

User Access

Q: We are new to using the SLC systems. Where is the CMS portal please? The user guide says I should see a link on HE Gateway but I'm not seeing it.

A: The CMS link only appears once your account has been given CMS permissions. If you're new to SLC systems, ask your HE Gateway Administrator to add CMS access; then log out and back in. If the link still doesn't appear after access is confirmed, contact the SLC Provider Support Helpdesk.

Accuracy

Q: CMS will provide a pop-up message to let you know when you have submitted a bank holiday start date - often I have done this by mistake. Does this count as an error?

A: It is a Right First Time (RFT) error if the course is set up with a start date that does not reflect the actual teaching start, such as a bank holiday when no delivery occurs. The error is the inaccurate start date, which can affect student expectations and payment processing on a non-working day.

Q: For very minor course title changes (such as replacing '&' with 'and'), is there a requirement to do a proforma course change? If not, what's the threshold when we need to fill one out?

A: Editing course details after students have submitted applications can affect their assessment. If you need to edit a course after we've assessed students, you must contact ssin_queries@slc.co.uk. You will be asked to complete a course change form before making any updates in CMS.

Minor title changes of this nature should be avoided altogether after course upload. Even small, non-substantive amendments can trigger a reassessment review for all students attached to the course across all years, with no material benefit to students or the provider. Providers should only submit course changes where the amendment is significant and could reasonably affect a student's entitlement (for example, changes to award, structure, duration, or mode of study). Cosmetic or minor editorial changes do not meet this threshold and should not be progressed.

Course Collection

Q: 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?

A: This functionality supports Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) course information uploads. Including cost per credit category during course upload ensures CMS is prepared to hold required funding data and is future-proofed for LLE delivery.

Q: Are the HECoS codes that identified reduced Foundation Year fees in the 2025/6 UG collection still the same for the 2026/7 collection?

A: Providers should continue using the same HECoS codes to determine whether a Foundation Year attracts the reduced fee cap or the standard Undergraduate (UG) fee cap. As a result, CMS validation and fee-cap logic for the 2026/27 UG collection should align with the 2025/26 HECoS reduced-fee mappings.

Q: Will the courses rollover into the CMS 26/27 as unsaved and we can then save, or will we have to add them afresh?

A: In preparation for the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), CMS will stop accepting saved courses for new English-domiciled students starting from 1 January 2027. A dedicated course collection will open in June 2026 for these students, as they will fall under LLE. Providers will still be able to roll over existing courses starting from January 2027 for Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish students, as well as returning English-domiciled students, and review and save these as usual in CMS.

Q: Can we please have the specific deadlines for the different course submissions, as the fact that they are all later this year means that they will clash with business-critical processes taking place in February and June, We therefore need to know exact deadlines to ensure we can plan our workloads and ensure that we can provide the data to you on time.

A: We recognise that the later timing of the 2026 course collections may overlap with business-critical activity. At present, exact submission deadlines have not yet been finalised, but a dedicated LLE course collection will open in June 2026. Confirmed submission windows and deadlines will be communicated as early as possible through SLC CMS and LLE guidance, to allow providers sufficient time to plan workloads and ensure timely data submission.

Q: Please can you provide exact dates for the course collection schedules opening and when they need to be completed by. Generic months makes it very hard for us to plan workload across busy timeframes.

A: You can now submit AY 2026/27 full-time undergraduate courses in CMS. Courses from AY 2025/26 have been rolled over to the AY 2026/27 tab, and you can also submit postgraduate master's courses for Scottish-domiciled students. All these submissions must be completed by 20 February 2026.

A separate LLE course collection window for new English-domiciled students will open in June 2026. Exact opening and closing dates are not yet confirmed but will be published through SLC CMS and LLE guidance as soon as they are finalised to support provider workload planning.

Q: FT UG and Scottish PG course collection is opening in January with a submission date 4-week prior service launch. Please can you confirm the expected service launch date?

A: FT Undergraduate and Scottish Postgraduate course collection opened in January. The service launch is now likely to be in March, but this is not yet confirmed.

Q: If our courses are England and Wales, will we need to create new LLE for England and new CMS for Wales?

A: Yes. You'll need an LLE version for England (new English students from January 2027) and a CMS version for Wales to continue supporting Welsh-domiciled students.

Q: Please outline what is an intercalated course? I am not familiar with the term.

A: Intercalation is an additional year, or period of study taken within an existing degree (commonly Medicine or Dentistry), after which the student returns to complete their main course.

Q: Confirmation on Foundation year lower or higher fee limit. In 2025/6, we followed the guidance where, when a course had 2 HECoS codes, if one was a higher fee and one was a lower fee, i.e. a 50/50 split, we were advised we could charge the overall higher fee. It sounded like guidance is where there is a 50 / 50 split, you should now charge the lower fee. Can you confirm this is correct?

A: If a foundation year has more than 50% lower-fee (classroom-based) HECoS codes, the lower fee cap applies.

If 50% or fewer of the HECoS codes are lower-fee — including a 50/50 split with one higher-fee and one lower-fee code — the higher fee cap applies.

Q: I work for a SCITT. We do not have or intend to get Welsh designation. Last year when setting up the courses, we could set them up once for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Will this need to be different this year? Or will this option be available.

A: For 2026/27, this remains true assuming you have no courses starting from January onwards.

If you do have January starts, courses for new starters and returners would need to be handled differently, in line with LLE requirements, rather than being set up as a single course in the same way as previous years.

Q: If we have a FT and PT version of the same course, are you saying students can apply for the FT course (on a PT basis)? Or do we need to have a PT version of the course for them to apply to?

A: Under LLE, funding is based on credits and study intensity, not a formal full-time/part-time label.

However, providers still need to structure and record courses clearly in CMS, and students can't switch intensity within a single course record. If FT and PT routes differ in delivery or limits, separate course records are still required.

Q: We might open a London facility for students to study there rather than travel to York. Will that attract more funding for them, and if that's the case, do we need a separate course for them to apply to?

A: Opening a London study location means students based there would be assessed under the London maintenance loan rules, which allow a higher maximum loan than study outside London, reflecting higher living-cost assumptions. In this scenario, a separate course is required because the provider does not currently have this location listed. If the London location had been set up from the start, it could have been included under the same course using different intakes, provided the academic content and award remain unchanged.

Q: If our course starts in both September and January, how will the roll over work with LLE in January 2027? Do we have to set up a separate version so that we roll the Sept course in CMS and then the January LLE one?

A: You will need two course records in CMS. The September start (before 1 January 2027) should continue to be rolled over as a non-LLE course. The January start (on or after 1 January 2027) must be set up as a separate LLE course record and cannot be rolled over from the September version. However, the January course will still need to be rolled over in the current CMS for Rest of the UK students and English returners, if applicable. This guidance assumes the scenario relates to new courses being created.

Q: Will we be able to apply the preregistration attribute to the degree awarding years of an allied health course being delivered as an integrated foundation degree?

A: The pre-registration attribute must only be applied to the specific year(s) that directly lead to first professional registration with the relevant statutory regulator. Where an allied health course is delivered as an integrated foundation degree, the degree-awarding years that are not themselves pre-registration should not have the pre-registration attribute applied, even if the overall programme culminates in registration eligibility.

In practice, apply the pre-registration flag only to the approved pre-registration element(s) of the programme, and not to earlier or degree-award years that sit outside the regulator-approved pre-registration stage.

Q: Some of our courses include a placement year. Students have a window of time in which they can start their placement (i.e. the actual start date for each student could vary by several weeks). How would you recommend the start dates are entered for these courses?

A: We ask that you enter one standard start date in CMS for the placement year, using the earliest expected start date for the cohort. This should represent the formal academic start of the placement year, not individual students' varying workplace start dates, which are managed through attendance and progression processes rather than course setup.

Q: Will we need to provide any LLE course information in June 2026 if our first intake for LLE students isn't until September 2027?

A: If your first intake of new English-domiciled LLE students is not until September 2027, you do not need to submit LLE course information in the June 2026 collection. Course data is only required ahead of your planned LLE intake, while CMS continuation for returning English students and Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Irish students should continue as normal.

Course Eligibility

Q: From recent press coverage, can you clarify the position on weekend courses and their eligibility for fees and maintenance funding please?

A: For the course to be deemed in person it must be “regular” attendance but that does not include weekends. If the study in campus is solely at the weekend, then this is to be classed as a distance learning course.

Q: Please can there be clearer examples of policy/eligibility for non-standard courses e.g. differences by domicile, part time, distance learning - what support would someone get (if anything) if studying a for a Certificate of HE, part time, distance learning? Does this differ by domicile?

A: Eligibility for non-standard courses (such as CertHEs, part-time or distance learning) depends on domicile, study intensity and delivery mode. For England-domiciled students, a part-time CertHE with at least 25% intensity is generally eligible for a Tuition Fee Loan, but maintenance support is not available for distance-learning courses except where the student cannot attend in person due to a disability. Students from other UK domiciles are assessed under their own funding bodies' rules, and international students are not eligible for public student finance.

From January 2027, the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) applies to new England-domiciled learners and will fund full courses and modules at Levels 4–6 on a credit-based basis, including part-time study. Maintenance support will remain linked to in-person attendance and personal circumstances. More detailed eligibility rules and worked examples are available in Student Loans Company (SLC) guidance, including:

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

<https://www.heinfo.slc.co.uk/lle>

Q: Will students starting a 1-year DipHE in Jan 27, after completing a CertHE in Dec 26 be classed as LLE for the DipHE? This will be the same for students who complete a Foundation Degree and return to study a top-up (end course).

A: A DipHE starting in January 2027 will be funded under the LLE, even if the student completes a CertHE in December 2026.

The CertHE would remain funded under the current (pre-LLE) HE finance system, while the DipHE would be treated as a new course start on or after 1 January 2027 and therefore fall within the LLE, subject to designation and eligibility.

This is because LLE status is determined by the course start date, not by the learner's previous qualification or funding route. The same applies where any lower-level qualification is completed before January 2027 and a DipHE starts from that point onwards; the DipHE would be LLE-funded, with entitlement reduced to reflect prior loan usage.

Q: Are distance learning post graduate courses eligible for Scottish funding?

A: Scottish-domiciled students can receive SAAS postgraduate tuition-fee loans (up to £7,000) for eligible taught Master's or PG Diploma courses delivered by distance learning, provided the course includes sufficient tutor-led teaching and academic engagement. Living-cost loans are not available for distance learning, and research degrees (e.g. PhDs) are excluded unless they have a substantial taught element.

Designation

Q: 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?

A: For Welsh students to be eligible if your course is franchised out to a non OfS provider, you must seek specific designation from Medr BEFORE you add the course to CMS. Our course service leads have recently reached out to all providers who added courses on to CMS incorrectly, advising of what actions you need to take in order to correct your courses.

Our aim is to correct all incorrect courses at or before rollover. If you are unsure on what you need to do, please contact us, you MUST not rollover incorrect versions for AY 26/27.

Q: What is the Approved category with the OfS in relation to contacting Medr?

A: The Approved category confirms English regulatory status with the OfS, but providers must contact Medr separately where their provision, students, or funding arrangements bring them within Welsh oversight.

Fees

Q: In relation to the increase in fees for 26/27 please can you just clarify if we are able to apply this for new and returning students?

A: Providers can apply the 2026/27 tuition fee increase to both new and returning students, if fees stay within the prescribed caps. For continuing students, any increase must be permitted under the student contract, included within the provider's Access and Participation Plan in place at the point of entry, and compliant with CMA guidance, meaning students cannot be charged more than the lower of the new fee cap or the allowed inflationary uplift.

Q: We envisage our fees increasing to £9790, however, this won't be agreed by the board until late Jan 26 and therefore not as per the APP, will the Fee Cap in the CMS remain as £9535? Am I best to submit with the current fee then update the fee when approved, which will be prior to application open date?

A: As the proposed fee increase has not yet been formally signed off, courses should not be submitted in CMS until fees are finalised. Once Board approval is in place, courses can be submitted with the confirmed fee.

Q: Is the sandwich work placement fee a change in regulations? The fee was zero in previous years I believe.

A: No — this is not a regulatory change. The £0 sandwich placement fee in previous years was a provider choice, not a requirement. Providers have always been able to charge a fee for placement years, provided it is published and within fee-cap rules.

Q: Are fees capped at £9535 for foundation courses and not £9790?

A: For foundation years in non-classroom-based subjects, the fee limit can be up to £9,790 depending on the provider's TEF/APP status. Classroom-based foundation years are capped lower (typically £5,760, subject to TEF/APP status).

LLE Course Collection

Q: For the course collection in June 2026, which courses will need to be input: those starting from January 2027? Is it just spring intake courses & modules?

A: For the June 2026 course collection, providers need to submit all courses and approved modules with a start date from January 2027 onwards for English-domiciled students only. This is not limited to spring-intake courses and includes any LLE-relevant courses or modules expected to start from January 2027.

Q: Please can I just check am I adding returning and other non-English domiciled courses for all terms now, and then just for English students starting from January 2027 later in the year?

A: Providers should continue to add and maintain courses for returning students and non-English-domiciled students for all terms as part of the standard course collection in January 26. Separately, from the June 2026 course collection, providers should add courses and approved modules specifically for new English-domiciled students starting from January 2027 onwards, to meet LLE requirements.

Q: When will the new LLE platform be available for us to see and use for the new English students for Jan 27 and May 27?

A: The revised gateway functionality will go live from September 2026, coinciding with the opening of LLE applications for English-domiciled students. Training, guidance and technical specification resources will be available throughout 2026 to ensure adequate provider preparation, with the CMS platform available for course collection from June 2026 and providers likely to see incremental changes in the interim.

Q: Will the LLE include postgraduate funding, and will this change how CMS is updated?

A: The Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) will not fund standalone postgraduate Master's (Level 7) courses. It covers Levels 4–6 only, including undergraduate degrees, foundation degrees, HTQs, PGCEs, and integrated Master's, which remain in scope.

Q: How will we be expected to load courses and modules for LLE? As we cannot roll these over

A: LLE courses and modules must be created as new records in CMS—they cannot be rolled over from existing pre-LLE courses. Providers will manually upload LLE parent courses and any associated modules, including required credit values and delivery details, while continuing to roll over existing courses only for students starting before 1 January 2027.

Q: Is there any specific guidance on LLE for Scottish institutions?

A: There is no LLE-specific guidance aimed at Scottish institutions, because the Lifelong Learning Entitlement applies only to learners ordinarily resident in England and only replaces English student finance. Scottish institutions do not need separate LLE regulatory approval, but if they recruit England-domiciled students, they must follow standard SLC / CMS LLE guidance for course loading, credit values and modular provision, in the same way as English providers.

For Scottish-domiciled students, funding remains a devolved matter and continues to be administered by SAAS, with no change under the LLE.

Q: I work within a Scottish University, and I'd wondered about LLE regarding English students. If the courses we provide here are programme related rather than modular. Will I be required to save the courses differently when the LLE collection start time arrives and thereafter?

A: Even if your provision is programme-based rather than modular, courses that are eligible for English-domiciled students under the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) will need to be saved separately in CMS once the LLE collection goes live. From January 2027 starts onwards, LLE courses cannot be rolled over from existing records and must be set up as new LLE course versions, with required details such as credit values and LLE designation

applied.

This applies regardless of whether you actually offer modules to students—the LLE is credit-based for funding purposes, not a requirement to modularise delivery. Note that courses cannot be modularised in Scotland, Northern Ireland, or Wales for English students. Your existing non-LLE course records can continue to be used and rolled over for students starting before January 2027, including Scottish-domiciled students funded by SAAS.

Phasing out

Q: How can we phase out current CMS courses if we still have non-English domicile students on them?

A: In the current CMS, English students will be recorded separately for courses starting after January 2027. For these courses, the only options available for English students will be “Returners” or “No students.” This approach allows you to phase out English students while keeping other domiciles set as “All students.”

Q: Is it still the case that setting a course to 'No students' does not prevent Scottish students from seeing and applying for it?

A: Setting a course to “No students” does not stop Scottish-domiciled applicants from seeing or applying to it.

That setting only blocks non-Scottish recruitment.

Student Eligibility

Q: If a SFE student is currently funded for a course but has a break in study e.g. withdrawn and restarting a new course, would they remain on the original funding scheme or join LLE?

A: An England-domiciled student who withdraws and then starts a new course from 1 January 2027 onwards will move onto the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) rather than remain on the existing Student Finance England (SFE) scheme. Any previous SFE funding is considered when calculating their remaining LLE entitlement.

If the student returns to the same course (or is treated as a continuation) that started before January 2027, they would normally remain on the original SFE funding arrangements, subject to standard break-in-study rules.

Q: So, if we have an English domiciled student undertaking an 'Intercalated' degree as part of their current medicine course on CMS, do they have LLE funding or current funding?

A: An English-domiciled student undertaking an intercalated degree as part of an existing CMS Medicine course will remain on current (pre-LLE HESF) funding, as they are a continuing student. From January 2027, only new English-designated students must be

enrolled on an LLE version of the course, and existing CMS courses cannot be used for them.

Q: Please can you elaborate on the Final Year Fee Rate for students? (50%)

A: The 50% final-year fee rate applies where a student's last year of study is shorter than 24 weeks and involves a reduced amount of teaching or supervised learning. In these cases, the HE provider charges half of the standard annual tuition fee, and any eligible student-finance support is capped at the same 50% level. However, the final year must be longer than 8 weeks to qualify for the 50% rate—if it is 8 weeks or less, the tuition fee and student-finance support will be £0.