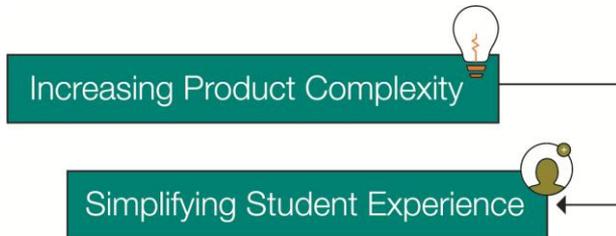
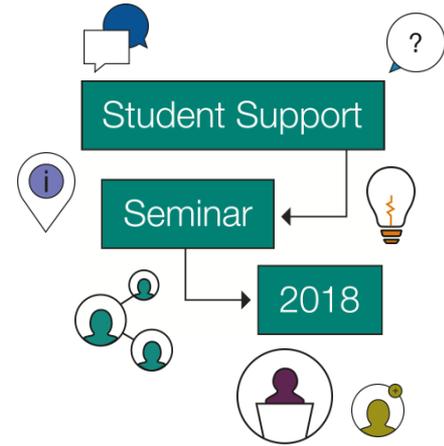


Student Finance England Study Abroad

Andrew Matthews

Core Assessing / Study Abroad Advisor





What do we do?

The Study Abroad Team was created to assist students who will be studying or working abroad throughout the academic year who require their student finance entitlement to be paid outside of the standard instalment structure/payment dates.

Our main priority is to process manual payments for students that require it based on information provided by HEPs via the HEP Spreadsheet. We are also here to assist HEPs with any study/work abroad queries that are not easily resolved using the guidance material provided either by us or through the practitioner website.



Who are we?

We are currently a team of 3 core assessors who also undertake the study abroad duties.

We are :

- Shaun Carter
- Andrew Matthews
- Yasmin Sung

EMAIL : STUDY_ABROAD@SLC.CO.UK



Maintenance Support – AY 2018/19 Rates

2016 cohort F/T students, not eligible for benefits or aged over 60

Full Year Student*	Maximum Loan (100%)	Non-Income Assessed (% of Max Loan)		Income Assessed (% of Max Loan)	
Parental Home	£7,324	£3,224	44%	£4,100	56%
Elsewhere	£8,700	£4,054	46.6%	£4,646	53.4%
London	£11,354	£5,654	49.8%	£5,700	50.2%
Overseas	£9,963	£4,816	48.3%	£5,147	51.7%

*Lower amounts available for final year students



Manual Payments Offered

A student may request a manual payment through the study abroad team when they would be more beneficial than the standard system payments. We offer three types of manual payments to assist students who are studying (or on placement) abroad.

These are:

- First Instalment paid early (earlier than the 25 working days payment date)
- Full Entitlement paid in two instalments (paying the student in a 50/50 split)
- Full Entitlement paid in one instalment



How To Request Manual Payments

A student can request one of the defined manual payments as long as we have confirmation of the study abroad or placement from their HEP. You can provide confirmation in the following ways:



How To Request Manual Payments

1. A letter sent to the Darlington postal address detailing where the student is studying (or on placement), the dates this will take place and the tuition fees charged. When the student is requesting a manual payment it must be stated either on the HEP letter or on an accompanying cover letter.
2. A Course Abroad (CAB) Form sent to the Darlington postal address. If the student wishes to request a manual payment then there **MUST ALSO** be a note/separate letter with the CAB form that states the type of payment being requested.
3. A completed “Study Abroad Template” spreadsheet sent to the designated SFE Study Abroad inbox (study_abroad@slc.co.uk) (**We recommend using this method as we will be able to deal with the requests much quicker**)



What happens next?

CAB Form or HEP letter

If a CAB Form or HEP Letter has been sent via post then these will be worked by our Core Processing department and if a manual payment is stipulated then the details will be passed to the study abroad team internally so that the account can be reviewed.

If there is no request for any manual payment provided with the CAB form/HEP letter, then the student will be paid in the standard 3 instalments.



What happens next?

Spreadsheets

When a spreadsheet is sent to the study abroad inbox it will be reviewed by a member of our team upon receipt. Any accounts where a manual payment has been requested **AND** the relevant eligibility criteria for a manual payment are met will be added to our “Master” spreadsheet so that they can be processed at a later date. This can be easily identified by the ‘Accepted for a manual payment?’ column on the left hand side of the spreadsheet which will be returned to you. If the manual payment request has not been accepted this will be set to ‘NO’ and a reason will be provided in the next column. If the student is not accepted for a manual payment they will be assessed by the core assessing department only and they will be paid in 3 instalments without any reassessment from us.



Communication to the Student

Students will continue to receive their standard notification of entitlement letter and can view their payment dates online. The system will still schedule the students payments as per the UK course term dates.

In order to ensure the student receives the correct information, we will send direct communication via email to all students who have been accepted for one of our manual payments. This will inform them that we have received their request from their HEP, accepted this request and what will happen next.

We will then issue a further email once their application is fully approved, which will confirm their payment dates.



What We Don't Do

As we are a team set up to deal with manual payment requests for study abroad purposes we do not normally process requests for reassessments for students who have not been accepted for a manual payment.

Where a manual payment is requested the student in question will have their application checked and assessed based on the details provided, however we are **unable to reassess every student whose details are sent to us**. Due to these reports coming through in peak processing time we are unable to provide the staffing levels required to work through all non manual payment accounts.

Any accounts that are sent to us that do not require a manual payment will be worked by the core assessing department. All of the details sent to us via spreadsheet will still be stored on our internal database (HEP Confirmation Sheet) for other departments to access if required.



Travel Grants

Travel grants are processed by a specialist team, therefore they are not handled by ourselves on the Study Abroad team.

If you have any specific travel grant queries, you can now email them directly at

Travel_grant_query@slc.co.uk

Please note as with the study abroad inbox, this is for internal use only and should **NOT** be given out to third parties (including students) under any circumstances.



Continuous Improvement

In December 2017, we invited feedback from a number of HEP's regarding the service they received during the 2017/18 academic year.

We requested feedback as to what went well and more importantly, suggestions of areas which could be improved upon moving forward.

Based on the feedback received and our own experiences from the 2017/18 academic year, we decided to review all of our processes to ensure that we are providing the best service we can for yourselves and the students.



Continuous Improvement

Changes have been made to the HEP guidance, nothing major really as this was tweaked a lot last year however we have just put an emphasis on some of the areas where there has been some confusion or miscommunication in previous years to try and reduce the number of queries we get for the same issues.

We have included a new scenario index which we hope will answer the majority of queries faced by HEP's.



Continuous Improvement

Improvements made to HEP spreadsheet template based on feedback from HEPs. Changes include colours, font size, detailed descriptions added to examples and tweaks to wording to ensure it is easily understood by people outside of SLC.

HEP confirmation sheet (SFE use only) has been completely redesigned to make it easier to use. We have worked with other departments to try and ensure that the risk of incorrect advice is reduced as much as possible.



Continuous Improvement

Based on feedback from HEPs and our own experiences, issues with the contact centre providing inaccurate information was one of the very few problems this year. A lot of effort was put in last year to try and resolve this however it still remained an issue. On the back of that we have been working closely with contact centre staff and the team who handle knowledgebase and we have totally rewritten the guidance.

The new guidance is much clearer and breaks down the information into stages to assist the advisor. We have also added examples to help and we are currently working on some form of flowchart to further assist the advisors. We have already seen a positive impact towards the end of the 17/18 academic year so we are confident this shouldn't be as big of an issue this year although due to the nature of the contact centre staff turnaround we don't expect it to be perfect.



Continuous Improvement

All email correspondence and notes have been updated ready for the 2018/19 academic year.

All emails have been tweaked to ensure the students know exactly what they will be getting and when. The emails will also include a prompt for the student to complete their application as soon as possible to avoid any delays.



Continuous Improvement

We have been working closely with the travel grant team who have agreed that we can send their email address to the HEPs so they can be contacted directly for any travel grant queries rather than going through us. The travel grant team have also created a nice document which should help the HEPs understand how travel grant claims work and what is required. This was included in the study abroad email sent on the 1st March 2018.

EMAIL : TRAVEL_GRANT_QUERY@SLC.CO.UK

Andrew Matthews

Study Abroad Team

✉ study_abroad@slc.co.uk



Student Loans Company

