations you offer delivery of that course – this could be different campus locations or may be when you work in partnership with a franchise provider.

Before you can add these locations to a course itself you will need to ensure they have been set up under the Locations tab on CMS.

When adding your locations, you will be asked to provide a postcode, and this helps us to determine the additional London funding element for students. Likewise, it is important that you notify us of any location address changes, especially where the uplift element is impacted, and student reassessments are necessary.

Once the locations have been set up you will be able to select the relevant locations when creating your course.

Unfortunately, at this point in time, you cannot add or delete a location from a course once it is active so bear in mind you will need to create a new version of the course to cater for the correct locations.

SLIDE 49: FRANCHISE PARTNERSHIPS –

Franchise arrangements are used when a lead provider (the franchisor) enters into an agreement with another provider (the franchisee).

Under this agreement, the franchisee will deliver a course on behalf of the lead provider. The franchisee may deliver all or part of a programme that the franchisor (the lead provider)

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approves and owns.

The lead provider keeps overall control of the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance. The lead provider must add the course on CMS. Students will apply for funding at the lead provider, and all tuition fee loan payments will be made to the lead provider.

Going forward, for any new franchise partnership arrangements, we'll organise a meeting with you and the franchisee to outline the service standards requirements and ensure that there is a general understanding of dependencies and accountability.

It's important to remember that English and Welsh course designation conditions are different for franchise arrangements and it is your responsibility to ensure you check these before adding your courses to CMS.

SLIDE 50: FRANCHISABLE LOCATIONS

This franchise location indicator is an enhancement made to CMS which gives HEPs the opportunity to manage their locations with franchisees.

Any campus that an HEP has will now have an additional column with this indicator, this will allow you to decide which campuses other HEPs can see when adding their franchise locations to CMS.

Only locations that have 'yes' ticked will be able to be seen by other providers when searching for franchise locations.

SLIDE 51: FRANCHISABLE LOCATIONS

The indicator can be edited by the HEP at the point of creating the location, or at any time by unticking the franchise location box. We would expect only locations where active franchise partners are using the campus to be ticked.

Validation within CMS will alert if indicator is being changed to no but the location is being used elsewhere. We would expect the HEP to contact their franchise partner and/or SLC if there was a concern about the location being used incorrectly.

SLIDE 52: QUALIFICATIONS

When adding a new course, you will see a drop-down list showing you all the available qualification types – please make sure to select the relevant qualification.

There are a couple of qualifications in particular we wanted to highlight to you as these have caused quite a lot of confusion.

Firstly, you will see there are several different education qualifications.

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The Postgraduate ITT with QTS qualification MUST only be used by School Centred Initial Teacher Training Providers.

All other Providers should select one of the options shown on the screen as most appropriate.

Secondly, English domiciled students studying a pre-registered, full time, in attendance, level 7, Allied Health Profession course that is at least 2 years long are now entitled to Undergraduate support.

As these English domiciled students are classed as undergraduates you will need to ensure you only set the course up at Undergraduate Level of Study not Postgraduate.

When we come out to you for Full time undergraduate course collection you will be able to add these at the same time – look for the qualification type Postgraduate Healthcare in the drop-down box.

But remember this does not apply to your students from the other domiciles who will still need to apply as Postgraduate students.

SLIDE 53: LOWER FEE LIMIT FOUNDATION YEARS

AY 25/26 will see the introduction of new lower-fee limits for "classroom-based" foundation years, with a maximum fee limit of £5,760.

The term "classroom-based" refers to subjects currently in OfS Group D. The course content is taught in a classroom setting and does not include laboratory, studio, or fieldwork elements.

Courses to which this lower fee limit applies will be determined in reference to the list of HECOS codes under the CAH 03 (Common Aggregated Hierarchy 3) specifications.

All other foundation years will continue to be charged at the higher-fee foundation year study limit which has a maximum fee limit of £9,535.

SLIDE 54: FOUNDATION YEARS WITH MULTIPLE HECOS CODES

UG courses with an integrated foundation year can be assigned multiple HECoS codes (up to a maximum of 5).

Where a course with an integrated foundation year has been assigned multiple HECoS codes which are a combination of both lower fee and higher fee, the lower fee cap of £5,760) should be applied. This is if more than 50% are lower-fee subject HECoS codes.

SLIDE 55: HIGHER TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS

Now we will move on to look at Higher technical qualifications.

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Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) are eligible for student finance support. Volumes are increasing year on year with 115 providers offering 759 HTQ courses in AY 24/25

These are level 4 or 5 qualifications approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE).

English students may be entitled to Part-Time Maintenance Loans for these courses. You must add the HTQ attribute so we can correctly assess them.

SLIDE 56: FEES

Another area that you will need to review and update each year is your Fees.

Your Provider Fee Cap is set by the relevant designatory authority, and a limit is set for both Full Time and Part Time courses. You cannot amend this, nor can you add course fees higher than this at any time.

However, you can and must amend the fees downwards, if need be, where policy regulations limit the amount, you are entitled to   - this can the case with final year caps and certain placement/study abroad courses.

CMS captures your Fee Cap which is presented to students on their online application form. If you charge fees higher than the fee cap, it is your responsibility to inform the student of the variation in fees being charged.

There may also be instances, where you as a Provider offer the course at a lower fee, maybe for Year 0 or Foundation Years or where an internal decision has been taken and you can alter the fee for the course, or a specific year of the course as required.

When amending the fees, it will apply to all students on this course or course year so in cases where you are making an exception or an adjustment to a fee which you have only agreed with a specific student remember these will need to be adjusted via a Fee CoC not via CMS.

SLIDE 57: ARB Accreditation Reminder

Now a reminder about ARB accreditation and how it impacts eligibility for student funding.

DfE, Welsh Government, and DfE Northern Ireland have confirmed that only undergraduate architecture degree courses with HECoS codes under CAH3 Code 'Architecture' are exempt from ELQ rules.

ARB-accredited Part 2 courses remain eligible for undergraduate support. Students will meet the single-course requirement if they complete a Part 1 undergraduate architecture course leading to qualification as an architect and then progress to an ARB-accredited Part 2 postgraduate MArch course within the defined timeframe, usually three years.

However, students who studied a non-architecture course first will not meet the single-course requirement and will only be eligible for postgraduate funding.

This distinction is important for providers when setting up courses in CMS to ensure students receive the correct funding entitlement.

SLIDE 58: PART TIME UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Next, we are going to look at where there are differences for your part time undergraduate students and how to upload this information on CMS.

Before you upload a part time course you might be asking what constitutes a part-time course…?

As a general rule a full-time course normally requires students to study for at least 24 weeks - full definitions are on the Practitioners website and by process of elimination, if the course does not meet the guidelines of a full-time course, then it is considered to be a part-time course.

To be eligible for part time tuition fee funding a student must be studying at a minimum intensity of 25%.

The course duration is captured on CMS as the Full Time Equivalent so think about the length of the full time course and set it up on CMS like this – for example, if the student is studying a four year degree they can have up to 16 years support but you show this on CMS as a 4 year full time equivalent duration – you do not enter the number of years that the student is planning to study part time.

SLIDE 59: FULL TIME EQUIVALENT DURATIONS

As a guide, the table displayed

illustrates the most common durations for full-time courses. This should help you when entering your part time courses.

SLIDE 60: PART TIME CREDIT VALUE

When it comes to maintenance loan and grant support for part time students the assessment is based on their intensity of study, so we need to work out the number of credits the student is studying.

However, we pick this up from their application form. For the purposes of entering the credits

on CMS we actually need to know the number of credits for the ENTIRE course so for example if you have a 3-year degree this is normally 360 credits.

Please don't enter the number of credits for an individual year of study or that you expect any particular student to be studying in that year part time.

Now, let's move on now to Postgraduate Masters courses.

SLIDE 61: POSTGRADUATE LOANS BY DOMICILE

Postgraduate master's courses need to be added to CMS differently dependent upon domicile and the relevant policy regulations.

English and Welsh students need only apply once for funding for the duration of their studies and will receive a loan as a contribution towards their costs – there is no fee loan available for Providers.

English and Welsh postgraduate courses can be added together on CMS for full time courses, but we will need separate English and Welsh versions for part time master's courses, and we'll explain the reason for this shortly.

Scottish Postgraduate courses attract a partial tuition fee loan and a partial living cost loan. You may remember that Scottish Postgraduate courses used to be added as Undergraduate level of funding however please remember these must now be added as Postgraduate.

The Northern Irish Postgraduate support package is a tuition fee loan only product.

SLIDE 62: ENGLAND AND WALES

When you select the England/Wales radio button during the initial course set up the designation is automatically selected for both domiciles. Please check the policy regulations before saving a course to ensure this works for your specific course.

SLIDE 63: ENGLAND AND WALES

As we have said the postgraduate loan is payable to the student, so the term dates drive the payment dates for their 3 instalments of each year of study.

We realise that a lot of these full-time courses run for less than 2 years so to cater for this we have amended the drop-down duration to months. This gives you the flexibility to accurately reflect your course duration.

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In cases where year 2 of study is a shorter period, you should still set 3 terms split evenly across that shorter period so for example a 15-month course only leaves 3 months to be studied in year 2 so you could have three 'one month' terms.

From the student's perspective they would still receive 50% of their funding in Year 1 and 50% split across 3 payments in the remaining 3 months of study in year 2.

You also have the option to add up to 12 intakes for each course, again to give you flexibility in offering various start dates to suit your students.

However, remember that once you have added intakes and the course has been saved, they cannot be amended so you won't be able to delete or add any further intakes – this may result in you having to create new courses as required.

The qualification is quite straightforward – you only have to indicate whether the student is studying a taught or research masters.

Duration is more complicated.

Full Time is treated the same for both England and Wales - the duration of an eligible course can be either 1 or up to 2 years long.

However, as we said earlier, for part time courses, due to the differing policy regulations you will have to add these courses on CMS separately.

For English domiciled students the part time duration is treated in the same way as that of your part time undergraduate courses, the duration is captured as the full time equivalent – you only need to think about the equivalent full-time course that you offer and enter the duration as either 1- or 2-year full time equivalent.

However, for Welsh students, the duration is the number of years the student is actually studying part time – so, there is no requirement for full time equivalent.

For example, in this case, a student studying the equivalent of a 1-year full time course would be allowed 2 years to study this part time so enter this as 2 years duration no full time equivalent.

Something else that comes up each year. Our CMS team picked up some errors where Providers offered a full-time version of a course but also added a part time course over 3 years duration with no full time equivalent – this in in breach of policy regulations and all students on these courses were made ineligible for funding and the courses had to be closed. Please note you cannot offer this option if you have a full-time version of the course.

SLIDE 64: BEST PRACTICE

Finishing off Postgraduate Masters for England and Wales, we want to share some best

practice.

It's important to remember that, even thought a student only applies once at the start of their studies for funding.

To receive payments each year, we need to have the student linked to an open active course so you must ensure that each year, you rollover the course to keep it active. We have seen a large number of courses that have not been saved moving into 24/25 which means our CMS team have had to contact providers to advise that students will not get paid until this happens.

Do not close
a course. Even if you are planning to send a withdrawal for the only student remaining on that course the course needs to remain open for SLC to action this CoC.

The best practice to ensure that no new students apply to a course that you no longer wish to offer is to set the available course years to 'No Students' – any students currently linked to that course will still continue to receive funding so it will not impact them at all.

SLIDE 65: DOMICILE NORTHERN IRELAND
As mentioned, the NI postgraduate loans policy differs as the loan is a tuition fee loan payable to Providers.
It also has a wider selection in terms of qualification options as both Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas are also eligible.
Course duration can be up to 3 years, either full or part time.
The main difference though, when uploading a course is that we do require you to enter the Fees for the course – There is a loan of £6,500 available per course, over the duration of the full course, and this is paid to you, the Provider, based on confirmation of attendance each year.
Also, whilst this impacts your students, please remember this is not an apply once product like England/Wales so your students will have to make a new application for each year of study.
From AY 24/25 the same funding package is available for NI students studying in ROI. For those ROI providers, you will need to convert the course fee from euros into pounds sterling when entering courses into CMS. Exchange rates will be confirmed in due course.

SLIDE 66: DOMICILE SCOTLAND

Postgraduate Funding for Scottish students is available for Postgraduate Diplomas, as well as Research or Taught Postgraduate Masters courses.

In terms of duration, a Postgraduate Diploma would be studied over 1 year, and Part Time can be either 2 years or 3 years.

For Postgraduate Masters, either Research or Taught, a Full Time Course can be studied over either 1 or 2 years, and Part Time can be studied over 2,3 or 4 years.

Postgraduate support is extended to courses at validated private providers throughout the UK.

In terms of Fees, enter the full course fee amount and if your course is more than one year in duration, split your fees equally across all years of the course.

We can now look at Postgraduate Doctoral courses in a bit more detail.

SLIDE 67: POSTGRADUATE DOCTORAL COURSE

These are only available in England and Wales and when setting them up on CMS you will find it is very similar to what you have to do for master's courses.

One of the biggest issues we found during course validation was the use of generic titles such as PHD - please don't do this as it causes problems linking the student application, in fact, the policy regulations are very specific about this too and the importance of having dedicated courses set up.

There is only one qualification type that you need to select irrespective of study methods so the main difference is the duration as eligible courses must be between 3 and 8 years in length.

You will find more information on the policy criteria to determine this course length on our CMS guidance should you need it.

SLIDE 68: RIGHT FIRST TIME ERRORS

When we spoke earlier about the Service Standards, we reiterated the importance of submitting your courses within the specified deadlines but also the need for 100% accuracy before the application launch dates.

We know that you will all be striving to meet these standards. However, realistically, we appreciate that mistakes happen, and even with our validation, that these errors might not always be picked up.

With the implications that this can have on student's entitlement, we need you to be aware of

the correct process to rectify these and notify us as soon as possible.

SLIDE 69: COURSE CHANGES

In addition, we also know that sometimes, internal decisions are made at institution level, which affect the course information you have already provided, and amendments may be required.

Not all information can be edited once the course is live on our systems and it also varies depending on product type and domicile. You will find further guidance on editing courses on our website.

The main areas you will most likely need to change, and can edit yourselves are course name, fees, and term dates - although, with term dates, please note you cannot amend the start month of a course. You must, in the first instance, before any changes are made, contact SLC.

Whilst course name changes themselves don't impact on the student assessment or entitlement and are not classed as errors it is worth highlighting that this year to date there have been over 9800 course name changes. This is 6% lower than last year, but these are end of year course changes that would affect students.

This is an example of the late internal decision making and does create administrative work for you and SLC. Please try to only amend course names if it is absolutely vital.

It is best practice to have a discussion with your Account Manager, particularly if you are planning to make major changes or if large volumes of courses are affected.

Whatever changes you make, please ensure you complete a change log and email our Practitioners Team so they can have any affected students reassessed.

We have spent some time looking at the key information you need to be aware of and pointers to look out for to add or update your courses each year successfully.

Now let's look at what you need to do should you have to amend your course details.

Where possible, all course changes should be made at least 2 weeks before the launch of the student application cycle, to ensure that entitlement is correct ahead of confirmation of registration or attendance. Otherwise, it creates an unnecessary distraction for students and may impact their overall experience.

From now on, for changes that you are planning post launch, you must contact us beforehand using the SSIN queries email address and you will be asked to complete a separate form for review. We will review and consider the rationale for the change, before coming back to you to agree on, for example, the best way to handle communications with students or any similar best practice advice.

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SLIDE 70: QUERIES AND GUIDANCE

We are nearing the end of our webinar presentation now so before we turn to questions from the audience, we wanted to leave you with some helpful contacts.

SLIDE 71: FURTHER GUIDANCE You will find guidance documents for CMS as well as all our other services, on our HEP Services website at the address shown on the screen now. You can contact our Partners Support Desk colleagues, either by telephone or email and they will be happy to assist you.

And lastly, of course please don't hesitate to get in touch with your Regional HEP Account Manager at any time should you wish to discuss any concerns or issues you may have – we are here to help you.

SLIDE 72: QUESTION TIME

Thank you for joining us and taking the time to go through today's session. We've covered a lot of important updates and best practices, and now we'd like to open the floor for your questions.

This next stage is a live Q&A, so please feel free to ask about anything we've discussed today—whether it's timelines, course collection, LLE changes, or any other topic. Our team is here to provide clarity and guidance, so don't hesitate to raise your queries.

Q&A SESSION

Bev McDonald

Great, thanks, so let's kick off with our first question.

And our first question has come through from Susie, thank you Susie.

And Susie is saying, from recent press coverage, can you clarify the position on weekend courses and their eligibility for fees and maintenance funding please?

Well thanks for that Susie, yes, some of you may have seen that recently in the press. Our HEP guidance does actually cover that scenario quite specifically, so for a course to be covered as 'in attendance' it needs regular attendance on that course to be deemed 'in-person,' so if that course only has weekend study on campus, then this would mean that the course would be distance learning only. As I say, our guidance on the HEP service website does cover that so if you want to take a look at that as well

just to digest it further, then please do so. Thanks.

Sam Stokell

Okay, thanks Bev, the next question we have is from Alan, and Alan is asking, 'We've been contacted recently advising that our courses were not eligible for Welsh students due to the fact they were being franchised out to a non OfS provider, could you provide more detail on what actions we should take?

Yes absolutely Alan, thanks for that question, a couple of points probably to make here, We did cover the CMS webinar around the Welsh designation, but before you were to add a course to CMS you would need to reach out to Medr, for that specific designation, the CMS service leads who you might be familiar with are SLC who are part of our Courses Management Team, have already been in touch with those impacted providers on what actions they should take and if you are needing to make any changes or any corrections to your courses we are asking that where possible these are done ahead of our course code collection launch in January.

Bev McDonald

Okay, the next question then is from Jim, and Jim has said, Hi thanks for broadcast. I've noticed from looking at CMS recently that the provider page now includes a cost per credit. Please can you explain what this means?

Well first of all, good Spot Jim. You've obviously been casting your eye over CMS, and we have been starting to make changes on CMS ready for LLE. So for those of you who came along to any of the roadshows that we did recently, the LLE awareness seminars,

If you come along to the courses session, you may have heard in there a lot about how LLE will be moving towards cost per credit, rather than a total fee, so the work that's going on behind the scene within CMS at the moment is gearing up for that, we heard a lot about timeline and plans, making sure that our systems were ready for LLE development and that's just one of the key parts so don't worry about this for the moment that will all become clear when we roll out the CMS training with you later next year.

Sam Stokell

Okay our next question is from Ben, and Ben is asking in relation to the increase in fees for 26/27 please can you just clarify if we are able to apply this to new and returning students?

So, in short, Ben, the answer is yes. However, there are a few things that you will need to consider. You will need to have a look at your own internal fee policy and what is in your

Access and Participation Plan. And we would ask that, again, you do this ahead of course collection for 26-27. Ideally, any sort of changes to the uplift in your fees, again, we would ask that these are signed off and agreed before course collection just so we can avoid any retrospective reassessments later down the line, should you need to make any changes to your course details.

Bev McDonald

Okay, next question is from Holly.

Hi there, it was a very useful presentation. Thank you very much, Holly. But some of my colleagues were unable to make it today. Will the presentation be made available afterwards for others to see?

Great question, Holly. Yes, it absolutely will. Our aim will be to have the presentation, the slides that we went through today uploaded to our website within the coming weeks. And what we'll also do is we'll be preparing the question and answer document, our FAQ, from the questions today and those that we won't get through in the time today. But they will be uploaded probably towards the new year. So you'll have the slides available first and then the questions to accompany them into the new year. So yes, your colleagues, and if you wanted to watch it again, if you enjoyed it that much, it will be available for you in the next few weeks.

Sam Stokell

Okay, so the next question is from Freya. Freya is asking, please can I just check, am I adding returning and other non-English domicile courses for all terms now, and then just for English students starting from January 2027 later in the year?

So yeah, great question, Freya. You know, we've obviously covered quite a bit on LLE and we know that there's still a lot of questions out there. But yes, you're absolutely right. You will add courses for new English domiciled students starting from January 2027 when our LLE course collection window opens in June 2026. Thanks.

Bev McDonald

The next question we have is from John. And John is asking, are the HECOS codes that identified reduced Foundation Year fees in a 25-26 undergraduate course collection still the same for the 26-27 course collection?

The short answer to that, John, is yes. You will have seen the list published and we linked that within our guidance. So that will still be available and going forward for the new

academic year course collection, those codes will remain the same
and you'll be able to review them just as you did for the previous
course collection.

Sam Stokell

Okay, great. The next question is from David, and David is asking, will you be able to send through a copy of the academic year timeline for our reference?
What's going to happen, David, like Bev mentioned, we know a lot of the information in the slides, especially the likes of the academic year timeline, is vital and can be really useful for yourselves and colleagues. So, whilst we won't send out specific or individual slides, like Bev said, a copy of the slides will be hosted on our HEP services website along with FAQs shortly thereafter. So, please feel free to access those slides, save them down and disseminate whatever information you need to from them.

Bev McDonald

Thanks. Neil has come through with our next question. Will we need to provide any early course information in June 2026 if our first intake for LLE students isn't until September 2027?
Really good question, because we know not everybody has January start courses. So no, you won't need to. We will be communicating further about our engagement plan, which will include full CMS training. And that will go over everything that you will need to do in terms of adding those courses for LLE students and those courses. So yes, we'll be in touch but don't worry, you will have that extra time.

Sam Stokell

So the next question that has come through is from Beth, and Beth is asking, please can you provide exact dates for the course collection schedules opening and when they need to be completed by. Generic months make it very hard for us to plan workload across busy time frames.
Great question, Beth, and completely understand that you know, you want to forecast resource and things like that to allow you to upload your courses on time. And as you can appreciate, our course collection is reliant on activities such as system testing, fee policy and regulatory policy being laid, all of which does impact our course collection. However, at the moment, indicatively, can I add, we are planning to launch course collection week commencing the 5th of January with the view to open in the students

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application mid-March. So, that would be the timeline and the deadline we would ask you to work towards in terms of uploading your undergraduate courses.

Thanks.

Bev McDonald

Okay, next question is from Laura. And Laura has asked, we envisage our fees increasing to £9790. However, this won't be agreed by the Board until late January 26,
and therefore, not as per the APP. Will the fee cap in CMS remain £9535? Am I best to submit with the current fee, then update the fee when approved, which will be prior to the application open date?

This is a really good question, Laura, and I'm sure lots of you are probably thinking the same thing. We know that it can take some time for decisions to be made on fees. The work behind the scenes is already happening in terms of CMS and updating those provider fee caps. Now, what I would ask you to do, Laura, and anybody else who's listening who is in the same position, we'd really prefer you to wait until you had a signed off definite fee before uploading those courses. Sam gave you an indicative date of when we're hopefully going to be looking at opening course collection. But please don't go in with an unknown fee at that point if it hasn't been signed off. We talked a lot in the webinar about late changes and how this can impact reassessments, leading to delays for students, for yourselves and us. So, we'd really prefer you to hold off
entering those courses and those fees until you know for definite and they've been signed off. One thing I would say, I'm not sure who your account manager is, but please keep in touch with them once course collection has opened and you have maybe an indicative deadline for when you think you're going to be able to update those courses with those fees. As I say, keep in touch with your account manager. They can then be liaising with the CMS team so that they'll know for definite what's happening and when we can expect those courses.

Sam Stokell

And Danielle is asking, will we have access to either of the new LLE system or tabs? It would be handy to have access earlier so we can get a feel for the systems and train the required staff before we have to go in and do the course submissions.

So, yeah, great question, Danielle. Just a couple of things to point out. We don't have a test system at SLC. So unfortunately, we're not able to give you early access to that. But what I do just want to highlight, we will be coming out in the spring to deliver a round of UK-wide

CMS training, where we will be training as many of you within the sector on what CMS is going to look like ahead of LLE course collection, what you yourselves are going to need to do and be aware of. So, the ask here from us at SLC is that you sign up as soon as possible. We won't notify you until later, obviously into the new year, but as soon as we come out with those communications around the training, please, please do sign up and that will then allow you to go on and train your necessary staff also.

Bev McDonald

Our next question is from Diane and Diane has asked, that CMS will provide a pop-up message to let you know when you have submitted a bank holiday start date and not submit the course. Often I've done this by mistake. Does this count as an error?

So I think, Diane, I'll answer this in two parts. You're absolutely right. If you enter a bank holiday start date, you will get the pop-up message that you saw in the webinar to ask that that's correct. We do understand that some courses do start on a bank holiday, but that validation will ask you to confirm that. So if you've confirmed that by mistake, you tick that box and you realise and you haven't submitted the course, you can then go back, untick and correct the date and then you submit the course with the correct date, then no, absolutely that wouldn't count as an error. And that's exactly why that

validation box is there, to make you check the date. If, however, you have ticked the box and confirmed that yes, it is a bank holiday start date, you then continue and go through to submit the course. Once that course is submitted with a bank holiday date, if that's incorrect and you then need to change it, then yes, that will count as an error and that will flag on our reporting. So, hopefully that covers both bases for you.

Sam Stokell

Okay, we just have time for one last question, and that question is from Carrie. And Carrie is asking, we are new to using the SLC systems. Where is the CMS portal, please? The user guide says I should see a link on the HE gateway, but I'm not seeing it.

So welcome, Carrie, to the wonderful world of working with student loans. So, a couple of things just to mention here. You, as a new provider, will be given a dedicated account manager. Might be me, might be Bev. So if one of us, if somebody hasn't reached out to you yet to introduce ourselves as your account manager, I am more than sure that will be happening shortly. And what will follow on from that introduction is a face-to-face visit with yourselves as a new provider where we will offer some niche training around what you need to do in terms of working with SLC. In answer to your question,

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where is the CMS portal; it is on our HE portal gateway, and you can find it by going to HEInfo.co.uk but again, an account manager will be in touch with you in due course to set up that introductory meeting and arrange some specific training for you.

So, thank you so much for all of your questions today. We have now run out of time, but as we've said previously, we will take away any unanswered questions and the answers will be provided in the FAQ document, which will be published in the coming weeks, as you've heard throughout this webinar. So lastly, just thank you so much for your time today. I hope you have a great Christmas and a very happy new year and we look forward to seeing you all in 2026.

For best practice and to avoid any technical errors we advise that you save this document on to your desktop.

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