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Funding Focus – Advanced learner loans – Where to find out more

3 August 2016

Funding Focus provides quick summaries of recent funding developments, or particular aspects of the funding system.

Introduction

Advanced learner loans are available for individuals aged 19 or above to undertake approved qualifications at levels 3 to level 6, at an approved provider in England. Advanced learner loans give individuals access to financial support for tuition costs similar to that available in higher education. They are paid directly to colleges or training organisations on behalf of an individual. They are not means tested or subject to credit checks and any individual who meets the criteria will be able to apply for a loan regardless of their current employment status. To become an approved provider, colleges and training organisations must be approved on the [Register of Training Organisations](#) and in receipt of an advanced learner loans facility agreement with the Skills Funding Agency.

Loans were expanded in 2016/17 so that:

- They are available **19-23** year-olds studying for a repeat level 3 or level 4 qualification (loans were previously only available to 24+ year-olds).
- They are available to those studying for a **level 5 or 6** qualification (loans were previously only available for levels 3 and 4).

Delivery to 19-23 learners, and delivery of level 5 and 6 qualifications, began at the start of the 2016/17 funding year. Applications for the expanded advanced learner loan were open from May 2016 for courses starting from 1 August 2016.

The Skills Funding Agency will cease to allow subcontracting for advanced learner loans programme from the start of the 2017 to 2018 funding year.

This brief guide gives providers links to further information about advanced learner loans including the qualifications eligible, tools and resources from the Student Loans Company to support delivery, information for learners considering taking out a loan or looking to take out a loan, operational, policy and detailed funding information for colleges, training organisations and employers, and information about Pearson qualifications approved for advanced learner loans.

Key links

For providers and learners

- **Qualifications eligible** for advanced learner loans (Skills Funding Agency): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loans-qualifications-catalogue>, and the [funding hub](#)
- **Practitioner site** (Student Loans Company): <http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/further-education/resources.aspx>, provides information about advanced learner loans and useful information, tools and materials including guidance on being a learning provider, factsheets on how advanced



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learner loans work, tools, graphics and guidance for how practitioners can promote advanced learner loans, a guides to how a learner can apply for a advanced learner loan, information about how the advanced learner loan is repaid, and case studies showing how learners and providers can benefit from advanced learner loans. It also includes a learner eligibility tool, links to further support from the Skills Funding Agency and Student Finance England, and more useful links.

For learners

- **Information about taking out advanced learner loans** (BIS): <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans>, provides an overview, what they will receive, eligibility, how to apply, repayments, and the bursary fund.
- **Information about taking out advanced learner loans** (National Career Service): <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/courses/funding/Pages/AdvancedLearnerLoans.aspx>, provides information about how to find out more, how to apply, where to go for impartial money advice, learner case studies, and training provider case studies.

For providers

- **Operational and policy information for colleges, training organisations and employers** for advanced learner loans (Skills Funding Agency), overview, and more detail: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/24-advanced-learning-loans-an-overview>, and <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-24-advanced-learning-loans>
- **Rules for designating qualifications for advanced learner loans** (Skills Funding Agency): https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/510219/AO_Prospectus_v2.pdf
- **Funding guidance, detailed funding rules** (Skills Funding Agency): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loans-funding-rules>
- **Information about the removal of subcontracting** for advanced learner loans from the start of the 2017 to 2018 funding year (Skills Funding Agency): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/advanced-learner-loans-subcontracting>

Pearson qualifications approved for advanced learner loans

Qualifications designated as eligible for advanced learner loans can be found on the [funding hub](#) and on the Skills Funding Agency's [Advanced learner loans qualifications catalogue](#).

Awarding organisations can make submissions for qualifications to be designated for loan funding at the beginning of each month. Pearson publish an update on the [Pearson Funding News page](#) at the beginning of each month which lets you know the qualifications Pearson are currently submitting for advanced learner loan funding. It also includes information on the submission process, and further information and links. If you wish to make a request for Pearson to submit a qualification for loan funding please email funding@pearson.com

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