

## DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES

(Not to be communicated to anyone outside HM Service without authority)

**Title:** Further and Higher Educational Support for Service Leavers

**Audience:** All Service Leavers

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**Content:** Information about the Government's commitment to fund free from tuition fees a first further or higher education qualification

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## **BACKGROUND – THE SERVICE PERSONNEL COMMAND PAPER – FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR SERVICE LEAVERS**

1. The Government announced to Parliament on 17 Jul 08 a package of cross-government support to Armed Forces personnel, their families and veterans<sup>1</sup>. One of the measures commits 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.

2. Since the announcement MOD has engaged with the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the equivalent education authorities within the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government Assembly and other key players to define and agree the parameters of this additional Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) support, develop the policy and implement the proposals.

3. To be considered eligible for state subsidised FE and HE free from tuition fees delivered within England, Scotland or Wales the SL must have completed six years full time service and be a member of the Enhanced Learning Credit (ELC) scheme. Therefore to ensure personnel are in the best possible position to take advantage of the Government's commitment applications will be administered for eligible SLs through the existing ELC Administration Service (ELCAS) operated by G4S Assessment Services.

### **INTRODUCTION**

4. This guidance should be read in conjunction with 2008DIN07-104 which sets out the policy for the Armed Forces Enhanced Learning Credit Scheme. It provides refined definitions of the eligibility criteria, information on scheme administration including information on how an eligible Service leaver can make an application and the invoicing procedures for providers.

5. All Service leavers 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**

6. The following definitions are used throughout this guidance:

#### MOD Education and Resettlement staffs and terminology

a. 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.

b. The Designated Officer for the ELC contract delivering the enhanced service is the holder of the appointment of DGTE-TEPoI Ed post on the staff of the Director General of Training & Education in the MOD.

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

d. 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 equivalent) free from tuition fees.

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

#### Qualification Level

e. **A first Level 3 or national equivalent.** This refers to a first full Level 3 i.e. the achievement of two GCE A levels<sup>2</sup> (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).

f. **A first foundation degree or first full undergraduate degree or national equivalent<sup>3</sup>.** 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.

g. In Scotland the equivalent qualification is a Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) or a first undergraduate degree, undertaken at a further education college (FE college) or a higher education institution (HEI).

#### Service Leaver

h. In accordance with JSP534<sup>4</sup> a Service leaver (SL) is defined as:

(i) **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.

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

The generic use of the term Service leaver (SL) throughout this guidance implicitly includes those ex-Armed Forces personnel who terminated Service on or after 17 July 2008.

### **AIMS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT**

7. The aims of the Service Personnel Command Paper education commitment are:

a. To provide fully state subsidised tuition fees for eligible Service leavers 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 DIUS and the Scottish and Welsh administrations.

b. To build on the extensive range of professional and personal development opportunities made available 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 Service leavers to the UK skills pool and providing the opportunity for them to raise their skill levels by achieving nationally recognised qualifications in economically viable skills which benefit the nation .

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<sup>2</sup> or in England and Wales the equivalent AS levels

<sup>3</sup> Leaver must undertake at least the equivalent of 50% of a full time course

<sup>4</sup> The Tri-Service Resettlement Manual

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

8. In order to take advantage of this support Service leavers (regardless of being a normal or medical discharge) must:

- a. Have completed six years full-time service from date of enlistment.
- b. Previously joined the ELC scheme and completed at least 4 years qualifying scheme membership (this includes approved retrospective registration see para 11).
- c. Only apply for a first eligible FE/HE qualification at the level for which they are academically qualified to enter learning on leaving the Service.
- d. Have left the Service or entered their qualifying resettlement phase on or after 17 Jul 08 – the date of the Service Personnel Paper announcement.
- e. Meet the residency requirements for this UK based support to qualify for the full-state subsidy.

## **MAIN FEATURES**

9. In addition to the main eligibility criteria above the main features of the new scheme are as follows:

- a. Provision will take effect from academic year 09/10 i.e. for eligible qualifications starting in Aug 09 onwards (FE) and Sep 09 onwards (HE).
- 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. SLs 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 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 which do not have to be consecutive) and DIUS/LSC or the devolved administration equivalents in Scotland and Wales will 'buy out' the personal contribution which would have been paid by the individual using their ELC.
- e. If ELCs have already been exhausted in-Service the commitment to fund the tuition fees for eligible personnel full transfers to DIUS/LSC or the devolved administration. For example, a claimant may have used their ELC under the existing scheme rules (i.e. making a personal contribution) to achieve a Foundation Degree. This would then open the gateway to top up to a full undergraduate degree free from tuition fees as an eligible Service Leaver or veteran. Under these circumstances and to help reduce the level of bureaucracy until other national arrangements can be put in place, MOD will continue to pay the course fee and reclaim the fee in full from the relevant national education authorities.
- f. Similarly, once any remaining ELCs run out after leaving service, again the commitment for any continued funding to complete the first full FE or HE qualification will transfer to DIUS/LSC or the devolved administration.

g. 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 membership 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.

h. This provision will not be retrospectively applied to those who left the Service before 17 Jul 08. Only personnel who left the Service on or after 17 Jul 08<sup>5</sup> and start their courses in academic year 09/10 or later may be eligible if they meet fully the qualifying criteria.

i. With regard to this specific Government commitment, the state subsidised educational support may be transferred to the spouse or civil partner in the case of death in Service or medical discharge where an individual's medical condition is so severe that it will prevent them from taking advantage of the support. For a widow/widower, bereaved civil or 'eligible' partner (as defined in JSP 534) to take advantage of this support the eligibility criteria must be met in full (para 8 a-e above refers). As for eligible Service leavers support can be accessed for up to ten years after death or severe injury occurs. In such circumstances a decision will be determined by the discharge authority. Each application must be considered and endorsed by the respective Service Director of Education before submission.

j. Consideration of transfer to the spouse, civil or eligible partner is a concession for this funding commitment only and is not connected in any way to Enhanced Learning Credits scheme policy or the levels of compensation determined by SPVA under the terms of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) or former arrangements. The spouse, civil or eligible partner is not entitled to any cash equivalent to the full state subsidy as part of the compensation package. They must also be in a position to benefit from the support by undertaking their first full Level 3, or first foundation degree or first undergraduate degree (or national equivalent) and meet the UK's residential requirements.

k. Transfer of ELC to the spouse, civil or eligible partner or any other individual is not permitted under any circumstances (2008DIN07-104 refers).

l. Before making an application SL are advised to first check the national position on existing support with the relevant national education authorities (see para 24). Support for tuition fees may already be available without having to access via this top up scheme.

#### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE ELC SCHEME**

10. Full details about ELC membership can be found in 2008-DIN07-104 dated 1 Jul 08. All Armed Forces personnel leaving the Service with six or more years service must fully meet the scheme membership rules.

#### **Late entry to the ELC scheme**

11. There will be no amnesty declared for those serving personnel who failed to register as an ELC scheme member. In exceptional circumstances personnel may continue to apply for consideration for late scheme registration only if they are able to prove that they failed to initially register through no fault of their own. Under these circumstances the individual should first seek advice from their respective Service. Application for late scheme registration must be endorsed by the single Service Directorate of Education.

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<sup>5</sup> 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.

### **Personnel on other Engagements**

12. Full Time Reserve Service (FRTS) and Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS) may be eligible to take advantage of this new support but only where they meet 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.

### **EDUCATION PROVISION ATTRACTING SUPPORT**

13. The provision accords with Government policy and is targeted at eligible Service leavers who will derive the most benefit either during their last two years of leaving the Service (their resettlement phase) or for up to 10 years after leaving the Service. In common with the wider national education policy the funding supports free from tuition fees the achievement of a first full level 3, or a first higher education qualification (a foundation degree or first full undergraduate degree (or national equivalent).

14. Application may be made for either part-time 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:

### **Eligible Qualifications**

Further Education (Level 3 and national equivalent)

#### **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 LSC on the Learning Aim Database (LAD) and which are:

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

For full details see: [www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk)

#### **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:

[www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk) and additionally

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/dcells/publications/publications/guidanceandinformation/aogmarch08/qualificationslistjune08?lang=en>

#### **Scotland**

To be eligible for the support a learner must be an eligible learner and working towards one of the following qualifications:

- A first Level 6 qualification (SVQ Level 3) within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

The qualification must normally be delivered by a further education college (FE college), holding a valid registration with the National Learning Opportunities Database (NLOD).

Full details see:  
[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

Higher Education (foundation degree or full undergraduate degree)

### **England and Wales**

To be eligible for the support a learner must be an eligible learner and working towards a higher education 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 a higher National Certificate or Diploma, for which entry qualification is lower than a degree and which normally takes place at a publicly-funded institution.

Full details see:

[www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk) and additionally

[www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

### **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 further education college (FE college) or a Higher Education Institution(HEI), holding a valid registration with the national Learning Opportunities Database (NLOD).

Full details see: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

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

[www.qualifications-across-boundaries.org/compare/uk\\_ireland](http://www.qualifications-across-boundaries.org/compare/uk_ireland)

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 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.

### **Non-British Service Personnel**

17. The support is available to eligible Foreign and Commonwealth Service leavers including Gurkha Service leavers 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 counts towards UK residency). Non-British nationals who have left the Services will be required to meet the rules on 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/](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/IDIs/idischapter15/) Non-British nationals who return to their country of origin or another country outside of England, Scotland or Wales do not qualify for this support.

### **Approved Providers**

18. 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:

#### Further Education (Full Level 3 and national equivalent)

England - The Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

Wales - The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) (DCELLS)

Scotland - Scottish Funding Council (SFC)

#### Higher Education (foundation degree or full undergraduate degree)

England - Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE)

Wales - Higher Education Funding Council of Wales (HEFCW)

Scotland - Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)

19. 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 membership through the ELC Administration Service (ELCAS). New providers must agree to apply and adhere to the specific administrative arrangements and invoicing procedures (see para 20 below) for this scheme. Non publicly-funded FE/HE learning provision is not eligible to be considered for this scheme.

20. 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 complete 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](http://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.

21. 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. 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.

#### Further Education

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

#### Higher Education

England - [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)  
Wales - [www.hefcw.ac.uk/index.htm](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/index.htm)  
Scotland - [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk)

#### **Purposes for which this support may not be claimed**

22. 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**

23 . Fully subsidised tuition fees for eligible courses of study involve substantial financial outlay on the part of the state (MOD and OGDs) and considerable investment of time and effort on the part of individual applicants. Before embarking on a course of study, therefore, Service Leavers are to ensure they are fully committed 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 paragraph 54.

24. Before considering an application through this scheme SLs 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 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 Service Leavers to explore alternative routes with the national authorities before considering support and access through the ELC scheme. This will avoid any potential instances of double funding by the state.

## **SCHEME ADMINISTRATION**

25. Applications will be administered through ELCAS with MOD (the single Service) initially paying the course fees in full each Financial Year (FY) over the duration of the qualification. The DIUS/devolved administration contribution will be refunded to MOD for reimbursement to Service Top Level Budgets (see para 52).

### **Preparing to Make an Application**

26. Before embarking on any activity covered by the terms of this scheme Service leavers 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.

27. The effects of any postings within the last two years of resettlement 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 paragraphs 44 – 49 of this guidance and SL must be fully aware of this before submitting an application.

### **Making an Application**

28. Eligible SL can make an application on entering their resettlement phase, normally on entering their last two years of service, 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.

29. 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, first foundation or undergraduate degree (and national equivalent qualification) in accordance with the scheme rules.

30. Claim forms are available from the CSP website, [www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk](http://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 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.

31. 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 Financial Year so that the cost is evenly spread. The course fee must include any existing discounts or fee reductions. For example, in England the state already contributes at least 50% of the total funding for tuition fees for SL over 25 years of age undertaking their first full level 3 qualification. **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.

32. 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 (DIUS/LSC/devolved administration) 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 qualifies for full state subsidy then course tuition fees will be met in full by the OGD 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.

33. The CSP, on receipt of a properly completed and authorised Claim Form 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.

34. 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.

35. 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.

**36. 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.

37. It is expected providers will waive any initial registration fee to help reduce the level of bureaucracy. SLs 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.

38. 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.

39. 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**

40. Support is 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**

41. 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**

42. Service leavers are required to complete the Self-Declaration on the Claim Form confirming they are eligible to receive support free from tuition for their first full Level 3 or first higher education qualification (a foundation degree or first undergraduate degree or national equivalent) 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 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.

43. In time the learner may be able to provide documentary proof from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) facility or through access to via "Managing Information Across Partners "(MIAP)" once in receipt of an Unique Learner Number.

#### **Cancellation Procedures**

44. **Cancellation.** 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.

45. **Reinstatement.** 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.

46. Personnel who fail to follow the procedures at paras 44 and 45 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 will be subject to the policies and procedures laid down by DIUS, the LSC or the devolved administrations.

47. **Amendments** 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](http://www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk)

**48. Extending Duration of Course Dates.** 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.

**49. SL Re-entering Full Time Service During Resettlement.** Eligible SL who embark on a first FE or HE qualification during their resettlement phase, under the new provision, and who then change their minds about leaving the Service may continue with their chosen qualification until completion without incurring any personal financial penalty. 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.

50. The 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 scheme administrator.

#### **Other funding streams**

51. 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**

52. The MOD Guide to Repayment (JSP 368) sets out the policy and process for Top Level Budgets to recover costs from Other Government Department's (OGDs) and Agencies in accordance with HM Treasury guidelines, Managing Public Money. Depending on national arrangements it is proposed that ELCAS will provide a monthly report to the Service TLB budget managers, copied to OGDs, to enable instigation of recovery action of OGD's contributions to MOD and 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 DIUS/LSC Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly Government and Service budget managers.

#### **Single-Service Authorities to which applications should be submitted**

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

**Royal Navy** - 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 policy desk for ELCs, FLEET-FOST-TE EL3R RESET SO3C.  
(Tel: Mil - 93832 5954 / Civ - 020392 625954) .

**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. The Army policy lead is ETS2 EO LC, HQ DETS(A), Trenchard Lines, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 6BE.  
(Tel: Mil - 94344 8729 / Civ - 01980 618729)

**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 the Learning Credits Administrator, Room 24, Air 22 Training Group Learning Forces, Building 28, Hunter Block, RAF High Wycombe, Naphill, Buckinghamshire, HP14 4EU.  
(Tel: Mil - 95221 5957 / Civ - 01494 495957)

### **PROCEDURE FOR CLAIMANTS NO LONGER IN SERVICE (CNLIS)**

54. Personnel who left the Service on or after 17 Jul 08 and who intend to make an application within 10 years of leaving can apply by downloading a Claim Form from the ELCAS website ([www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk](http://www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk)) and submit to the single-Service authorities below for endorsement:

- a. **Royal Navy.** FLEET-FOST-TE EL3R RESET SO3C, Floor 3, Leach Building, Whale Island, Portsmouth PO2 8BY (telephone: 02392 625954). Those 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.** ETS2 EO LC, HQ DETS (A), Trenchard Lines, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 6BE (telephone: 01980 618728/9). Those 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.** Learning Credits Administrator, Room 24, Air 22 Training Group Learning Forces, Building 28, Hunter Block, RAF High Wycombe, Naphill, Buckinghamshire, HP14 4UE (telephone: 01494 495957 or 495603). CNLIS are encouraged to refer to the Learning Forces website for further information. Service leavers in their resettlement phase are to consult the staff in their local Learning Centre.

### **Payment Approval**

55. The Approval Authorities for the three Services are:

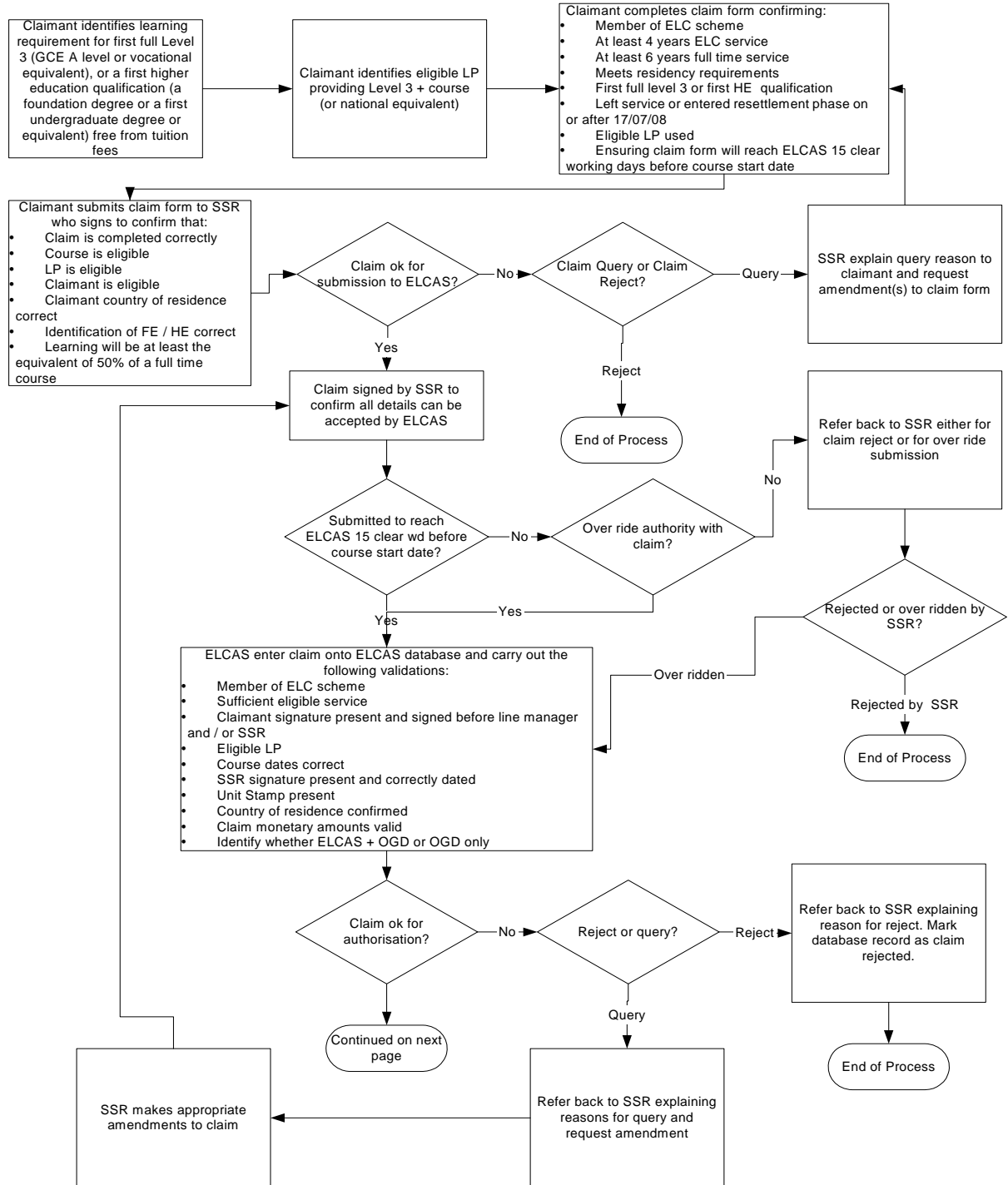
- |    |                        |   |                 |
|----|------------------------|---|-----------------|
| a. | <b>Royal Navy</b>      | - | DACOS (T&E)     |
| b. | <b>Army</b>            | - | HQ DETS(A)      |
| c. | <b>Royal Air Force</b> | - | DACOS (Trg Mgt) |

### **AUTHORITY FOR TRAVEL**

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

57. 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.

**Full State Subsidy – FE/HE Tuition Fees - Claim Process**  
**Annex A**



**Full State Subsidy – FE/HE Tuition Fees - Claim Process - Continued**  
**Annex A**

