



Skills Funding
Agency

Funding Rules and Guidance 2013/14 for the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS)

September 2013

Of interest to OLASS providers

Funding rules and guidance 2013/2014 for the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service

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Purpose

1. This document sets out the way in which the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service Phase 4 (OLASS) funding arrangements will work for 2013/2014, from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014. It also provides information and guidance for delivering the service.
2. The document also explains how offenders can access a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan for skills at level 3 and above.

Background

3. Since 2006, we (the Skills Funding Agency, previously called the Learning and Skills Council) have held a budget for OLASS in England. In May 2006, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Ministry of Justice published a review of offender learning – Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation. This recommended a number of changes aimed at reducing reoffending. These changes included:
 - a greater focus on developing skills and routes to employment, especially in the 12 months before prisoners are released;
 - putting prisons in groups, with a designated lead governor co-ordinating activity;
 - a revision of funding to bring allocations for each prison in line with new priorities including funding based on outcomes (enrolments, achievements, success rates and progression);
 - a greater role for lead governors in planning curriculum, being able to meet local needs and understand the job market into which offenders are released; and
 - commissioning new OLASS provision.

Introduction

OLASS funding rules apply to learning and skills OLASS-funded provision for those held in adult prisons in England. They form part of the terms and conditions of the funding agreements and the 24 + Advanced Learning Loans Facility Conditions between the Chief Executive of Skills Funding (the Chief Executive) and all providers of education and training who receive funding from the Chief Executive or a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan (Loan) Facility.

The Chief Executive is a statutory post established by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009 and is the legal entity (the organisation legally entitled to enter into contracts) which enters into funding agreements with providers of education and training.

The terms 'we' and 'Skills Funding Agency' refer to the Chief Executive of Skills Funding and her staff. When we refer to 'you' or 'providers', this includes colleges, training organisations, local authorities and employers who receive funding from us or through a Loan Facility, to deliver education and training.

The funding rules and the funding agreement or the 24+ Advanced Learning Loans Facility Conditions contain the full set of requirements which you as a provider must meet.

We use the term 'funding agreement' to include the financial memorandum, contract for services, conditions of funding grant and the 24+ Advanced Learning Loans Facility Conditions between the Chief Executive of Skills Funding and all providers.

We use the term 'learner' to cover all those who receive education or training we have funded, either directly from the Chief Executive or through a Loan.

OLASS funding follows the same principles, rules and evidence requirements as those in the latest version of Funding Rules 2013/2014.

If other factors apply, due to the nature of OLASS, we have set these out in this document. If providers have specific questions, they should contact their relationship manager.

Eligibility for funding

OLASS funding applies to adults (18 and over) in custody, including prisoners on remand.

Learner eligibility rules concerning where they are ordinarily resident do not apply to OLASS funding. (For a definition of ordinarily resident, see annex 1 in the latest version of Funding Rules 2013/2014).

To reflect how the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) decides which prison an offender will go to, and to help deliver this priority and reduce bureaucracy, any providers delivering agreed OLASS-funded programmes to offenders in English prisons may treat them as individuals eligible for our funding without the usual evidence needed.

This concession only applies to OLASS-funded learning in adult prisons. It does not apply to individuals serving community sentences, those under supervision in the community or those held in immigration detention centres or immigration removal centres, where the rules on eligibility apply.

We realise that some level of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) or other training may be needed to keep prisoners safe and occupy their time in the prison.

4. Learners aged 18 to 23 are eligible for full funding through the OLASS programme for all learning aims up to and including level 3, including units.
5. Learners aged 24 or over are eligible for full funding through the OLASS programme for all learning aims up to and including level 2, including units
6. From 1 August 2013, any learner who is aged 24 or over at the start of learning and is studying any of the learning aims or Apprenticeship frameworks listed below will not be eligible for funding through OLASS, but may apply for a Loan.
 - Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) Certificates and Diplomas at levels 3 and 4
 - Programme of A-levels (including AS, A2 and full A-levels)
 - Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Access to HE Diplomas
 - Advanced-level Apprenticeship framework
 - Higher Apprenticeship framework

7. In exceptional circumstances, some individuals may be below the age of 18 when they enter an adult prison. If this is the case, you must discuss the particular circumstances with your relationship manager.

Learning programmes for adults in custody

8. You will report data back to us through the individualised learner record (ILR). You must keep your records up to date. Data must be identified as relating to OLASS provision in line with the ILR specification (ILR Funding Model 35 and Learning Delivery Monitoring code 034).
9. For more details, please see the information authority's ILR specification for 2013/2014.

Priority learning aims

The learning aims must give learners appropriate skills to help them gain, and stay in employment after being released from prison.

Lead governors and partner organisations will match the learning and skills offer for learners in custody with the local, regional or national employment priorities for the areas which each cluster (group) of prisons releases offenders to.

10. By September 2013 you must provide a delivery plan which sets out a core curriculum made up from three elements:
 - English and maths and ESOL;
 - vocational qualifications, including information and communications technology (ICT); and
 - employability skills (these may include a wide range of team-working, personal, social and other skills).

Note – to be eligible for funding all elements offered must appear on the Learning Aims Reference Service (LARS).

English and maths and ESOL

English and maths refers to qualifications and units to help learners achieve their English and maths GCSEs (A* to C) or Functional Skills level-2 qualification. The suite of fully funded learning aims defined as English and maths are set out in annex 1 of the latest version of Funding Rules 2013/2014.

English language skills are essential in the community and for success in the job market. Learners who do not use English as their first language are expected to undertake ESOL learning to improve their prospects of getting a job and enable them to progress to functional skills in English and GCSE in English language. The ESOL learning aims we fund are set out in annex 1 of the latest version of Funding Rules 2013/2014.

Any non-regulated English, maths and ESOL provision for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD learners) must be based on the National Literacy and Numeracy Standards and must enable the learner to progress to a regulated English and maths qualification (see annex 1 of the latest version of Funding Rules 2013/2014).

English, maths and ESOL provision form part of the core offer and are likely to be required in every prison.

The funding rules which apply to the Adult Skills Budget also apply to your OLASS budget for providing English, maths or ESOL provision for offenders in custody

Vocational training

11. Providers must work with the lead governor in each cluster and with the wider partnership, for example Jobcentre Plus, Work Programme contractor, offender managers, probation trusts and local employers in the areas to which prisoners will be resettled. The aim is to identify and develop opportunities for learning and skills that meet local, regional or national employment priorities in these resettlement areas.

Employability skills

12. OLASS funding may support employability skills as it recognises the importance of the personal and social skills which employers rate highly in employees. It must take account of the distance many offenders will have to travel in developing these skills to be considered 'job ready'.

Units of QCF qualifications

A unit-based curriculum offers flexibility since it allows short episodes of learning to be offered to offenders, which may well suit the requirements of sentencing. As credit can be awarded for successful achievement of a unit, this can build up towards target qualifications while the learner is still in custody or at a later date.

13. Providers can offer QCF units where they appear on the Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS). (Note: individual units of qualifications at levels 3 and 4 are not eligible for funding through a Loan.)
14. In offering QCF units, you must identify and deliver an appropriate and clear programme of units, geared to the individual learner's needs as reflected in their Individual Learning Plan. You also need to make sure that the units themselves are within the rules of combination of a QCF qualification already approved for our funding. You can see a section covering delivering units in more depth in our Qualifications Information Guide for 2013/2014. This is on our website.
15. Although, in general, any unit within a QCF qualification approved for funding as part of OLASS can be delivered as part of a clear programme of units, there are some exceptions. The units when combined must give learners appropriate skills to help them gain, and stay in, employment when they are released from prison. The information published on our website covers this in more depth.

Other qualifications

16. Some prisons require offenders to have accredited prior learning (for example, food hygiene or health and safety certification) before they can work in kitchens and other prison industries. If this learning and the work experience in the prison will help the learner gain employment when they leave prison, the prior learning can be funded through OLASS. If these learning aims are listed on LARS they should be used. If these learning aims are not listed on LARS, they can be delivered through PSD (see the next section).

Learning for personal and social development (PSD)

17. Wherever possible, the learning must be for regulated qualifications or units. A significant range of regulated qualifications and units are now available for OLASS provision across all activities and subject areas (accredited activity does not count towards PSD spend).
18. For the purposes of OLASS, PSD activity is not considered to be regulated. The learner's Individual Learning Plan should set out how their learning experience and the skills they gain will help to increase their confidence and self-esteem, and how the skills they gain will contribute to further learning and make them more employable.
19. There is no separate funding allocation for PSD activity in 2013/2014. However, we will continue to monitor levels of PSD delivery. The range of regulated qualifications and units now available for OLASS delivery means that we will not accept the previously confirmed 2012/2013 value of PSD activity increasing in 2013/2014. This requirement will be monitored by the lead governor of each group of prisons as the needs of individual prisons will vary. Whether or not to use funding for PSD delivery must be discussed between the appropriate lead governors and providers at each group of prisons.

Outcomes

20. You must use any informal PSD learning you provide to encourage progression to further learning and employment. You do this by having appropriate systems in place to refer learners to further learning as appropriate. Prisons will monitor how PSD is used to support learner progression.

Flexibility

21. The needs of individual prisons will vary greatly, and the volume of PSD delivery must be discussed locally, including through each Local Offender Partnership Group (see note 1 below).

Recording delivery

Note1: The OLASS Governance Framework is available on the Skills Funding Agency website. The Framework sets out the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in delivering the OLASS 4 programme, including Local Offender Partnership Groups.

22. The funding system must allow providers to identify, record and allocate a value for appropriate PSD activity. By using appropriate learning-aim references, providers can identify the scale and differences between PSD activity provided to the prison.
23. The funding rates to be used for PSD activity for 2013/2014 are the same as our mainstream funding rates for unregulated provision.

The innovation code

In the latest version of Funding Rules 2013/2014 we set out how the innovation code is used in relation to the Adult Skills Budget. This applies to OLASS and you must discuss this with your relationship manager in the first instance.

Supporting learners in custody who are carrying out higher education or other separately funded distance learning

24. By co-operating with the prison, you must support learners who want to study with the Open University and other institutions that provide courses on a distance-learning basis. You can find more information in the relevant Prison Service Instruction (PSI).
25. You must make sure that appropriate staff are available to give learners the time, resources and support they need for their studies. This includes adequate access to appropriate ICT facilities.
26. The support you must provide does not include tutorial input, but should include general mentoring and guidance.

Mentoring

27. There are roles for adult learners in custody acting as mentors, including 'peer to peer' teaching to improve outcomes. This activity must be accredited through regulated qualifications, so that it can be used as a factor on the route to employment.

Provision delivered in custody using the Adult Skills Budget (ASB)

28. The OLASS budget can only be used to fund learning programmes for adults in custody. It must be used before considering provision being delivered through the ASB. You can put sub-contracting arrangements in place so that learning delivered in custody is properly assigned to the OLASS budget.
29. If, in exceptional circumstances, you are using your ASB with offenders in custody, you must make sure it supports (not duplicates or competes with) your OLASS-funded provision. You must make sure that all ASB eligibility and fee requirements are met.
30. If a learner does not complete their learning aim while in custody, we expect you to put arrangements in place to provide support after they leave prison, and make sure they are fully funded through the ASB. Local partnership arrangements should make sure that learning started in custody can be supported by suitable equivalent provision 'outside'. Learners will use the credit they have built up in custody towards the full qualification.
31. When a learner is released on temporary licence to take part in learning and skills training funded through the Adult Skills Budget, they must meet the eligibility requirements associated with that provision.

Apprenticeships

The Review of Offender learning (Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation, published in May 2011) aims to “increase the scope for prisoners to prepare for and take up Apprenticeship opportunities”.

There are currently two broad options to support providers delivering Apprenticeship-related activity to offenders in custody:

- Access to Apprenticeship pathway (OLASS provision); and
- Apprenticeships for those released on temporary licence into paid employment.

Outside prison, Apprenticeships are available through normal routes.

32. Currently it is not possible for offenders to undertake a nationally recognised Apprenticeship while serving their sentence in closed prisons. This is because it would not be possible to meet every requirement of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.
33. However, as long as they keep to the requirements of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, offenders released on temporary licence (ROTL) into paid employment (as long as they are earning at least the minimum Apprenticeship wage) can now start an Apprenticeship, supported by the Adult Skills Budget.
34. The tender specification for OLASS included a section on the Access to Apprenticeship pathway. This pathway gives offenders in custody the opportunity to prepare for starting an Apprenticeship when they are released. The help provided by the pathway includes help in applying for an Apprenticeship through the Apprenticeship vacancies system (www.apprenticeships.gov.uk) and training on how to behave at interviews. If the pathway contains elements of an advanced-level Apprenticeship, offenders aged 24 or over may need to apply for a Loan.
35. Where an offender is approaching the end of their period in custody, and the prison authorities, the National Careers Service and the offender have agreed that an Apprenticeship is a realistic option, the offender must be given an opportunity to follow the Access to Apprenticeship pathway or, for eligible offenders released on temporary licence, an Apprenticeship.
36. Enhanced funding for apprentices aged 19 to 23 may be available for some released prisoners. The latest version of Funding Rules 2013/2014 state that:

“Eligible individuals who have not been available to enter learning before their 19th birthday due to a reason beyond their control will be funded at the fully funded 19-23 rate as long as they start an Apprenticeship before their 24th birthday.”

Examples of reasons include a custodial sentence and remanded in custody.
37. As a result of the Prisoners’ Earning Act 1996, prisoners will have to pay a levy (tax), at a rate of 40%, on their earnings over £20 a week after tax, National Insurance and any court-ordered or child-support payments. The levy is paid to the charity Victim Support.

38. We, along with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the National Offender Management Service, continue to explore whether a nationally recognised Apprenticeship can be delivered to offenders while they are in custody.

Learners in custody with learning difficulties or disabilities

The Review of Offender Learning (Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation), which was published in May 2011, called for a new focus on assessing, and then tackling, the needs of offenders with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Investing in further education (FE) and skills training for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD learners) is an important part of the support that the Government provides to disabled people. This involves making sure the right level of support is available to make sure barriers to education and training are removed and learners can make the most of their potential.

39. The funding rules which apply to the Adult Skills Budget also apply to your OLASS budget for providing learning and support for offenders with learning difficulties or disabilities in custody.

Learning Support

Learning Support aims to help you work flexibly and provide support to meet the learning needs of your learners. This will enable these learners to achieve their learning goal and make the most of their potential. Learning Support funding will also help providers meet the costs of reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Learning Support is now part of the OLASS budget.

40. The funding rules which apply to the Adult Skills Budget also apply to your OLASS budget for providing Learning Support for offenders in custody.

Subcontracting

41. OLASS providers can work with other organisations to offer local or specialist delivery. If you enter into subcontracting arrangements to deliver OLASS-funded provision, you must make sure that you keep to all the requirements set out in the latest version of Funding Rules 2013/2014.

OLASS ILR requirements

42. You must report ILR data for each learner in line with the ILR guidance for 2013/2014. You should take account of the following.

Date of birth

43. In exceptional circumstances, if a date of birth genuinely cannot be provided due to security issues set by the governor or head of learning and skills, you must make sure that you keep evidence of the security concerns. You will need to enter the date of birth in all other cases. The date of birth is needed to register a learner for a ULN. It is also used to identify delivery to young offenders separately from delivery to adults in split-site establishments. You must not estimate the date of birth.
44. The Funding Information System (FIS) validation report will identify those learners who are aged 17 or younger in provision we fund. You must make sure that you review FIS warnings and only apply them in special circumstances where you can give legitimate reasons and have the agreement of your relationship manager.

Learner name

45. It is your responsibility to keep accurate records of learner progress and if particular security issues prevent you from recording names, you must introduce a system or process that reduces, as far as possible, the risk of duplicating learning activities and learner records.

How the learner in custody prefers to be contacted

46. All learners in custody must have a record of how they prefer to be contacted to show the restrictions on using the learner record. You should record the 'contact preference type' field as restricted use indicator (RUI)

and set the 'contact preference code' field to code 4 to show that the learner must not be contacted.

Postcode before enrolment

47. This postcode should record the permanent or home postcode of the learner before they enrolled on the learning aim as their last-known non-custodial postcode. This field is marked as optional in the ILR guidance to allow for particular circumstances where you cannot provide a learner's non-custodial postcode for security issues given to you by the governor or head of learning and skills. In such circumstances you must keep evidence that there are security concerns.

Delivery location postcode

48. For offenders in custody, the delivery location postcode must always record the prison postcode at which the learner is living and taking part in learning. You can find a list of prison postcodes in Annex A.

Previous attainment

49. The qualification should have been completed and passed for recording. However, there is no requirement for the learner to provide evidence of achievement. You should treat the information provided by learners as acceptable.
50. You will use information on previous attainment to report on the individual learner's progress to date. Information on previous qualifications completed is usually collected with little formal evidence. If it becomes obvious during learning that the information was wrong, you should correct this.

If you withdraw from delivering OLASS provision

51. If you stop delivering OLASS, you have a duty to complete the full cycle of ILR returns for a funding year in which you stopped doing so. You need to make arrangements to transfer all the information on active learners to a new provider. You must also make all reasonable arrangements to capture achievement for the group of completed learners.
52. If you stop providing education at any prison, you must complete the ILR data as fully as possible. You must pass information on the active learners to the new provider so they can enrol the active learners. You must also record the reason for the transfer.

Funding and earnings

Payments

53. We will make 'profile payments' where we split your total funding allocation into 12 monthly payments, so paying you a set amount every month. The allocation covers all costs of delivering the provision, including registration, accreditation, learning materials, support for higher education and other distance learning as well as your management and administration costs.

Funding formula

54. OLASS will use our new streamlined funding system. Details of this were put on our website at the end of March 2013.
55. The disadvantage uplift provides extra funding to support the most disadvantaged learners. After consulting the sector, we have agreed that for 2013/2014 we will apply a disadvantage uplift of 12% to each learning aim. This uplift will be applied in the funding calculation.
56. The area cost uplift reflects the higher cost of delivering provision in some parts of the country, such as London and the South East. The area uplift will be based on the delivery location postcode as reported in the ILR. This will be the prison postcode. You can find postcodes for each prison in Annex A.

Funding rates for learning aims

57. Funding for all eligible learning aims will be based on a new simplified table of rates. The actual funding rates can be found in the Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS). If you cannot find a rate for a learning aim you want to deliver, please contact us.
58. OLASS learning aims will be flagged as eligible in LARS separately from the Adult Skills Budget.
59. The maximum Loan amounts for learning aims and Apprenticeship frameworks financed through a Loan are published on our website.

Job outcome payments

60. There will be no payments for job outcomes in 2013/2014. However, we aim to introduce those payments and plan to review how this policy can best be put into practice, developing our arrangements in line with our policy in the Adult Skills Budget.

Managing performance in 2013/2014

61. The performance-management arrangements put in place in 2012/2013 will continue in 2013/2014. We have worked with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to specify roles and responsibilities for managing performance, and to provide a framework for managing performance.
62. The review process will continue for each unit of procurement (group of prisons within which offenders move).
63. Performance-management reviews, carried out every three months, will focus on delivery at individual prisons and within each cluster, looking at volumes of learning activity, achievements and how delivery plans are being put into practice. The reviews will include provision financed through Loans. You will play an important role in the performance-management process. A separate guidance note on our website sets out the proposed arrangements for managing performance.
64. If, after a review, there is a recommendation to redistribute funding between prisons, you will need to confirm this with us. If we agree to the redistribution, we will send you a notice of the contract confirming the changes. This process must not result in a change to the maximum contract value or funding allocation for the unit of procurement.
65. Through the performance-management process we will also review the value of funding delivered across all units of procurement to identify any underspend and overspend. If we do identify any, we will work with the National Offender Management Service to agree the position for you in terms of paying back funding for provision you have not delivered.

Data reports

66. We will make a suite of funding and performance reports available (using the ILR returns) to the lead governors. The reports will be based on each unit of procurement, down to cluster and prison level, and will show the main areas of performance. These are:
- learner characteristics (age, ethnic background, learning difficulties or disabilities);
 - title and level of learning aim;
 - success rates; and
 - funding earned.

Learning Records Service (LRS) and unique learner number (ULN)

67. You have to record the unique learner number (ULN) of learners on the ILR. However, there will be certain categories of prisoner who must not be registered on the learner register held by the Learning Records Service (LRS) and cannot have any associated learner-plan information held in the LRS system at a particular time during their sentence.
68. These categories of prisoner include:
- high-profile prisoners;
 - prisoners who the media are or would be particularly interested in;
 - prisoners who have been convicted under the Terrorism Act (TACT); and
 - prisoners who are in the witness-protection programme.
69. Prisoners in any of the categories above should not, under any circumstances, have their details entered onto the LRS system. Governors are responsible for letting you know about the prisoners in these categories and formalising these arrangements in the local operating agreement. If a learner in one of the categories above is registered by mistake, you should contact the LRS helpdesk as quickly as possible to solve the problem.
70. If you cannot find a ULN or basic skills assessment score through the LRS, you must carry out an assessment.
71. You must administer the system to meet the contractual requirements of updating the learner plan and issuing ULNs. Issuing a ULN is a shared responsibility between you and the National Careers Service. The ULN should be issued by whichever organisation is first involved with the prisoner.
72. You must keep to the business processes that govern how the individual learning plan is used, and must sign and keep to the LRS Organisational

Agreement and Super User Agreement (specific to OLASS provision in custody).

73. The individual learning plan allows information to be shared about a learner's basic-skills assessment, goals and involvement in both learning activity that we pay for and other activities (classed as work experience). You must continue these arrangements until the end of the OLASS contracts.

National Careers Service

74. The National Careers Service (NCS) is available to all adults (aged 18 and over) in custody. The aim of the service is to provide high-quality careers and skills advice to adults in custody.
75. The NCS is different from its predecessor because, although it is an important and integral part of the offender learning arrangements, it is not an OLASS-directed, dedicated prison-careers service. This has implications for how the service is governed, its role in prisons and how it works with its partners.
76. It is important for the NCS to work in partnership with others in order to support prisoners. Those partnerships must be based on trust, openness and sharing relevant information. A willingness to negotiate and agree strategies and approaches that are in the best interests of the prisoners and the partners who support learners, both while they are in custody and after they are released, is important.
77. The Review of Offender Learning (Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation) published in May 2011 sets out how the NCS initially works with and supports new prisoners (including prisoners who have arrived as a result of transfer from another establishment).
78. The NCS will be available to any prisoner who wishes to use the service or where, despite a short sentence length, key partners believe a one-to-one careers and skills advice session is in the best interests of the prisoner. This service may be available to prisoners on remand.
79. While in custody, prisoners will be eligible for up to three funded sessions with the NCS during any 12-month period. When they are released into the community, they will be entitled to another three funded sessions (over a 12-month period). Activity in one-to-one sessions will provide the same service, as far as possible, as is delivered throughout the NCS.

80. Careers and skills advice is focussed at the beginning of a prisoner's sentence to identify their learning and work needs, and in the 12 months before release (working with partners such as the prison service, Jobcentre Plus, learning and skills providers, employers and the prisoner's local NCS contractor) to help the prisoner move into learning or work.
81. The benefit of every new or transferred prisoner having access to the NCS at the beginning of their sentence must be balanced against the length of their sentence and the length of time they are likely to remain in the same establishment. For example, if a prisoner is only in custody for two months it may be more appropriate for them to undertake short, vocational provision with the OLASS 4 provider and see an NCS adviser shortly before their release to make sure they link up with an adviser in the community at the end of their sentence
82. For this reason the NCS will only need to work directly with a prisoner at the start of their sentence if they are sentenced to 12 months or more (that is, serving six months or more in prison) or are likely to be in the same establishment for at least six months.
83. For prisoners serving sentences of less than 12 months, NCS activity would be focussed towards the end of the sentence, preparing the prisoner for being released into the community.
84. To get a copy of the National Careers Service's operating instructions, send an email to NationalCareersQuestions@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk

Security of learning information

85. You should refer to the Prison Service Instruction PSI 2012-10 Conveyance and Possession of Prohibited Items and Other Related Offences.
86. The Offender Management Act makes it a criminal offence for you to pass on information relating to prisoners, in any format and through any means. In all circumstances, if you pass on information it must be for legitimate work purposes.

24+ Advanced Learning Loans 2013/2014

87. From August 2013, 24+ Advanced Learning Loans (Loans) will apply to offenders in custody who meet the eligibility criteria. OLASS providers

have a 24+ Advanced Learning Loans Facility allocated to them and should use this for offenders in custody.

Provider eligibility

88. All providers funded by us who are currently delivering OLASS provision to offenders in custody have been given a Loan facility. This allows them to deliver eligible provision, in the prisons they hold a contract for, to offenders who apply for a Loan and who meet the eligibility criteria.

Offender eligibility for a Loan

89. Offenders must meet the standard eligibility rules set out in the Further Education Loans Regulations 2012. Offenders must also:
- have the right to stay in the UK after completing their sentence;
 - not be subject to a deportation order;
 - have been sentenced and not be on remand;
 - have their prison governor's approval to study the learning aim or Apprenticeship framework the Loan will fund;
 - be studying their learning aim or Apprenticeship framework with a provider in England who has a Loans facility from us; and
 - be within six years of their release date.
90. The Student Loans Company (SLC) will be responsible for assessing whether offenders are eligible for a Loan.
91. Loans will not be means-tested and the offender will not start making Loan repayments until they are earning more than £21,000 (before tax and National Insurance) a year.

Qualifications funded through Loans

92. Loans can be used to fund the following types of publicly funded provision, as set out in the Funding Rules 2013/14.
- Programme of A-levels, including AS, A2 and full A-levels (up to a maximum of four)

- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Access to HE Diplomas
- Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) Certificates and Diplomas at levels 3 and 4
- Advanced-level Apprenticeship framework
- Higher Apprenticeship framework (see note 2 below)

Loan application process

93. If an offender wants to apply for a Loan to fund an eligible course, you must give the offender a Learning and Funding Information Letter, together with the published material on Loans.
94. Offenders will make Loan applications on the standard paper-based Loan application form, which you can download from the GOV.UK website (www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans/how-to-claim). The application must be accompanied by a letter from the prison governor (or their representative) to confirm the information such as the offender's release date and their permission for the offender to study. If the offender does not have the required evidence of their identity (such as a passport or birth certificate), the governor's letter must also confirm the offender's identity.

Attendance and Loan payments

95. You must confirm the offender's attendance through the SLC Learning Provider Portal. You will receive Loan payments to fund the offender's learning, as described in the Funding Rules 2013/2014 and in the SLC's Learning Provider Portal User Guide.

Cross-border issues

96. An offender will only be eligible to apply for a Loan when they are studying an eligible learning aim with:
 - an approved provider at a prison in England (which would normally be the OLASS provider); or
 - another approved provider with a Loan facility for delivering provision to offenders released on temporary licence.

Note 2 We do not fund 'prescribed higher education' (for example, a degree or a Higher National) which is eligible for HE student support.

97. If an offender with a Loan transfers from an English prison to a prison in Wales, they must leave their Loans-funded course. Before the transfer, the prison governor should tell the provider, who must then tell the SLC through the Learning Provider Portal. The offender will still be liable for repaying Loan payments made to the OLASS provider in England up to the point they leave their course.
98. If an offender who has already started a Loans-eligible qualification transfers from a prison in Wales (where provision is free) to an English prison, they will need to apply for a Loan if they want to continue their studies. In these circumstances, the OLASS provider should take account of the offender's prior learning when setting the fee for the learning aim the Loan will fund.

Transfers between prisons in England

99. There are times when an offender will be transferred between prisons in England.
 - If the same OLASS provider operates in both prisons, the transfer will be treated as a 'Change to personal details' change of circumstance. The offender must tell the SLC about the change.
 - If the prisons have different OLASS providers, the transfer will be treated as a withdrawal from the course. The OLASS provider must tell the SLC about the withdrawal through the Learning Provider Portal. If the OLASS provider in the prison the offender is transferred to can offer a comparable course, the offender must make a new Loan application. The prison governor will need to confirm the offender's eligibility for a Loan. The OLASS provider in the prison the offender is transferred to must take account of the offender's prior attainment when setting the fee for the rest of the course. In this situation, the two OLASS providers must work together to provide continuity of the offender's learning programme.
100. Guidance to prison governors advises them to avoid transferring offenders in Loan-funded learning where possible.

Through the Gate

101. If a person who is undertaking an eligible learning aim financed through a Loan is sent to prison, they may be able to continue their studies while they are in custody. The person will have to meet the eligibility criteria for offenders as set out above, including that the prison governor will need to confirm that the course is appropriate.

102. If an offender starts an eligible learning aim towards the end of their sentence, when they are released they should be able to continue their studies with an eligible provider who has a Loans facility from us. If this involves changing provider, the offender should withdraw from the learning aim and apply for another Loan with their new provider. The OLASS provider must tell the SLC about the withdrawal using the Learning Provider Portal. The new provider should take account of the learning the offender completed in custody when setting the fee for the rest of the course.

If the learner's circumstances change

103. The OLASS provider must tell the SLC when an offender's circumstances change (for example, if they are released from prison, transfer to another prison or change or withdraw from their course).
104. When the prison governor decides that an offender's eligibility for a Loan has changed (for example, if a further conviction makes the learning aim inappropriate), or the offender's release date is extended to beyond the maximum time period, the offender must withdraw from their course. In these circumstances the prison governor should tell the OLASS provider and the provider should then tell the SLC through the Learning Provider Portal. The offender will still be liable for repaying Loan payments made before the withdrawal.

Release on temporary licence

105. An offender who has been released on temporary licence can apply to study a Loans-eligible qualification with a provider who has a Loans facility from us. The Offender's Loan application should be made in the same way as those from offenders in custody.
106. An offender who started a Loan-funded qualification in custody and is released on temporary licence should be able to continue their studies with a provider with a Loans facility from us. If this involves a change of provider, the offender must withdraw from their Loan-funded study in custody and apply for another Loan for their study with the new provider. The prison governor should tell the OLASS provider about the withdrawal, and the OLASS provider must then tell the SLC through the Learning Provider Portal.

Reviewing provision

107. We will review the volume of offender learning funded through Loans as part of our performance-management process.
108. The review process for each unit of procurement must incorporate a review of Loans-funded learners (see paragraph 63). In particular, where offenders have to transfer between prisons other than by choice, the review should take account of the effect the transfer has on the learning the Loan is funding and the offender's liability to repay the Loan.

24+ Advanced Learning Loans Bursary Fund: offenders in custody

The Loans Bursary is aimed at helping vulnerable and disadvantaged learners who are being funded through a Loan. The Loans Bursary will provide funding for learners who are in custody or released on temporary licence and who get a Loan from the Student Loans Company. However, support must only be provided for learning support activity.

109. The funding rules which apply to the Loans Bursary are set out in the latest version of Funding Rules 2013/2014.

Annex A: Prison postcodes

Unit of procurement	Prison name	Delivery location postcode
East of England	BEDFORD	MK40 1HG
	BELMARSH	SE28 0EB
	BLUNDESTON	NR32 5BG
	BURE	NR10 5GB
	CHELMSFORD	CM2 6LQ
	HIGHPOINT	CB8 9YG
	HOLLESLEY BAY	IP12 3JW
	LITTLEHEY 1 & 2	PE28 0SR
	NORWICH	NR1 4LU
	THE MOUNT	HP3 0NZ
	WAYLAND	IP25 6RL
	WHITEMOOR	PE15 0PR
	East Midlands	GARTREE
GLEN PARVA		LE18 4TN
LEICESTER		LE2 7AJ
LINCOLN		LN2 4BD
NORTH SEA CAMP		PE22 0QX
NOTTINGHAM		NG5 3AG
ONLEY		CV23 8AP
RANBY		DN22 8EU
WOOD HILL		MK4 4DA
STOCKEN		LE15 7RD
SUDBURY		DE6 5HW
WHATTON		NG13 9FQ
Kent and Sussex		BLANTYRE HOUSE
	EAST SUTTON PARK	ME17 3DF
	ELMLEY	ME12 4DZ
	FORD	BN18 0BX
	LEWES	BN7 1EA
	MAIDSTONE	ME14 1UZ
	ROCHESTER	ME1 3QS
	STANDFORD HILL	ME12 4AA
	SWALESIDE	ME12 4AX
London	BRIXTON SLA	SW2 5XF
	FELTHAM	TW13 4ND
	HOLLOWAY	N7 0NU
	PENTONVILLE	N7 8TT
	WANDSWORTH	SW18 3HS
	WORMWOOD SCRUBS	W12 0AE
	COLDINGLEY	GU24 9EX
	DOWNVIEW	SM2 5PD
	HIGH DOWN	SM2 5PJ
	SEND	GU23 7LJ
	THAMESIDE	SE28 0FJ
	ISIS	SE28 0NZ
North East	NORTHUMBERLAND	NE65 9XG
	DEERBOLT	DL12 9BG

	DURHAM	DH1 3HU
	FRANKLAND	DH1 5YD
	HOLME HOUSE	TS18 2QU
	KIRKLEVINGTON GRANGE	TS15 9PA
	LOW NEWTON	DH1 5YA
North West	BUCKLEY HALL	OL12 9DP
	GARTH	PR26 8NE
	HAVERIGG	LA18 4NA
	KENNET	L31 1HX
	KIRKHAM	PR4 2RN
	LANCASTER FARMS	LA1 3QZ
	LIVERPOOL	L9 3DF
	MANCHESTER SLA	M60 9AH
	PRESTON	PR1 5AB
	RISLEY	WA3 6BP
	STOKE HEATH	TF9 2JL
	STYAL	SK9 4HR
	THORN CROSS	WA4 4RL
	WYMOTT	PR26 8LW
South Central	ALBANY	PO30 5RS
	AYLESBURY	HP20 1EH
	BULLINGDON	OX25 1PZ
	GRENDON	HP18 0TL
	HUNTERCOMBE	RG9 5SB
	PARKHURST	PO30 5NX
	SPRING HILL	HP18 0TH
	WINCHESTER	SO22 5DF
READING	RG1 3HY	
South West	BRISTOL	BS7 8PS
	CHANNINGS WOOD	TQ12 6DW
	DARTMOOR	PL20 6RR
	DORCHESTER	DT1 1JD
	EASTWOOD PARK	GL12 8DB
	ERLESTOKE	SN10 5TU
	EXETER	EX4 4EX
	GUYS MARSH	SP7 0AH
	LEYHILL	GL12 8BT
	PORTLAND	DT5 1DL
	THE VERNE	DT5 1EQ
West Midlands	BIRMINGHAM	B18 4AS
	BRINSFORD	WV10 7PY
	DRAKE HALL	ST21 6LQ
	FEATHERSTONE	WV10 7PU
	FOSTON HALL	DE65 5DN
	HEWELL	B97 6QS
	LONG LARTIN	WR11 8TZ
	OAKWOOD	WV10 7QD
	STAFFORD	ST16 3AW
	SWINFEN HALL	WS14 9QS
Yorkshire and the Humber	ASKHAM GRANGE	YO23 3FT
	DONCASTER	DN5 8UX
	EVERTHORPE	HU15 1RB
	FULL SUTTON	YO41 1PS

	HULL	HU9 5LS
	LEEDS	LS12 2TJ
	LINDHOLME	DN7 6EE
	HATFIELD	DN7 6EL
	MOORLAND OPEN	DN7 6BW
	NEW HALL	WF4 4XX
	NORTHALLERTON	DL6 1NW
	WAKEFIELD	WF2 9AG
	WEALSTUN	LS23 7AZ
	WOLDS	HU15 2JZ



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