Course Management Service (CMS) Webinar

Questions & Answers

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Introduction

The **Course Management Service (CMS) Webinar** was designed to provide HEP CMS users with key information around the AY 2020/21 course submission process for all full-time undergraduate courses, part-time courses and postgraduate courses.

The webinar covered; entering course information on to CMS, the correct application of flags, term dates, fee entry common errors and SLC's approach to course entry validation. We also supported the viewer by detailing any changes needed to help CMS users prepare ahead of academic year 20/21 as a result of student finance adjustments due to the COVID pandemic.

If you did not have a chance to register for this webinar, please click **here** to view the webinar recording complete with live Q&A sessions.

Questions & Answers

Q. Can you confirm if a date has been agreed yet for when the full-time undergraduate courses for 21/22 become available on CMS for us to start working on, and when the deadline will be for completing this task?
A. We are expecting launch for full-time undergraduate courses week commencing 23rd November.

Q. Can you please clarify who is responsible for ensuring all courses are uploaded correctly onto CMS?
A. It is your responsibility as the Provider to ensure the accuracy of the data that you upload on CMS, however we also undertake a validation exercise to review this information and may be in touch with you if there are any anomalies requiring clarification.

Q. If a course on CMS is closed as this is no longer running, do they ever get deleted?
A. Unfortunately not, however we have added this to our Enhancements Register for future consideration.

Q. What is the Service Standard for courses? How long do we have to submit them?
A. You will have 10 weeks from the launch date to submit your Undergraduate Full-time courses, 6 weeks for Undergraduate Part-time and for Postgraduate courses.

Q. In the past we have always had to fill in and send back a data capture form. Does this now need to be done another way?
A. If you successfully completed the mandatory CMS training in Autumn 2019 you will have received access and instructions to upload courses directly on to CMS.
Due to the current pandemic we have not been able to offer further training this year, so if you have not received the relevant training you should continue to complete and return the Data Capture Form.

Q. Unsaved courses do not appear when we export on CMS, is there any way that these can be visible?
A. An export of unsaved courses can be accessed via the Unsaved Export tab. This is located next to the Export Courses tab.

Q. In what circumstances would a student receive a higher rate of maintenance entitlement?
A. There are so many different variables which can affect a students' entitlement.
In terms of CMS, some factors which would impact funding would be the length of the course (any course longer than 30 weeks and 3 days will trigger Long Courses Loans for eligible means tested students) and location i.e. London rating.

Q. Are weekends included when calculating the duration in weeks?
A. Yes, the calculation is based on calendar days not working days.

Q. With regards to 18-month PGT courses, do we enter them as 18 months or two years?
A. Based on sector feedback an enhancement was introduced to allow you to enter the actual duration of the course so you will be able to reflect this as 18 months.

Q. How many intakes can you add to a course once it has been saved?
A. None, you can't edit intakes once the course is saved.

Q. If we make a mistake by not entering an additional intake, how do we amend this?
A. As you can't amend intakes you will have to create a separate course for the new intake.

Q. How many campus locations can you add to CMS?
A. As many as you require - there is no limit on the number of campus locations you can add to CMS.

Q. If we have 2 courses offered over multiple campuses (start and end dates the same) can we just upload once with one campus location?
A. No, it is best practice to add both locations to avoid student confusion and ensure correct assessments particularly where the campus is London based.

Q. If a course has been saved and we want to make a change, how do we do this?
A. There are only certain fields that you can still edit once the course has been saved. It is best practice to refer to our CMS Guidance on HEP Services website for further details. In all cases, if you do need to make amendments please ensure you notify the Partners Support Desk.
For further information please refer to Page 20 of the **CMS User Guide**

Q. What happens if we don't change information for a course on time?
A. It is important to make timely changes as any delays will have a greater impact on a student's entitlement.

Q. Can you please explain the available course years function?
A. This functionality offers you the flexibility to phase in /out courses by selecting if you want the course to be available to all students, returners only, or no students. For further information please refer to our **Available Course Years Quick Guide**

Q. How would we advise SLC that a course is delivered by distance learning?
A. You can flag this by selecting the 'distance learning' attribute. Further information can be found in our **Course Attribute Quick Guide**

Q. Which domicile requires Postgraduate pre-registration healthcare courses to be added as undergraduate?
A. This applies to England only. Courses should still be added as Postgraduate for all other domiciles.

Q. How many credits generally make up a standard year?
A. This is usually 120 credits. Some courses may differ, so please refer to our **Quick Guide** for further information.

Q. Where a course needs to be 50% in the UK, is this in physical dates or credits?
A. This would be based on 50% physical attendance in the UK.

Q. SCITT courses are Postgraduate courses, but they are classified as 'undergraduate funding'. This causes a huge misunderstanding for the candidates. Can this be corrected to reflect the correct course level?
A. These courses attract undergraduate funding in terms of the Student Support Regulations. As it currently stands, there is no foreseeable change in policy to allow us to amend this.

Q. What caused the problems that our applicants had with their SFE applications for our SCITT courses, with SFE not recognising our SCITT courses as non-salaried?
This was a huge issue throughout the summer for almost all SCITT non-salaried courses/SFE applicants.
A. As some Providers also offer 'salaried' routes SFE have to be certain that all students' assessments are undertaken accurately so have to verify this on occasion. Guidance on this topic is located **here**

Q. Will you give us specific guidance for SCITT Course Management?
A. There is a Quick Guide specifically for Initial Teacher Training courses available on our **HEP Services website** which should assist you.

Q. Why are part-time courses/ applications later in the cycle?
From our experience (we are a teacher training provider), the applicants for part-time programmes have more complicated circumstances which take longer to process. Our part-time students are often affected by long processing / approval.
A. Historically, this was due to the smaller demographic of students, no UCAS application deadlines and the fact that the funding available was only in respect of a tuition fee loan.
As this sector changes this is an area that we may consider reviewing in the future.

Q. Validation for funding from Wales for courses running in England was incredibly slow this year and very late. Could we request that decisions are made quicker next year?
A. This is something that we are aware of and are currently in discussions with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).

Q. Why if you close a course in error, can this not be reinstated?
A. There is no functionality for a Provider to reinstate this. If you have closed a course in error please contact your Account Manager for advice.

Q. When do we receive the email from you ready for validation?
A. You will receive a notification when course collection opens.
Our CMS Team commence the validation exercise as soon as Providers start to upload their courses and will get in touch with you if they have any queries regarding your courses.

Q. We are an FE College and our term dates coincide with our FE students, so longer than the 30 weeks. Will it automatically generate additional funding for students?
A. Yes, any Higher Education course which runs for longer than 30 weeks and 3 days will trigger additional funding (Long Courses Loans) for means tested students.

Q. You mentioned that term cannot begin on weekends or bank holidays. Does this also apply to Postgraduate Doctoral courses?
A. Yes. This is best practice for all courses as the UK banking systems will not make payments into students' bank accounts on weekends or bank holidays.

Q. If in Scotland, does the same processes apply for changing term dates or does it need to go through SAAS?
A. The same process will apply - you should amend the term dates on CMS.

Q. If SLC validates courses who designates them?
A. There are a number of scenarios relating to different domiciles so please refer to our Designation Quick Guide on our **HEP Services website**

Q. How are term dates worked out?
A. Term dates are decided by the Provider however please refer to the relevant Quick Guides to ensure that your dates meet our criteria.
Full-time Undergraduate
Part-time Undergraduate
Postgraduate Masters
Postgraduate Doctoral

Q. What are the fees for an intensive 2-year course that has 180 credits per year?
A. Please refer to the specific guidance available on our **HEP Services website**

Q. Does the course length calculator count bank holidays?
A. Yes, funding is calculated based on calendar days.

Q. Please can you add a link on the CMS portal to the guidance as it is not very accessible?
A. We will add your suggestion to our CMS Enhancements Register for future consideration. However, the following is a link to the **CMS guidance** on the HEP Services website

Q. Are there any plans to provide a bulk update feature on the CMS?
It would make the rollover process for each academic year run more smoothly and would probably limit errors in data input.
A. This has been considered on a number of occasions previously, however the overall view and feedback from the sector wide CMS User Guide is that a manual upload retains the integrity of the data so there are no planned changes.

Q. Do you provide online training for new users who will be responsible for the system?
A. Due to the current pandemic we have not been able to run our usual training events. These will be scheduled as soon as circumstances allow. In the meantime please contact your HEP Account Manager or refer to the **CMS guidance** for support.

Q. How do you differentiate between 'public' and 'private' providers?
A. All English Providers are now required to register with the Office for Students. For further information please refer to their **website** There are different designation rules for other domiciles. Please refer to our **Quick Guide**

Q. What course do you put on if the student is completing a QTS only course and not a Postgraduate Certificate in Education?
A. There are a number of new qualifications that have been added to the drop down choices to cater for this – please refer to our **Quick Guide for Initial Teacher Training courses** for further information.

Q. Are there any discussions concerning compressed first year course dates going forward, as pandemic aside, some HEPs offer courses in this way (e.g. year 2 starts in the September of the same year)? Funding becomes very complicated for these students as they have to remain as winter starts and funding doesn't reflect the way they study.
A. Other than the exception for the current pandemic which has been made by DfE for AY20/21 only, Policy is dictated by The Student Support Regulations, which do not allow for this.

Q. Do we need to set up a separate part-time course option where a full-time student needs to take a restudy year and is studying part-time (e.g. only 60 credits) during that year? This wouldn't be an advertised option.
A. No, you would not be required to set up a separate course as a full-time student would continue to apply on a full-time application – this would be considered a repetition and available funding based on previous study calculations.

Q. In terms of the DSA applications for postgraduate students, why are you not able to use the actual course code?
Can you explain why the UG course needs to say ITT when it isn't ITT?
A. This is historical as previously this generic option was the only option to allow DSA assessments when there were no Postgraduate Loans available to students. We will raise this for future consideration.

Q. Courses may not be offered at all sites in each year - is it possible to include / exclude sites for certain years?
A. No, it is not possible to cater for this with our current functionality.

Q. We have Postgraduate courses that are structured for 3 years but some students study quicker and complete in 2 years, what is the best way to manage this?
A. Without further details there are too many different scenarios here so it would be difficult to answer. We would suggest that you get in touch with your **HEP Account Manager** to discuss further.

Q. Is it possible to add a notes section/field for every programme on CMS? This is particularly helpful since this task is completed annually.
A. We will add your suggestion to our CMS Enhancements Register for future consideration.

Q. How can we transfer provider for doctoral loan if they were approved in past years under other institutions?
A. You should submit a Provider Transfer Change of Circumstances.

Q. Is it possible to amend the export function?
It currently exports all courses on CMS, however could it be changed so it is more responsive to criteria entered e.g. undergraduate part-time only.
A. No, this option is not available. However, once you have exported the data on CSV format you can use filters to identify specific course groups.

Q. We have a variety of Postgraduate courses at various campuses, which are all eligible for the Postgraduate Loan.
Can we upload one course e.g. LPC with masters on CMS to cover all these or does each course have to be uploaded individually?
A. Courses need to be added at subject level.

Q. Can the SLC course code be a part of the course title?
A. The functionality will allow you to do this. Please be aware that this has been raised as a potential enhancement to allow students to view the SLC course code at application stage.

Q. We have optional Sandwich courses - in CMS we have input these courses twice - one version as 3 years (full-time without placement) and the other as 4 years (with sandwich). Is this correct?
A. Yes, this is correct. We would need both versions due to the differing durations.

Q. What if a student on a full-time ITT course changes to part-time study - we do not currently offer, or have part-time courses to transfer them to?
A. There is no requirement to set up a separate part-time course. A full-time student would continue to apply on a full-time application and this would be considered a repetition with available funding based on previous study calculations.

Q. What is the best process if a doctoral student starts an 8-year course but intends to finish their course in less study years, yet undetermined duration?
A. DfE have confirmed that, providing a Postgraduate Doctoral student remains on an eligible programme of study, with an end date not before the 3rd Academic Year of their course, early submission of their thesis will not affect the student's entitlement to the Postgraduate Doctoral Loan. We will shortly be rolling out a new 'early thesis' CoC type to cater for such changes.

Contact Us

For further information on any of the topics included within the Course Management Service webinar, please contact:

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