



HEI Services Bulletin

Issue 11, May 2010

AY 10/11—SFE Update

Application Status

We are slightly ahead of our forecasts in relation to applications received and significantly ahead of last year which is positive and shows that the key message of “**apply early**” is getting through to new students using our IAG channels, radio messages and help from HEI colleagues. However we have received less applications from returners than were expected.

Whilst overall, these figures are substantially ahead of this time last year, we are still making additional efforts to prompt applications.

How can you help?

Please remind your students to apply before the **deadline (21st May 2010 for continuing, means tested applications and 25th June for new, means tested applications)**. We may need up to 20 working days to receive, process applications and up to 35 to return evidence.

Scanning

The scanning solution continues to work well. The end to end process of receiving forms / evidence etc, imaging, verifying can

take up to 20 working days. Return of evidence can take up to 35 working days. We have amended our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems to give a key message to students who call too soon for us to have processed their evidence.

Income and Identity Evidence

Recent enhancements to the online application system have been introduced and this appears to have improved the student's online experience.

Applications continue to be closely monitored however and colleagues at SFE report that there are still some students and sponsors providing income evidence for FY 09/10 and not FY 08/09 as is required under the prior year tax policy.

Applications can also be dealt with quicker if both sponsors (if applicable) submit their information at the same time and if they submit their information online.

If students or sponsors hold passports which have more than 10 years validity, there is a system issue currently where this will result in an error message and will not allow the details to be submitted online. If students click the “show help” button,

they are advised to complete a “UK Passport Details Form” and send this in.

UK Passport holders do not need to send their actual passport in—we only require the details to validate the passport.

How can you help?

You can help us get the message to students and sponsors that we require **income evidence from FY 08/09** and **UK passport holders do not need to send their actual passports in** unless this is requested at a later date.

Call Handling

Call volumes in April were higher than expected but have now fallen back within the profiled forecast. Many calls are “reassurance” requests and password reset requests have also been common. Students are able to reset their passwords online and should be encouraged to do so.

Provisional Evidence Assessments

There are some AY 09/10 applications which have a current status of provisional evidence. Whilst this has implications for students in terms of national support, we are well aware that some institutions will not

make HEI Bursary Payments until the evidence is fully verified.

An audit of these cases was undertaken with a view to considering various courses of action. The audit review concluded that there was insufficient evidence logged for us to alter the status of these applications from provisional to full evidence without further income checks.

The current approach is therefore to write to these students as they apply for AY 10/11 to advise them that we still require income evidence in respect of AY 09/10. In addition students can be advised that they can call 0845 300 50 90 to establish what has yet to be submitted. If HEIs are able to help students in scanning documents if required, then these can be emailed to SFD_P.U_Enquiries@slc.co.uk

Please note this mailbox operates on the same basis as other HEI to SLC mailboxes and **must not be given to students**.

Thank you for your co-operation and patience in this matter.

AY 10/11 - Course Collection

There are a number of institutions who appear to have finished inputting their courses for AY 10/11, but are not showing as 100% completed on the reporting function. This gives a distorted picture when reporting to BIS on course collection progress.

Please can you ensure that where you have completed your submission for AY10/11 that you action the following:

Change the predicted number of courses to match the actual entered so that your institution shows as 100% complete

If you have any courses which are completely closed in that no students are studying on any year of the course, these courses

should be marked as closed and promoted to "live" status. Failure to do so will mean that these courses will roll forward to AY 11/12.

Where courses have variations e.g. 3 year and 4 year option, these should be entered as 2 separate entries, similarly with courses which have options of September and January starts.

If any of your partner / franchise institutions have not yet provided their course information for AY 10/11, please could you encourage them to do so as soon as possible.

Repayment Holidays

Colleagues at BIS have asked us to inform you of the following with regards Repayment Holidays:

Repayment holidays (taking a break from making a student loan repayments for up to two years after you leave your course) were due to become available to some students from April 2012.

However a decision has been taken that this will no longer be possible. The case remains that borrowers won't have to make any student loan repayments if they are earning less than £15,000 a year.

This was intended to only be applicable to English domiciled students.

"Phishing" Emails

We are aware that some students have been targeted with "phishing" emails.

These emails look like they have come from Student Finance England and ask students to click on a link to confirm their personal details in order for them to receive payments.

Please could we ask that you help us get the message to students that SFE would not send them an email asking them to confirm their details.

If students receive such an email, **under no circumstances should they respond to this or provide any details.**

Any emails received should be forwarded, if possible, to

security@slc.co.uk to allow us to trace where these have come from.

Students from a small number of HEIs have been specifically targeted over the past few weeks and if this involves your institution, your HEI Relationship Manager will have been in touch to advise you of this. We will continue to do so if any other instances arise.

SAAS Students Bank Details

For HEIs who are Full Administration HEBSS and WBS Users, you may have been experiencing issues in trying to pay bursaries for SAAS students where SLC had not received bank details from SAAS.

We are pleased to inform you that for these customers, SLC are now able to manually update bank details and any SAAS custom-

ers who require to update / provide bank details are able to do this by calling 0845 603 4016.

We have asked SAAS to update their website accordingly.

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Student Applications- 3rd Party Consent to Share

In response to feedback we received during the 09/10 application cycle, we recognise that our HEI colleagues, in attempting to assist their students regarding application queries, felt the current arrangements for enabling consent was unwieldy and obstructive.

As a result, we have consulted with stakeholders in developing an amended process for 10/11 to address these areas whilst exploring further improvements for 11/12.

The outcome is as follows:

- Customer creates own “Consent Password” and telephones or completes the downloadable form to notify SLC
- Consent password is stored against the account of the customer
- Customer gives the password to sponsors, HEI advisor or any other chosen 3rd Party
- In giving an HEI advisor this password, the student is agreeing that any advisor from the HEI can use this. The HEI may wish to note the password on the record of the student
- The HEI advisor, when phoning SLC, will be required to give the following details— Customer Name, CRN or SSN, Customer D.O.B, Consent Password and HEI advisor name

- When telephoning on behalf of a student, please call the Practitioners Helpline on 0845 602 0583 and then press **option 1** to be transferred to someone who can answer your query
- 3rd parties given Consent to Share are required to be named by the customer when they give consent initially, except in the case of the HEI where they can indicate consent to be given to “the advisory team at my university”
- Consent to share is read only—3rd parties cannot make updates to accounts
- To talk to an advisor with regards to DSA, the current process remains whereby students will have to have given consent via the DSA application form
- If you wish to speak to an advisor regarding anything out with DSA then the above process should be followed.

Changes will come into effect on the 1st June. The fastest way to have consent added is for the student to call 0845 300 5090 and once they have given consent, it is effective immediately. Downloadable forms will be available at a later date.

SFE Contacts for HEIs

In previous bulletins, we have provided clarification on mailboxes which can be used for the Business Services Operations team. We thought it may be helpful to clarify SFE email addresses.

Practitioner Queries: SSIN_queries@slc.co.uk

ALF Queries: alf_queries@slc.co.uk

EU Team queries: EU_team@slc.co.uk

Disability Practitioners at HEIs: disability_adviser@slc.co.uk

Needs Assessment Centres: access_centre@slc.co.uk

Submission of Needs Assessment Report via PGP (encryption):
needs_assessment_report@slc.co.uk

Invoice or invoice queries from the university: invoice_team@slc.co.uk

Telephone number for DSA Team for specific queries: 01325 215194

Practitioner Helpline: 0845 602 0583

Please note that these are not to be used by students and are for HEI use only.

Student Information Service

As you will be aware, the new Student Information Services is going live in the Autumn.

We recently sent technical specifications and supporting documents to the primary contact for fees and Change of Circumstances that we currently hold for each institution.

If you require to see this and it has not yet been cascaded to you within your institution then you can find copies on the HE Info Website using the following link:

<http://www.heinfo.slc.co.uk/he-services/student-information-service.aspx>

If you have any further questions regarding the material then please email HEI_Services@slc.co.uk