

PART 4 – CHAPTER 7

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR SERVICE LEAVERS

Policy Sponsor: TESR

BACKGROUND

1. The Government announced to Parliament on 17 Jul 08 a package of cross-government support to Armed Forces personnel, their families and veterans¹, which included a commitment to providing Service Leavers (SL) with access to a first full Level 3 (GCE A level or vocational equivalent), or a first higher education qualification (a foundation degree or a first undergraduate degree or equivalent) free from tuition fees. Subsequently, the MOD engaged with Other Government Departments (OGD)² and Devolved Administrations (DA)³ to define and agree the parameters of this additional Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) support, develop the policy and implement the proposals. Details of the scheme were published in 2009DIN07-042 Further and Higher Educational Support for Service Leavers in Mar 09 and it commenced with effect from 6 Apr 09.

2. On Government direction, the scheme has been reviewed by MOD and its partner departments to ensure that it correctly meets the need of SL. **This chapter details revised criteria governing claims for FE and HE Support under the auspices of the scheme that are submitted after 6 Apr 11 and replaces 2009DIN07-042.**

INTRODUCTION

3. This guidance should be **read in conjunction with JSP 898 Part 4 Chap 3**, which sets out the policy for the Armed Forces Enhanced Learning Credit (ELC) Scheme. It provides refined definitions of the eligibility criteria, information on scheme administration including information on how an eligible SL can make an application and the invoicing procedures for providers.

4. All SL who are eligible to receive fully subsidised tuition fees for a recognised qualification (as defined below) must adhere to the rules described in this guidance. Failure to comply will result in the withdrawal of support, the transfer of the financial commitment in full to the individual and the possible removal of any remaining use of ELC.

DEFINITIONS

5. The following definitions are used throughout this guidance:

a. **MOD Education and Resettlement staffs and terminology:**

¹ Cm 7424 dated Jul 08 - The Nation's Commitment: Cross-Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans

² Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

³ Scottish Government (SG) and Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

(1) Where the phrase 'Education Staff(s)' is used it is to be interpreted throughout as referring to all Royal Navy and Royal Marines, Army and RAF education and resettlement staffs.

(2) The Designated Officer for the ELC contract delivering the enhanced service is the holder of the appointment of DCDS PERS-TESS-SKILLS SO2 post on the staff of the Head of Training , Education, Skills and Resettlement in the MOD.

(3) The contractor, G4S Assessment Services⁴ (branded the Enhanced Learning Credit Administration Service (ELCAS)) is described henceforth as the Customer Service Provider (CSP).

(4) The terms "applicant", "claimant" "Service Leaver" and "learner" are variously used to describe eligible individuals accessing a first full Level 3 (GCE A level or vocational equivalent), or a first higher education qualification (a foundation degree or a first undergraduate degree or national equivalent) free from tuition fees.

b. **Qualification Level:**

(1) **A first full Level 3 or a first HE qualification.** The scheme is specifically targeted at supporting the achievement of a **first qualification** at either Level 3 or HE. If the scheme is used to achieve a Level 3 qualification, it cannot be used again to achieve a HE qualification. Similarly, although the scheme supports the achievement of a HE qualification up to that of a full undergraduate degree, it cannot be used to achieve a degree if a lower level HE qualification such as an HND is already held. It is, however, permissible for a SL using the scheme to expand their studies whilst they are in progress, for example extending their foundation degree studies to achieve a full degree.

(2) **A Level 3 or national equivalent.** This refers to a full UK Level 3 qualification such as the achievement of two GCE A levels⁵ (A2) (passes at A-E) or vocational equivalent as defined by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) (England and Wales); or in Scotland a Level 6 qualification (SVQ Level 3) on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

(3) **A foundation degree or full undergraduate degree or national equivalent.** Typically to be eligible for this support, the higher education qualifications would be at levels 4-6 of the Framework for Higher Education and Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) eg: a first undergraduate degree (including foundation degree) or Higher National Certificate or Diploma for which the entry qualification is lower than a degree and which normally takes place at a publicly funded institution. In Scotland the equivalent qualification is a Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) or a first undergraduate

⁴ Or whatever company is awarded the contract in the future.

⁵ Or in England and Wales the equivalent AS levels.

degree, undertaken at a further education college (FE college) or a higher education institution (HEI).

c. **Service Leaver.** In accordance with JSP534⁶ a SL is defined as:

(1) **Normal Discharge Service Leaver.** Normal discharge SL are those discharged from the trained strength either on completion of their engagement or having submitted their notice to leave or having been given notice of discharge under redundancy.

(2) **Medical Discharge Service Leaver.** Medical discharge SL are those who have been medically discharged from service.

The generic use of the term SL throughout this guidance implicitly includes those ex-Armed Forces personnel who terminated Service on or after 17 Jul 08.

AIMS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT

6. The aims of the Government's commitment to FE and HE support for SL are:

a. To provide fully state subsidised tuition fees for eligible SL undertaking their first further or higher level qualification (as defined above). This commitment comprises that already allocated as employer contributions to the Armed Forces ELC scheme, supplemented by resources made available by partner OGD and DA.

b. To build on the extensive range of professional and personal development opportunities made available to individuals during a Service career and provide an incentive for many, especially the educationally disadvantaged, to raise their skills levels in preparation for and on returning to civilian life.

c. To enhance the reputation of the Armed Forces by returning sufficient high quality SL to the UK skills pool and by providing the opportunity for them to raise their skill levels by achieving nationally recognised qualifications in economically viable skills which benefit the nation .

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

7. In order to take advantage of this support a SL must:

a. Have completed four years full-time service from date of enlistment.

b. Have previously joined the ELC scheme and completed at least four years qualifying scheme membership (this includes approved exceptional retrospective registration⁷).

c. Only apply for either a first full Level 3 or a first HE qualification.

⁶ The Tri-Service Resettlement Manual.

⁷ JSP 898 Pt 4 Chap 3 Para 10.

- d. Have left the Armed Forces on or after 17 Jul 08 – the date of the publication of ‘The Nation’s Commitment’.
- e. Meet the residency requirements specified by the relevant OGD/DA for this UK based support to qualify for the full state subsidy.

MAIN FEATURES

8. In addition to the main eligibility criteria above, the main features of the FE and HE support scheme are as follows:
 - a. To ensure personnel are in the best possible position to take advantage of the scheme applications will be administered for eligible SL through the existing ELCAS operated by the CSP.
 - b. Aligning to the ELC scheme support can be accessed by eligible SL for up to ten years after they leave the Armed Forces.
 - c. SL will apply through the ELC scheme using up any of their remaining three annual credits but incurring no direct cost to themselves in paying towards the tuition fees.
 - d. By providing a full state subsidy to pay for tuition fees only, in effect MOD (the relevant single Service) will continue to pay its contribution towards the course fees as per the ELC scheme (up to a maximum of £1k or £2k per FY depending on qualifying scheme membership) for up to three years and the relevant OGD and DA will ‘buy out’ the personal contribution which would have been paid by the individual using their ELC.
 - e. If all ELC claims have already been exhausted, or are used up during the course of supported studies, the commitment to fund the tuition fees in full for eligible personnel transfers to the relevant OGD or DA.
 - f. Only UK institutions delivering publicly-funded FE and/or HE qualifications will be considered. If not already listed as an ELC approved provider they must apply for ELC scheme provider status and agree to work within the specific administrative requirements of the ELC scheme. UK based providers delivering non-publicly funded FE/HE qualifications are ineligible to be considered for this new funding commitment. In all cases, the final decision as to the eligibility of a course for funding rests with the relevant OGD or DA, who should be consulted by authorising education staff..
 - g. This provision will not be retrospectively applied to those who left the Armed Forces before 17 Jul 08. Only personnel who left the Armed Forces on or after 17 Jul 08⁸ may be eligible if they meet fully the qualifying criteria.
 - h. Before making an application for tuition fee support, SL are advised to first check the national position on existing support with the relevant national

⁸ Includes death or confirmation of Medical Discharge and any subsequent decision to transfer the support to eligible spouse, civil or entitled partner on or after this date.

education authorities (see Para 26). Support for tuition fees may already be available without having to access via this top up scheme.

EFFECTS OF MEDICAL DISCHARGE ON FE AND HE SUPPORT ELIGIBILITY

9. Personnel who have completed both Phase 1 and Phase 2 training who are to be medically discharged from Service before achieving the required four years eligible service to qualify for FE and HE support, may be eligible to claim in some circumstances. Specific regulations are as follows:

- a. Personnel must have registered to join the ELC scheme prior to the date of the injury or commencement of the illness, although eligibility to claim ELC is not a specific requirement for FE and HE support.
- b. Have been discharged from the Armed Forces on or after 17 Jul 08.

EFFECTS OF REDUNDANCY ON FE AND HE SUPPORT ELIGIBILITY

10. Personnel who are made compulsorily redundant, irrespective of whether they have expressed an interest or not in being made redundant, and who have registered with the ELC scheme, will cease to accrue qualifying service for FE and HE support eligibility on the day they leave the Armed Forces. Specific regulations are as follows:

- a. Personnel who have accrued four or more years eligible service by the date on which they leave the Service will be eligible to apply for FE and HE support, subject to meeting the other conditions associated with such claims such as eligibility for ELC funding. Moreover, such support can be claimed for up to ten years after termination of service.
- b. Personnel who have accrued less than four years eligible service by the date on which they leave the Service will not be eligible for FE and HE support.

PERSONNEL ON OTHER ENGAGEMENTS

11. Full Time Reserve Service (FRTS), Military Provost Guard service (MPGS) and Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS) may be eligible to take advantage of FE and HE support, but only where they fully meet the ELC scheme membership rules and have accrued the necessary qualifying service. All other Reserve Forces personnel are not eligible to apply for this support.

TRANSFER OF FE AND HE SUPPORT ELIGIBILITY TO SPOUSE OR ELIGIBLE PARTNER

12. In the event of the death of a serving individual or medical discharge of a serving individual whose condition renders him/her unable to utilise the FE and HE Support scheme, it may be permissible to transfer the support to the individual's spouse, civil or eligible partner. Specific regulations are as follows:

- a. The individual Service person must have either:
 - (1) An established eligibility to claim ELC.

- (2) Or:
- (a) Completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 training.
 - (b) Registered to join the ELC Scheme prior to the date of injury or death.
 - (c) Eligibility to claim ELC is not a specific requirement.
- b. The death of the Service person, or their medical discharge from the Armed Forces must have occurred on or after 17 Jul 08.
- c. The eligibility to transfer FE and HE support to a spouse, civil or eligible partner is to be assessed using the qualifying criteria detailed in the Tri-Service Resettlement Manual to assess the transfer of resettlement entitlement.⁹
- d. FE and HE support can be accessed by the spouse, civil or eligible partner for up to ten years after death or medical discharge for severe injury occurs.
- e. Each application must be considered and endorsed by the respective Service Director of Education before submission.
- f. The spouse, civil or eligible partner is not entitled to any cash equivalent to the full state subsidy as part of the compensation package.
- g. The spouse, civil or eligible partner must be in a position to benefit from the support by undertaking their first full Level 3 or a first HE qualification.
- h. The spouse, civil or eligible partner must meet the residency requirements specified by the relevant OGD/DA for this UK based support to qualify for the full state subsidy.

EDUCATION PROVISION ATTRACTING SUPPORT FOR SL

13. The provision accords with Government policy and is targeted at eligible SL who will derive the most benefit either during their last two years of service in the Armed Forces (their resettlement phase) or for up to 10 years after leaving the Armed Forces. In common with the wider national education policy, the scheme provides funding for the tuition fees of study to achieve a first full Level 3 or a first HE qualification

14. Application may be made for either part-time¹⁰ or full-time study, whether by individual or group tuition or distance learning. Applicants must have enrolled to undertake an eligible first full further or higher level course of study which results in the achievement of a nationally recognised qualification. Only qualifications listed on website links below are eligible for support:

- a. **Further Education** (Level 3 and national equivalent):

⁹ JSP 534.

¹⁰ Learner must undertake at least the equivalent of 50% of a full time course.

(1) **England.** To be eligible for the support a learner must be an eligible learner and working towards one of the following qualifications identified for funding by the SFA on the Learning Aims Database (<http://providers.SFA.gov.uk/>) and which are:

- (a) A full Level 3 qualification, that is a qualification equivalent in size and breadth to two GCE A-Levels or vocational equivalent;
- (b) A Level 3 qualification that if achieved would mean the learner has reached the full Level 3 threshold.

For full details see: <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>

(2) **Wales.** To be eligible for the support a learner must be an eligible learner and working towards one of the following qualifications identified on the List of Approved Qualifications for learners in Wales. These are same as England above. For full details see: <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/> and additionally <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/090115creditsleaflet.pdf>

(3) **Scotland.** To be eligible for the support a learner must be an eligible learner and working towards a first Level 6 qualification (SVQ Level 3) within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The qualification must normally be delivered by a FE college, holding a valid registration with the National Learning Opportunities Database (NLOD). For full details see: www.sqa.org.uk

b. **Higher Education** (foundation degree or full undergraduate degree or national equivalent):

(1) **England and Wales.** To be eligible for the support a learner must be an eligible learner and working towards a HE course at levels 4-6 on the Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) e.g. a first undergraduate degree (including foundation degree or an integrated masters degree) or a higher National Certificate or Diploma (HNC/HND), for which entry qualification is lower than a degree and which normally takes place at a publicly-funded institution. For full details see: <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/> and additionally www.qaa.ac.uk

(2) **Scotland.** To be eligible for the support a learner must be an eligible learner and working towards a higher education course at levels 7-10 within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), ie a first undergraduate degree or a Higher National diploma (HND) or a Higher National Certificate (HNC) , which must normally be delivered at a FE college or a Higher Education Institution(HEI), holding a valid registration with the National Learning Opportunities Database (NLOD). For full details see: www.sqa.org.uk

Additionally, for the whole of the United Kingdom and Ireland the following crossboundaries weblink provides some helpful guidance in comparing qualifications between countries noting that, for the purposes of this funding initiative, Northern Ireland is excluded:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/standardsandquality/otherrefpoints/qualsboundaries.asp>

15. Qualifications not included on the national databases do not attract support. These, for example, may include some categories of sport or outdoor skills, flying such as pursuit of a Private Pilots Licence and the wider range of 'industry standard or vendor' qualifications which are not accredited by a UK nationally recognised Awarding Body.

Residency Requirements

16. This full state subsidy is available only to eligible ELC scheme members who reside in the UK. To qualify SL must have been resident in the UK for at least three years prior to the start of the course and they must continue to remain in the UK until the qualification completes (overseas service in the Armed Forces counts towards UK residency). SL who reside outside of the UK after leaving the Service do not qualify for this UK based support. If, however, they return to reside in the UK they may be eligible for support within any remaining ten year window but only having first completed a minimum of three years residency.

17. Funding responsibility under the scheme lies with the OGD/DA region within in which the SL has established their residential status. In general, residential status reflects the country in which the SL lives; if people who move between these areas (for example from England to Wales) funding responsibility remains with the initial department until 3 years residence has been completed in the new location. Moreover, it is possible that some SL may have resided in an overseas location¹¹ in excess of 3 years whilst on Armed Forces duty prior to submitting a claim. Therefore, SL are strongly advised to check with the OGD/DA where they reside to confirm with whom funding responsibility lies.

Foreign and Commonwealth Personnel

18. The support is available to eligible Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) SL including Gurkha SL who reside in the UK who must meet the residency requirements detailed in Para 16 above. In addition, F&C personnel who have left the Armed Forces will also be required to meet the relevant OGD/DA requirements in regard to settlement and citizenship in the UK to attract the funding. The residency and citizenship rules for dependants are different. For further guidance on residency and citizenship requirements, covering the Armed Forces and their dependants visit the UK Border Agency's website at www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/IDIs/idischapter15/

19. Notwithstanding Para 9 above, F&C SL who have been medically discharged prior to achieving four years qualifying service are still required to meet the residency requirements specified by the OGD/DA before they can apply to study using the FE and HE Support scheme. Medically discharged F&C personnel remaining in UK may apply

¹¹ In this instance 'overseas location' also includes Northern Ireland which is not part of the scheme.

to commence studies after the required residency period has been achieved. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for an individual SL to submit a case to the relevant OGD/DA for exceptional treatment; in such a case, the decision to provide funding or not rests with the OGD/DA, not the MOD.

Approved Providers

20. Applications to undertake an eligible qualification is limited to publicly funded institutions in England, Wales and Scotland i.e. those providers in receipt of adult learner responsive/employer responsive funding. The relevant national bodies are:

- a. FE (Full Level 3 or Vocational HE and national equivalents):
 - (1) England - The Skills Funding Agency (SFA).
 - (2) Wales - The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) (DCELLS).
 - (3) Scotland - Scottish Funding Council (SFC).
- b. Higher Education (foundation degree or full undergraduate degree):
 - (1) England - Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE).
 - (2) Wales - Higher Education Funding Council of Wales (HEFCW).
 - (3) Scotland - Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS).

21. Applicants must use approved English, Scottish or Welsh based providers delivering publicly-funded FE and HE qualifications listed on the national databases. If, for the purposes of this support, any of these providers are not already listed as approved ELC providers located through the ELC website they must first apply for ELC scheme approved provider status through the ELCAS. New providers must agree to apply and adhere to the specific administrative arrangements and invoicing procedures (see para 22 below) for this scheme. Non publicly-funded FE/HE learning provision is not eligible to be considered for this scheme.

22. Having identified a provider, the onus is on the claimant to first check that the provider is eligible to participate in the scheme. If the FE/HE institution is not already listed on the ELCAS website as an approved publicly-funded provider, the institution may apply to join the scheme. This will require the provider to complete a concise on-line application process and agree to participate within the rules of the ELC scheme. To comply with audit procedures a new provider's details will be referred by ELCAS to the relevant national education authority for verification. This may take a few days; therefore, the claimant must allow sufficient time for this check to be completed as they will only be able to submit a full application once the provider has been approved and is added to the ELC list of approved providers. Full details can be obtained from ELCAS via their website www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk . New providers will, therefore, be added progressively to the ELC approved database on evidence of student demand. Only those providers identified as delivering publicly- funded FE and/or HE on the ELCAS list of approved providers can be used by claimants.

23. Further information on potential providers can also be found through a range of associated national websites but note the links below are not exclusively limited to publicly funded institutions; they also contain details of non-publicly funded providers which are not eligible for the purposes of this support:

a. Further Education:

- (1) England - www.ukrlp.co.uk
- (2) Wales - <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en>
- (3) Scotland - www.sfc.ac.uk

b. Higher Education:

- (1) England - www.hefce.ac.uk www.direct.gov.uk www.ucas.ac.uk
- (2) Wales - www.hefcw.ac.uk/index.htm
- (3) Scotland - www.saas.gov.uk

If the applicant is unsure they should seek the necessary advice from the appropriate national authority, their Service education or resettlement adviser or ELCAS. If a prospective provider is unsure about participating in this scheme they should seek advice on eligibility from the appropriate national authority. Providers delivering state-funded FE and HE qualifications should refer to ELCAS for information on the application process to join the scheme.

Purposes for which this support may not be claimed

24. The Government's commitment for this scheme is to provide full state subsidy for tuition fees only. The funding can not be used to pay for text books or other course materials or, for example, examination re-sits that are not included in the initial course fee structure and for which there may be additional charges. Similarly, the support cannot be used to pay for annual memberships fees for professional bodies or institutions to upgrade through membership levels other than through undertaking a recognised qualification listed on the national frameworks.

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

25. Fully subsidised tuition fees for eligible courses of study involve substantial financial outlay on the part of the state (MOD and OGD/DA) and considerable investment of time and effort on the part of individual applicants. Before embarking on a course of study, therefore, SL are to ensure they are fully committed to and are able to complete the course. This may include setting aside additional resources to cover any financial outgoings over and above the free tuition commitment by the state. Individuals are to consult with, and gain approval from, their Education Staff and Commanding Officer or Line Manager and, when necessary, seek specialist advice and guidance before making any additional financial commitment. Applicants are also strongly urged to seek guidance as to the self-development value of the course they are considering. Guidance for claimants no longer in Service (CNLIS) is at Para 55.

26. Before considering an application through this scheme, SL are advised to first check the national position on existing support with their relevant education authorities. There may already be existing 'free' provision by another route e.g. those aged between 19 - 25 years are already entitled to a first full level 3 in England. For those who fulfil the residency requirements, there is currently free entitlement to undertake a first degree/HNC and HND level course in Scotland. In Wales residents also attract support for FE and HE provision. It makes sense for SL to explore alternative routes with the national authorities before considering support and access through the FE and HE Support scheme. This will avoid any potential instances of double funding by the state and may preserve ELC claims for the individual.

SCHEME ADMINISTRATION

27. Applications will be administered through ELCAS. In the case of courses funded by BIS/DA, MOD (the relevant single Service) will initially pay the course fees in full each Financial Year (FY) over the duration of the course. The BIS/DA contribution will be refunded to MOD for reimbursement to Service Top Level Budgets (see Para 53). However, the SFA will pay funds to cover course fees directly to the institutions for courses that they are supporting and no payment or refund action is necessary by MOD or the single Services.

Preparing to Make an Application

28. Before embarking on any activity covered by the terms of this scheme SL must carefully consider:

- a. The relevance of the course or qualification in question to their personal development goals and choice of funding, if appropriate.
- b. Their own ability to cope with the pressures of study or provision of evidence for assessment.
- c. The risk of disruption to the course, and loss of course fees caused by exigencies of Service life.
- d. The flexibility of the study method.
- e. The time required to process the Claim form. Education staffs at Units may have to make enquiries about the Level of the proposed qualification being undertaken. Equally, the time it will take a publicly funded provider to apply for ELCAS registration and to agree to work within the specific invoicing procedures required.

29. The effects of any postings within the resettlement phase and withdrawals from the scheme should be carefully understood and, although unlikely, applicants should consider the possibility of being posted during their period of study. Normally, failure to complete the activity will result in any further application being denied. However, if failure to complete is due to Service or compassionate reasons that could not have been foreseen at the time of enrolment for the course, then this ruling will not apply.

Further information on this aspect of scheme is contained at Para 46 – 50 of this guidance and SL must be fully aware of this before submitting an application.

Making an Application

30. Eligible SL can make an application on entering their resettlement phase, normally on entering their last two years of service¹², or for up to ten years after leaving the Service. Officers from the age of 50, or Other Ranks who have completed in excess of 30 years service may register for resettlement support prior to the two year point and become eligible at the point of registration in accordance with ELC and resettlement policy.

31. Having first sought advice, as appropriate, from education and resettlement staffs to check eligibility and considered all available options and funding routes SL may then complete and submit an application form to undertake a first full Level 3 or a first HE qualification in accordance with the scheme rules. **A separate claim form must be submitted in respect of each year of a course.**

32. Claim forms are available from the CSP website www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk. Applicants are only to use the version, which ELCAS has placed on their website. Failure to use this form will result in the Claim Form being returned. Claim Forms must be completed by the applicant and countersigned by Line Managers and the responsible Resettlement/Education Staff before forwarding to the CSP. A copy of the form and record of the interview is to be held in the applicant's Personal Development Record (PDR) and personal education records where appropriate. The Application process is explained in the algorithm at Annex A and is to be adhered to at all times.

33. The Claim Form must state the cost of the tuition fees to be paid; for longer and the more costly qualification courses this is to be calculated by each FY, so that the cost is evenly spread. The course fee must include any existing discounts or fee reductions. Under these circumstances it is essential to ensure that the state is not duplicating payment to the provider. The provider must be clear and transparent in presenting their fee structure.

34. In calculating the division of costs between MOD and the national education authorities the Claim Form must state the MOD contribution (i.e. up to a maximum of £1k or £2k depending on tier eligibility under ELC scheme rules) with the remaining balance (the amount which would have equated to the individual Personal Contribution) annotated in the relevant box. The two amounts when added together should total the course fee quoted by the provider. As with the current ELC scheme, the ELC contribution will in no case exceed 80% of the gross course cost (tuition fees only). This includes VAT but excludes payment for food, accommodation, travel, subsistence and course books and materials for which there may be additional charges and which are, therefore the individual claimant's responsibility. The OGD/DA will meet the minimum 20% cost towards the tuition fees which would have been paid by the individual claimant from their own resources. Where all ELC has been exhausted but the claimant still

¹² Notwithstanding the general tenet that personnel enter their resettlement phase at the start of their last 2 years of service, in many cases this is unlikely to align with the start date of courses. Therefore, individuals may be authorised to commence a course under this scheme some months earlier if all other requirements are met. In these cases guidance should be sought from the single Service ELC managers and/or SO2 Skills in TESR.

qualifies for full state subsidy then course tuition fees will be met in full by the OGD/DA with no MOD contribution. The Claim Form includes an Annex with some examples of how the division of costs, which must be rounded up to the nearest full penny, is calculated.

35. On receipt of a properly completed and authorised Claim Form, ELCAS will send a Claim Authorisation Note (CAN) to the individual through the Education Staff. The CAN is effectively a promissory note to the provider that the individual is eligible to receive fully subsidised state support, free from tuition fees, for the qualification being undertaken and that the state will meet the cost.

36. A claim must be received by ELCAS at least 15 clear working days prior to the course start date. Applicants must ensure there is sufficient time to receive the CAN to present to their chosen Provider before the course starts; for many providers including the Open University, this means the CAN must be presented to them by the final course registration date. Sufficient time must also be allowed to allow any new publicly-funded provider not listed on the ELCAS database to apply for scheme membership as an approved provider. A CAN will not be issued by ELCAS until this process has completed.

37. All payments will be made direct to the Learning Provider by MOD on receipt of a correctly completed invoice once the applicant commences the course of study in accordance with the current ELC scheme procedure. **Provider invoices will be accepted by MOD (through ELCAS) no earlier than six weeks after claimants starts their course and must confirm that the claimant has completed six weeks of study.**

38. Under no circumstances are personnel to pay any money to learning providers towards the cost of their tuition. This scheme provides full state subsidy towards the cost of tuition. Should they do so, they will be deemed to have invalidated their CAN. Personnel are reminded that they will not be able to claim a refund for any money paid to a provider under the terms of the ELC scheme. Personnel are not to commence a course without first receiving their CAN and presenting it to their approved learning provider. Furthermore, personnel are not permitted to transfer their CAN to a different course or provider. Applicants are expressly forbidden to pay money upfront to a provider and subsequently seek reimbursement from MOD on receipt of their CAN. **If claimants do not complete the initial first six weeks of study, the OGD/DA will not fund any tuition fee costs owed to the training provider and that the payment of such costs will be the personal responsibility of the claimant.**

39. It is expected providers will waive any initial registration fee to help reduce the level of bureaucracy. SL must not pay any monies upfront by way of a deposit or registration fee. Those providers requiring an assurance to protect against no-shows could ask for an applicant's credit card details. Any provider who insists on a deposit on registration should be referred to ELCAS.

40. All new providers must agree to adhere to the ELC terms for invoice processing. This will require ELCAS to establish a provider record containing minimum provider details and for MOD to issue a contractor code.

41. The CSP will process Claim Forms within 15 working days of receipt. On receipt of the CAN, the learner is to submit the CAN to the provider and confirm that they are eligible for state support, free from tuition fees, under the Government's new scheme. Length of Support.

42. Support will be made available for the course of study until normal completion date. In some instances such as illness, compassionate circumstances or the learner being deployed during resettlement or after service on transfer to the reserve, it may be possible for the support to be made available beyond the normal length of the course of study.

Evaluation and Achievement Tracking

43. In accordance with current ELC policy, ELCAS will conduct a targeted programme of evaluation of provider training and support including site visits and electronic evaluation of student feedback.

Self Declaration

44. SL are required to complete the Self-Declaration on the Claim Form confirming that they are eligible to receive support free from tuition for their first full Level 3 or first HE qualification and that by receiving the state support it is their intention to complete the full qualification. They must also declare that they meet the residency and citizenship/settlement criteria. Service education and resettlement staffs are to advise applicants as appropriate on what constitutes eligibility but it will be the learners' ultimate responsibility to ensure they understand and fully comply with the scheme policy.

45. In time the learner may be able to provide documentary proof from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) facility or through access to via the Learner Records Service once in receipt of a Unique Learner Number.

Cancellation and Withdrawal Procedures

46. Learners are not permitted to cancel their place on a course without strictly adhering to single Service procedures. Under certain operational or compassionate circumstances, personnel will be permitted to cancel their course and their CAN, but only if the provider has not yet sent the invoice to the CSP. If the provider has sent the invoice, the CSP are obliged to honour it and the learner is then to follow single Service Reinstatement procedures. Where approval is given for cancellation, then the specific ELC instalment (where any ELC use remains) earmarked for the cancelled course will not in fact be used.

47. Learners are not permitted to withdraw from their course without adhering strictly to single Service procedures. Under certain operational or compassionate circumstances, learners may be permitted to withdraw from their course and have the particular ELC instalment (where any ELC use remains) used for that course reinstated.

OGD/DA Cancellation/Withdrawal Criteria

48. Personnel who fail to follow the procedures at paras 46 and 47 above risk forfeiting their continuing ELC instalment and risk forfeiting their membership eligibility for the ELC scheme. Full details of the procedure are given in single Service policy documents. Those that have used up their ELC but are claiming full state subsidy and do not fully comply with the withdrawal and cancellation procedures risk forfeiting their membership eligibility for the ELC scheme and thus their eligibility for the FE & HE Support scheme. Moreover, all personnel will also be subject to the criteria laid down by the OGD/DA. **The OGD/DA will not fund any tuition fee costs owed to the training provider of any claimants who do not complete the initial first six weeks of study. Such costs will be the personal responsibility of the claimant.**

Amendment of Approved Studies

49. Learners are not permitted to amend their submitted application without strictly adhering to single Service procedures. Full details on activities which constitute a claim amendment can be found on the ELC website: www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk

50. Under certain operational and compassionate circumstances, personnel may be able to arrange with their Provider to extend the duration of their course dates, in order to complete their qualification. Under no circumstances are learners to transfer their CAN to a different course or to a different start date to that shown on their CAN.

SL Re-entering Full Time Service

51. Eligible SL who embark on a first FE or HE qualification during their resettlement phase under the FE & HE Support scheme who subsequently remain or re-enter the Armed Forces may, with the agreement of the OGD/DA, continue with their chosen qualification until completion without incurring any personal financial penalty¹³. Under these circumstances the Service must take account of the study and its duration and be prepared to endorse and support its continuation to completion. However, such SL will forego any further state support under this commitment on finally leaving the Service having effectively used up their opportunity to draw down fully subsidised tuition fees. A record will be retained by the CSP. Alternately, the training provider and OGD/DA may agree to defer the completion of the course under the scheme; final authority for this rests with the OGD/DA and if agreed a record will be retained by the CSP.

Other Funding Streams

52. Service leavers are not permitted to claim any other source of MOD funding including the Individual Resettlement Training Cost (IRTC) or Standard Learning Credit related to any application made under this scheme.

Cost Recovery Process

53. The MOD Guide to Repayment (JSP 368) sets out the policy and process for Top Level Budgets to recover costs from OGD and Agencies in accordance with HM Treasury guidelines, Managing Public Money. Depending on national arrangements it ELCAS will provide a quarterly report to the Service TLB budget managers, copied to OGD/DA, to enable instigation of recovery action of OGD/DA contributions to MOD and

¹³ This may require the claimant to change the course to a part-time/distance learning basis, possible with an alternate provider transferring CAT points etc.

to maintain a record of invoice tracking and volume. The full model and guidance has been produced separately by DGFM Fin Pol Rep in consultation with OGD/DA and Service budget managers.

Single-Service Authorities for Authorisation of FE & HE Support Claims

54. Applications made by SL during their resettlement phase should be submitted through:

a. Royal Navy. Guidance on completion of application forms will be provided by full time RN/RM Education and Resettlement Officers (EROs), Naval Education and Training Support Officers (NETSOs) and Naval Resettlement Information Officers (NRIOs) at RN/RM Learning Centres who will provide further detailed advice and guidance. Education and Resettlement staffs seeking further clarification of the regulations should contact the RN ELC Manager at FLEET-FOST-TA EL3R RESET SO3C (Tel: Mil - 93832 5954 / Civ - 020392 625954) .

b. Army. Guidance on completion of application forms will be provided by the Individual Education and Resettlement Officers (IERO). Guidance on all ELC related matters is available from Army Education Centres which must be used in the first instance by serving personnel undergoing resettlement. Education and Resettlement staffs seeking further clarification of the regulations should contact the Army ELC Manager at LF-DETS(A)-LCS-SO3 (Tel: Mil – 94391 7565 / 7580 or Civ - 01264 381565 or 01264 381580) .

c. Royal Air Force. Guidance on completion of application forms will be provided by the Resettlement and Education Coordinators (REC). All other ELC related matters can be obtained from Personal Learning Advisors (PLAs) at RAF Learning Centres. The RAF policy lead is Flt Lt Learning Forces at 22TrgGp-LrngFrcs SO3 (Tel: Mil - 95221 5603/5957 or Civ - 01494 495603/495957)

PROCEDURE FOR CLAIMANTS NO LONGER IN SERVICE (CNLIS)

55. Personnel who meet the eligibility criteria and left the Service on or after 17 Jul 08 and may make an application to utilise the scheme within 10 years of their date of discharge from Service. A Claim Form is from the ELCAS website (www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk) and submit to the single-Service authorities below for endorsement:

a. Royal Navy.

ELC Manager NTE
Mailpoint 3.3
Leach Building
Whale Island
HMS Excellent
Portsmouth
PO2 8BY
Telephone: 02392 625954
Email: FLEET-FOST-TAEL3RRESETSO3C@mod.uk

Personnel still serving in the Royal Navy are not to use this point of contact but are to consult the staff in their local RN Education Centre.

b. Army.

ELC Manager
DETS (A)
Zone 4, Floor 2
Ramillies Building
HQLF
Monxton Road
Andover
SP11 8HT
Email: elc@detsa.co.uk
Tel: 01264 381565 or 01264 381580

Personnel still serving in the Army are not to use this point of contact but are to consult staff in their Army Education Centre.

c. Royal Air Force.

Flight Lieutenant Learning Forces
Room 24, Hunter Block
RAF High Wycombe
Naphill
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE
Email: 22TrgGp-LrngCreditsAdmin@mod.uk
Tel: 01494 495603 or 01494 495957

CNLIS are encouraged to refer to the RAF Learning Forces website for further information. Personnel still serving in the Royal Air Force are not to use this point of contact but are to consult the staff in their local Learning Centre.

Payment Approval

56. The Approval Authorities for the three Services are:
- a. Royal Navy - DACOS (T&E)
 - b. Army - HQ DETS(A)
 - c. Royal Air Force - DACOS (Trg Mgt)

AUTHORITY FOR TRAVEL

57. Travelling expenses may be claimed for SL undergoing resettlement for authorised provision under this scheme subject to single Service regulations and local budget approval.

58. Eligible ex-Service personnel who make an application within the 10 year window of leaving the service are not eligible to claim travelling or any other related costs from the MOD.

Annex:

A. Further and Higher Education Support Scheme Claim Process To Be Followed By Learners and Learning Providers.

ANNEX A TO
JSP 898 PART 4
CHAPTER 7

**FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT SCHEME CLAIM PROCESS TO
BE FOLLOWED BY LEARNERS AND LEARNING PROVIDERS**

TO BE ISSUED