

Study Abroad

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Core Assessor/Study Abroad Advisor

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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 who require their payments outside of the standard instalment structure 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 :

- Charlene Hind
- Andrew Matthews
- Margaret Towers

EMAIL : STUDY_ABROAD@SLC.CO.UK

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 a manual payment

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.

Spreadsheet

HEP Study Abroad Template 19.20 V1 - Microsoft Excel

SPREADSHEET GUIDANCE			HEP GUIDANCE		SCENARIO INDEX		25 Working Days Calculator	
SFE USE ONLY			Enter Student's Full Name	Student's First Name	Student's Surname	DOB only if no SSN / CRN		
Date Received	Accepted For A Manual Payment?	Reason Student Hasn't Been Accepted For A Manual Payment	Full Name	First Name	Surname	Student Support Number [SSN] OR Customer Reference Number (CRN)	D.O.B	Course Title (at HOME)
01/03/2019	Yes		EXAMPLE - A			SFDU12345678A	01/02/1993	Japanese Language
02/03/2019	Yes		EXAMPLE - B			SFDU12345678B	02/03/1994	Engineering
03/03/2019	No	Early payment not required as System will pay student on time	EXAMPLE - C			SFDU12345679C	03/04/1995	History with French
04/03/2019	Yes		EXAMPLE - D			SFDU12345678C	04/05/1996	International Business

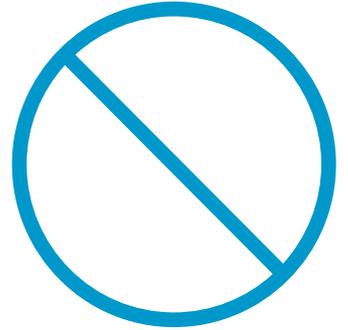
Communication to the student

- 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.



Continuous Improvement

- In December 2017 and in December 2018, we invited feedback from a number of HEP's regarding the service they received during the 2017/18 & 2018/19 academic years.
- 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 both academic years, 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

- 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 last year we totally rewrote the guidance.
- The new guidance is much clearer and breaks down the information into stages to assist the advisor. We also added examples to help. During the 2018/19 academic year, we saw a very positive impact regarding the amount of queries that were referred directly to us. We also had feedback from our contact colleagues advising that the new knowledgebase article certainly assisted agents when dealing with study abroad queries. We would add however that due to the nature of the contact centre staff turnaround we don't expect it to be perfect.



Continuous Improvements

- We have been working closely with the travel grant team who last year agreed that we could send their email address to the HEPs so they can be contacted directly for any travel grant queries rather than going through us. We have found this has worked well with our team not having to forward on as many queries as we have done in previous years.
- 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 27th February 2019.



EMAIL : TRAVEL_GRANT_QUERY@SLC.CO.UK

HEP Comments

- One of the biggest pluses for me is that you contact students to inform them of the payment dates. This is a fantastic service and has massively cut the number of queries I used to receive from students about payments.
- It is incredibly reassuring to know that you are not just firing an email into a black hole where it'll get passed around before eventually ending up in the right place but that you are instead directing it towards a specific team who have expertise in the area you are working in and who will respond quickly.



HEP Comments

- ‘The system works exceptionally well, and is easy to use for an IT dinosaur like me.’
- ‘I think everything has worked well this year - the improvements to the spreadsheet have made it easier to use and we have found you and your team to be very helpful, speedy and knowledgeable. Your guidance document and the accompanying scenarios were also very useful. Thanks for your help over the last year!’
- ‘I realise that your workload is massive and staff work under a lot of pressure but thank you again for providing a fantastic service.’



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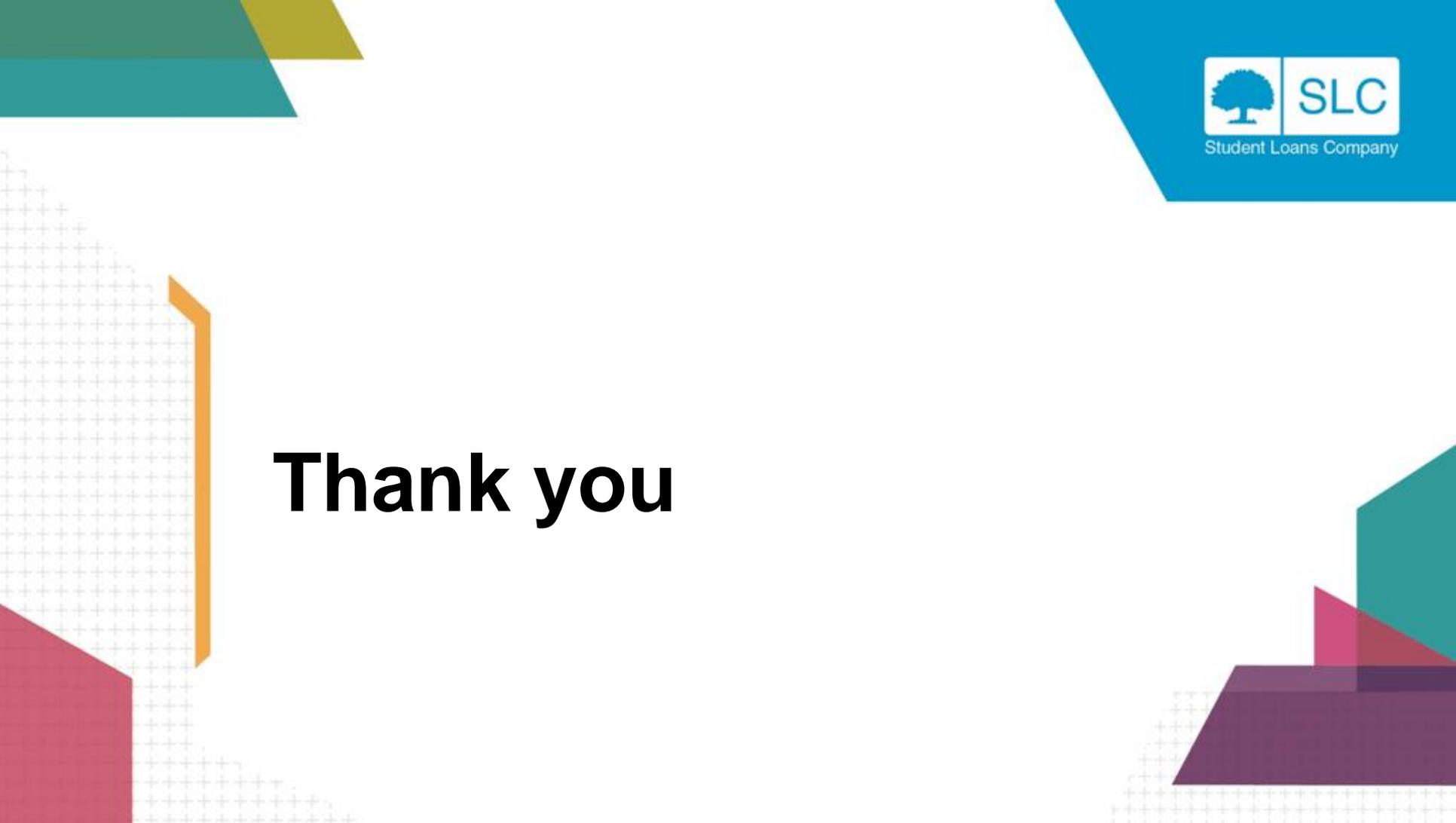
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<https://www.slc.co.uk/>

The slide features several decorative elements: a teal and yellow geometric shape in the top left; a blue triangle in the top right containing the SLC logo; a white grid pattern in the bottom left and bottom right corners; a red shape in the bottom left; and a teal, pink, and purple geometric shape in the bottom right. A vertical orange bar is positioned to the left of the main text.

Thank you