



Ministry
of Defence

JSP 898
Defence Direction and Guidance on
Training, Education and Skills

Part 1: Directive

3.5.2 Enhanced Learning Credits Scheme

The MOD promotes lifelong learning among members of the Armed Forces, and this is encouraged through the Learning Credit schemes. The Enhanced Learning Credit (ELC) scheme helps eligible Service Personnel (SP) or Leavers (SL) with the cost of learning. The Scheme allows a single award in each of a maximum of three separate Financial Years, or a single aggregated lower tier award. ELCs may be claimed for learning which is an integral part, and results in the cost effective achievement, of a nationally recognised qualification at Level 3¹ or above. The ELC scheme permits Regular SP to pursue their personal development, both during their Service and generally for 5 years after discharge,² subject to the eligibility criteria being met. This Defence Direction explains the rules of the ELC Scheme as it applies to SP. All SP eligible to receive ELC support are required to adhere to this Direction. The rules of the ELC Scheme that apply to SL set out in this JSP are based on legislation.³

Scope

1. The following terms, defined as below, are used in this Direction:
 - a. 'Ed Staff' refers to all RN/RM, Army and RAF education and resettlement staff, including: RN/RM Education and Resettlement Officers (EROs), Naval Resettlement Information Officers (NRIOs), Naval Education and Training Service Officers (NETSOs); Army Learning and Development Officers (LDOs) and Individual Education and Resettlement Officers (IEROs); and RAF Learning Centre and Education Staff.
 - b. The Designated Officer for the ELC scheme is 'People-TESSRR-Skills,' and works on the staff of TESSRR, CDP in the MOD.
 - c. The contractor to administer the ELC scheme is G4S Assessment Services (branded the Enhanced Learning Credit Administration Service (ELCAS)) and known as the Customer Service Provider (CSP).
 - d. The term 'ELCAS website' means the website www.enhancedlearningcredits.com
 - e. The term 'Learning Provider' (LP) is used to describe those educational or training institutions that are eligible to provide courses under the ELC scheme, and are properly registered and endorsed by the CSP.
 - f. The term 'Learning Purpose' is used to describe the reason or objective of learning, which must be in direct pursuit of a nationally recognised qualification at Level 3 or above in order to be eligible for ELC support.
 - g. The terms 'applicant,' 'claimant' and 'learner' describe individuals accessing the ELC scheme. For ease, the generic terms 'SP' and 'SL'⁴ are used, and include serving Regular and ex-Regular Armed Forces people who meet the eligibility criteria for this scheme.
 - h. 'Date of enlistment' also includes date of commission (where relevant).

¹ (A level and equivalent) and above as defined by the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), a Level 6 or above on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) or, if pursued overseas, an approved international equivalent higher level qualification. The QCF is being replaced by the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) from 1 Oct 15. Ofqual expect the QCF will expire on 31 Dec 17.

² See paragraph 11.

³ The Armed Forces (Enhanced Learning Credit Scheme and Further and Higher Education Commitment Scheme) Order 2012, S.I. 2012/1796 (as amended, most recently by S.I. 2016/310).

⁴ SL in accordance with JSP 534: The Tri-Service Resettlement Manual.

Aims

2. The aims of the ELC scheme are to:
 - a. Provide funding support to SP who wish to enhance their educational, academic, professional or vocational achievements by pursuing learning (Level 3 to 8) and
 - b. Enhance the reputation of the MOD, thereby encouraging the recruitment and retention of high quality SP.

Features of the ELC Scheme

3. The features of the ELC scheme:
 - a. ELC is not an entitlement unless SP and SL fully satisfy the eligibility criteria of the scheme to claim ELC support.
 - b. ELC is not a refund scheme. Under no circumstances will MOD refund any SP or SL who pay for or commence their learning in advance and subsequently seek a retrospective ELC claim.
 - c. Prior to 1 Apr 16, SP were required to make a positive commitment to Level 3 to 8 lifelong learning by registering as a member of the ELC scheme to claim ELC support. From 1 Apr 16, those completing Phase 1 training, plus all currently serving SP who are not already members of the ELC scheme, will automatically become members of the scheme.
 - d. Three types of ELC award are available:
 - (1) The Lower Tier level provides funding for up to a maximum of 3 awards of up to £1k per FY. SP or SL must have completed either 4 or more years qualifying service completed before 1 Apr 17, or otherwise 6 or more years qualifying service completed on or after 1 Apr 17.
 - (2) From 1 Apr 16, a new type of award is available, called an Aggregated Lower Tier award, which provides a single award of up to £3k for SP who have completed 6 or more years qualifying service on or after 1 Apr 16. This type of award may not be taken by SP or SL who previously accessed a Lower Tier award or who qualify for Upper Tier awards.
 - (3) The Upper Tier level provides funding for up to a maximum of 3 awards of up to £2k per FY. SP or SL must have completed 8 or more years qualifying service.

Providing SP and SL meet all the eligibility criteria, they may make ELC claims in up to three separate FYs (which need not be consecutive and may be a combination of Lower Tier and Upper Tier awards) either while in Service or generally for 5 years after discharge.⁵ ELC funds may be directed at one Learning Purpose (such as successive years' study towards a particular qualification) or different Purposes in each of the 3 years. An Aggregated Lower Tier award replaces the 3 Lower Tier awards that could otherwise be made.

⁵ See paragraph 11.

e. ELC is an individual award to assist in the personal development of eligible SP and SL. It cannot be transferred to any other individual except under the terms stated in Para 14.

f. This support is provided on a 'burden sharing' basis reflecting the mutual benefit that personal development brings to SP and the organisation. SP in receipt of ELC funding are expected to make a personal contribution of at least 20% of fees using their own funds, as well as using off-duty or leave periods for study. Undertaking ELC funded study does not confer duty status and sS regulations should provide further clarification, if required.

Membership

4. **Prior to 1 Apr 16** SP had to be in Service both when they applied and when they were registered as members of the ELC scheme. Acknowledgement letters for membership were forwarded to SP via Ed Staff, to be retained by the SP in their Personal Development Record (PDR). **On 1 Apr 16** all current SP who have completed Phase 1 training will be auto-enrolled in the scheme if they are not already members. **From 1 Apr 16** new SP will be auto-enrolled as members of the ELC scheme on completion of Phase 1 training. SP will no longer register as members on enlistment, during second registration opportunity or by late registration (see paragraphs 5 to 7).

5. **On enlistment.** All new recruits are to be made aware of the existence of ELC during the recruitment process. During Phase 1 (Initial) training, recruits are to be briefed by the appropriate staff as to the detailed benefits of ELC.

6. **Second registration opportunity.** SL who chose not to register for the scheme in their 1st year of service may have registered as members of the ELC scheme before 1 Apr 16 by completing an ELC application form during a six month window between the 8 and 8½ year Service point, measured from their enlistment date. They may not make an ELC claim unless they have completed the required qualifying service, which is measured from: if the person left service before 1 Apr 16, the first day of the six month window; or in all other cases, whichever is the later of 1 Apr 2000 and the date of enlistment.

7. **Exceptional authorisation for late registration.** In exceptional cases, SL who failed to register during the initial or second registration opportunity periods could submit a request to their single Service (sS) Authority for exceptional authorisation for late registration. This request had to prove that the SL was, for Service reasons, unable to register in accordance with the existing scheme regulations while they were serving (such as, on operational deployment or due to administrative error by their Phase 1 unit) during the recognised registration periods.

8. **SP on other engagements.** Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS), Military Provost Guard service (MPGS) and Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS)⁶ may have elected to join the ELC scheme in the expectation of meeting the eligibility requirements, noting:

a. Eligible Service, for the purpose of calculating qualifying service as a requirement to establish eligibility, includes only that time on active service after 1 Apr 00.

b. Qualifying Service may include a mix of periods of Regular and non-Regular service and need not be continuous. It should be recorded on the 'Interrupted Service' Form, available from the ELCAS website and should be submitted with the registration application and with each ELC claim.

c. These SP, if still in service on 1 Apr 16, will also be auto-enrolled as members of the scheme on 1 Apr 16.

⁶ All other Reserve engagement types are ineligible for this support.

Eligibility criteria

9. In order to make ELC claims, scheme members must:
 - a. Complete the required length of eligible service before submitting the ELC claim form and prior to commencing the course of study for which ELC support is being claimed; and
 - b. The SP or SL must start the course in respect of which the claim is made before the end of their period of eligibility.⁷
10. **Length of eligible service requirement.** SP or SL must complete 'eligible service' (i.e. sufficient qualifying service⁸) to qualify for different levels of award:
 - a. For lower tier claims, those who complete 4 years' qualifying service before 1 Apr 17 are eligible: for those who do not complete 4 years' qualifying service before 1 Apr 17, 6 years' qualifying service is needed.
 - b. For aggregated lower tier claims, 6 years' qualifying service completed on or after 1 Apr 16 is required.
 - c. For higher tier claims, 8 years' qualifying service is required.
11. 'Eligible service' commences as follows:
 - a. For SL who were already serving before 1 Apr 03 and who registered on the scheme by 1 Apr 04, eligible service runs from 1 Apr 00 or date of enlistment, whichever is later.
 - b. For SP and SL who entered Service on or after 1 Apr 03 and registered on the scheme during the initial registration opportunity (paragraph 5), eligible service runs from the date of enlistment.
 - c. For SP and SL who joined at the second registration opportunity (paragraph 6), eligible service runs: for a member who left service before 1 Apr 16, from the date of the 8 years' service point; and for SP and SL who were in service on 1 Apr 16, from 1 Apr 00 or date of enlistment, whichever is later .
 - d. For SP and SL who registered through late registration (paragraph 7): if the SP or SL was serving before 1 Apr 03, whichever is later of 1 Apr 00 and date of enlistment; and if the SP or SL was serving on or after 1 Apr 03, from the date of enlistment.
 - e. For SP and SL who were auto-enrolled while in service on 1 Apr 16, eligible service runs from 1 Apr 00 or date of enlistment, whichever is later.
12. Time spent on an unpaid career break does not count as qualifying service but an ELC claim can be submitted for learning to take place during a career break.
13. Paid maternity/paternity leave counts as qualifying service but not unpaid additional maternity/paternity leave.
14. **Period to use ELCs:** SP and SL must commence the course in relation to which they are claiming an ELC award before the end of the entitlement time limit, which is defined as follows:

⁷ See paragraph 11.

⁸ 'Qualifying service' means service in the armed forces and includes time spent on ordinary maternity leave, additional maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave, additional paternity leave, ordinary adopting leave or additional adoption leave, but does not include time spent on any unpaid career break.

- a. For SL who ceased to be members of the Armed Forces before 1 Apr 11, 10 years after discharge.
- b. For SL who ceased to be members of the Armed Forces between 1 Apr 11 and 31 Mar 16, until 31 Mar 21.
- c. For SL who ceased to be members of the Armed Forces on or after 1 Apr 16, 5 years after discharge.
- d. Notwithstanding the above, for SL who is medically discharged on or after 1 Apr 11 and who receives a disablement pension under the War Pension Scheme or a guaranteed income payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, 10 years after discharge.

15. **Wounded Injured and Sick (WIS) SP.** SP who have completed Initial (Phase 1 and 2) training and who are Scheme members, who become WIS before achieving the required ELC qualifying service, and who are expected to return to duty, may be authorised to claim ELC at the lower tier rate. ELC use when WIS must be part of an Individual Recovery Plan (IRP) managed by sS recovery schemes. Specific regulations are:

- a. Must have registered to join the ELC scheme or been auto-enrolled prior to the date of the injury or commencement of the illness.
- b. The injury or illness must be wholly or predominantly caused or worsened by Service.⁹
- c. At the discretion of Ed Staff, the rules regarding direct benefit to the Service may be relaxed, and the WIS SP may in addition study at Level 2.
- d. SP must be briefed on, and agree, the implications of using a lower tier ELC claim at this stage of their career.

16. **Effects of attributable medical discharge on eligibility.** SL who have completed initial training and who are medically discharged from Service on or after 1 Nov 10 before achieving the required qualifying service, may be eligible to claim ELC at the Lower Tier. In such cases, the SL must already be a member of the ELC scheme and the injury or illness must be wholly or predominantly caused or predominantly worsened by Service.¹⁰ The period in which ELCs must be used is described in paragraph 14. If SL are in receipt of a disablement pension or a guaranteed income payment the period of eligibility is relaxed and they have 10 years after discharge to start their learning.

17. **Transfer of eligibility to eligible adult dependant.** In the event of the death of a SP or attributable medical discharge of a SP where their condition renders them unable to utilise their ELC, it may be permissible to transfer all remaining ELC awards to the SP's "eligible adult dependant". The "eligible adult dependant" is the SP's spouse, civil partner or "eligible partner" (or surviving spouse, civil partner or "eligible partner").

18. A person is an "eligible partner" if:
- a. the person and SP cohabit as partners in an exclusive and substantial relationship;
 - b. the person and SP are not prevented from marrying or entering into a civil partnership; and
 - c. the person is financially dependent on the SP, or the person and the SP are financially interdependent.

⁹ Injury or illness which is made worse by service is described in JSP 765: MOD Compensation Schemes.

¹⁰ See footnote 11.

19. A person is a “surviving eligible partner” if they met the requirements of paragraph 18 at the date of the SP’s death.

20. If the SP dies, the SP’s eligible adult dependant will be eligible to use the SP’s ELC in the following circumstances:

a. The SP died on or after 1 Apr 04 and on the date of their death was a member of the ELC Scheme and had completed the eligible service described in paragraph 10 and calculated according to paragraph 11. This gives eligibility to a Lower Tier, Aggregated Lower Tier or Higher Tier award depending on the eligible service the SP completed; and

b. The SP died on or after 1 Nov 10 and on the date of their death was a member of the ELC Scheme and had completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 training. This gives eligibility to Lower Tier awards.

21. If the SP has an attributable medical discharge and is unable due to the illness or injury to use the ELC, the SP’s eligible adult dependant will be eligible to use the SP’s ELC in the following circumstances:

a. The discharge occurred on or after 1 Apr 04 and on that date the SP was a member of the ELC Scheme and had completed the eligible service described in paragraph 10 and calculated according to paragraph 11. For attributable medical discharge on or after 1 Apr 17, the SP must also be in receipt of a disablement pension under the War Pension Scheme or a guaranteed income payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. This gives eligibility to a Lower Tier, Aggregated Lower Tier or Higher Tier award depending on the eligible service the SP completed; and

b. The discharge occurred on or after 1 Nov 10 and on that date the SP was a member of the ELC Scheme and had completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 training. For attributable medical discharge on or after 1 Apr 17, the SP must also be in receipt of a disablement pension under the War Pension Scheme or a guaranteed income payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. This gives eligibility to Lower Tier awards.

22. The eligible adult dependant must start learning before the tenth anniversary of the SP’s death or attributable medical discharge.

23. In certain circumstances, SL may be able to transfer their entitlement to a Nominated Proxy (NP). This requires the NP to be providing ongoing care or financial support to the SL and for Service welfare agencies to approve the transfer. Full details are in JSP 534 para 0616.

24. **Effects of redundancy on eligibility.** SP who are made compulsorily redundant and who are ELC scheme members, will cease to accrue qualifying Service for ELC eligibility on the day they leave Service. Their entitlements to Lower Tier, Aggregated Lower Tier and Upper Tier awards are related to their length of qualifying service as for other SP.

Submitting a claim

25. **Eligibility of a claim.** Applicants for ELC awards must satisfy these conditions:

a. The Learning Purpose must be of direct benefit to the Service and have a substantial developmental value, appropriate to the SP’s personal development goals. SP are required to demonstrate that their proposed course of study is derived from a process of careful planning. They must provide evidence of such planning (such as, from Personal Development Plans in their PDR) as a condition of claim approval.

- b. An activity undertaken by WIS SP to achieve a qualification as part of a managed IRP, must demonstrate that it has substantial developmental value appropriate to their personal development needs, and ability. Exceptionally, this does not have to be of direct benefit to the Service.
- c. SLC may not be used simultaneously to fund elements of a course of study which is supported by ELC funding.
- d. SL undergoing resettlement may use their Individual Resettlement Training Cost (IRTC) grant, in addition to their ELC, to finance the undertaking of a nationally recognised higher level qualification,¹¹ of which at least 75% of the study must be a minimum of Level 3 and the remaining 25% must be Level 2. The qualification must be delivered by an approved ELC LP.¹² It is permitted, in these circumstances only, for SL to use their IRTC grant to offset, or pay in full, the 20% personal contribution required when using ELC.¹³ Allowing SL to use both funding streams ensures that they have the greatest level of flexibility when financing their preferred Learning Purpose. In addition, the costs of gaining a QCF Level 3 qualification or above will generally exceed the sum of ELC and IRTC, meaning that in the majority of cases the principle of a personal contribution (at the higher educational level) will continue.
- e. ELC and IRTC may be put towards a single resettlement Learning Purpose should continue to be submitted in accordance with the individual scheme regulations, noting: the 20% minimum personal contribution will be paid on receipt of the Claims Authorisation Note (CAN) from ELCAS, and MOD will be invoiced separately by the LP to pay the difference. The SL may then submit a retrospective IRTC claim on completion of the course and claim back the difference up to the maximum of £534 or, alternatively, they may continue to routinely apply for pre-payment of IRTC.¹⁴ Any unspent IRTC may be directed towards another Learning Purpose. IRTC may be used to finance multiple Learning Purposes whilst ELC cannot. It is the SLs responsibility, with advice from Ed Staff, to determine how best to optimise the funding support available when undertaking resettlement.
- f. When using ELC and IRTC for specific resettlement activities, SP/SL must not be in receipt of any other Service funding for the proposed activity.¹⁵
- g. Any Learning Purpose undertaken must be done so by the most cost-effective means available.
- h. The LP must be an Approved Provider, which is administered by the CSP and their courses **must** be approved for participation in the scheme.¹⁶ LPs who are also resettlement Preferred Suppliers who are suspended or removed from the Preferred Suppliers List will also be suspended or removed from the approved Learning Providers List.

¹¹ At QCF Level 3 or above.

¹² Courses offered by publically funded providers such as FE Colleges and Universities are accepted to offer their full range of publically funded courses, subject to the requirements of the Level. Private providers must request and have each course approved.

¹³ Noting that all other policy regarding the use of ELC remains extant, it is not permissible to use the ELC in concert with the IRTC for courses supplied by non-approved ELCAS LP.

¹⁴ Using the procedure laid down in the SPVA Business Process Guide.

¹⁵ In this context, SL who are utilising the 'standby' place facility on Career Transition Partnership (CTP) contract funded courses may not claim ELC as the course is already subsidised by the MOD contract with CTP for the course. Also, ELC is not be used to pay for Summer/Residential school fees.

¹⁶ LP may be eligible to apply for inclusion on the list of Approved Providers by applying to the CSP on the ELC website. The application process includes the submission of course structures for approval and these may be added to by further submission.

- i. All training must be delivered directly by the registered approved LP. Training delivered by associated third parties is not permissible and will result in the LP's immediate removal from the approved Learning Providers list.
- j. The SP must be authorised to undertake the activity and registered in accordance with sS instructions.
- k. For second and third claims, SP/SL must provide proof that they have completed their Learning Purpose and have completed the Electronic Course Evaluation (ECE) on ELCAS website. A separate claim form must be submitted for each year of a course.
- l. If a number of separate courses are undertaken but combine to form a discrete, single Learning Purpose, delivered by one LP, then ELC can fund the total cost. SP, with Ed Staff advice, must be able to prove the validity of the proposed combination of courses in contributing to the Learning Purpose. The PDR enables demonstration that a claim is part of a PDP.
- m. Only one ELC claim is permitted per Financial Year (FY (1 Apr-31 Mar)) and must relate to learning that commences that FY. For longer courses, where the academic and FY are out of sync, it is permissible to use one claim for several modules that count towards a continuous block of study, which may extend into the subsequent FY. In all such cases, the start date of each course module must be within twelve months of the start date of the earliest.
- n. ELC is based upon the principle that SP/SL will make a personal contribution. The ELC contribution will not exceed 80% of the gross course cost. This includes tuition fees and VAT but excludes food, accommodation, travel and subsistence (which may be claimed from other sources, based upon sS regulations, but is not covered by ELC) or course materials, which are the personal responsibility of the SP.
- o. SP/SL will meet their 20% personal contribution from their own resources. The MOD forbids the acceptance of inducements or incentives from LP including subsidies, free accommodation, travel, food and equipment.

26. Overseas Resettlement Training (ORT) Application Priority over ELC. Where a Service Leaver (SL) intends to use their ELC entitlement with ORT, it is the SL's responsibility to ensure that they apply for and obtain the ORT authority **first**. Only on the receipt of a successful ORT approval authority may the SL make their ELC application. Under no circumstances may a SL make an ELC application for a non-UK based provider for resettlement purposes without having first obtained the ORT authority. Failure to follow this policy may result in the SL not being granted ORT approval with the outcome that they are unable to use their ELC.

27. Making a claim. Before applying, and having discussed their needs with their Ed Staff and Chain of Command, SP must consider:

- a. Relevance of the course or qualification to their personal development goals and choice of funding; as well as resources in terms of time and money required.
- b. Their ability to cope with the pressures of study (or provision of evidence for assessment), the risk of disruption due to Service life and the flexibility of the study method.
- c. The time required to process the claim form. Claim forms must be received by Authorising Ed Staff a minimum of 25 clear working days prior to the course start date. Equally, the time it will take for a new LP to apply for ELCAS registration.

28. **Effect of assignment.** The effects of assignment and forced withdrawal from an ELC funded Learning Purpose, should be carefully understood by SP. Normally, failure to complete the course will result in further claims 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, then this ruling will not apply.

29. **Importance of completion.** First applications for ELC funding will take account of the likelihood of completing the proposed course of study. Ed Staff will assess this through interview and any supporting evidence. Should a SP subsequently fail to complete a course of study, they may have to repay the subsidy. For subsequent claims, a SP's previous completion/non-completion will inform the decision as to whether to approve the claim. Electronic Course Evaluation for previous Learning Purposes is evidence to support subsequent claims.

30. **Admissibility of proposed study/course.** For SP, Ed Staff will provide advice as to whether or not a proposed course qualifies as appropriate use of ELC. If in doubt, Ed Staff should approach sS Authorities for assistance, who in cases of continuing doubt will seek direction from the Designated Officer. Where required the SP is responsible for providing proof that the qualification is at Level 3 or above (or equivalent).

31. **Purposes for which ELC may be claimed.** ELC may be claimed for part or full-time higher level study, whether conducted centrally, or through distribution learning. Study must result in the cost effective achievement of a nationally recognised Level 3 qualification.¹⁷ Useful references are:¹⁸

- a. The list of Awarding Bodies approved to make awards accredited by the regulatory authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland as listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications, <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>
- b. The Scottish Qualifications Authority, <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41278.html>
- c. British Qualifications (a guide to educational, technical, professional and academic qualifications in Britain) and British Vocational Qualifications (a directory of vocational qualifications available in the United Kingdom).
- d. National Academic Recognition Centre for the UK (UK NARIC), www.naric.org.uk
- e. Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) Directory, www.ucas.com
- f. Other national governing or regulatory bodies who recognise qualifications in their own right e.g. Civil Aircraft Authority (CAA) or the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

32. **Study meriting ELC support:**

- a. Study towards first degrees (including Foundation Degrees).
- b. Study towards postgraduate qualifications, including teacher training.
- c. Other academic study, such as AS/A level study, Higher Educational Institute (HEI) access courses, or foreign language study.
- d. Professional self-development in addition to that provided in Service training.

¹⁷ as defined by the QCF (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), a Level 6 or above on the SCQF (Scotland) or, if pursued overseas, an approved international equivalent higher level qualification

¹⁸ SP should be aware that the burden of proof of the Level of a course rests with them. They should seek proof from their LP.

- e. Accreditation of prior learning assessment fees, including accreditation of Service professional skills, leading to partial or complete qualifications providing there is evidence that the SP has produced new, original work.
- f. Vocational courses, providing there is direct benefit to the Service.
- g. Examination fees for qualifications that meet the ELC eligibility criteria.
- h. Initial registration fees and accreditation fees for professional bodies and institutes expressly to gain qualifications (such as certificates, diplomas or equivalent schemes of work rather than categories of membership).¹⁹
- i. Refresher training, provided that training results in the re-qualification or re-award.
- j. Courses and qualifications which are required for the coaching and management of sport or Adventurous Training (AT) in the Services, provided that they are in support of a SPs PDP. There must be evidence of intellectual development. Cases of this kind are to be examined by Ed Staff and where there is any doubt, they should be referred to appropriate sS Authority. SP must prove either that the activity is not provided under the auspices of Joint Service Adventurous Training Schemes (JSAT) or that a place is not available on such a course.²⁰ In some cases, qualifications are available through courses authorised by sS Sports Boards. Ed Staff should check before approving the use of ELC.
- k. Some LP may offer discounts for certain qualifying courses to SP/SL. SP should ensure any such discounts are fully taken into account in calculating the course fee and their personal contribution before submitting their claim.
- l. Overseas courses and qualifications may be eligible for ELC support. However, the LP must be approved through the CSP, and the activities must lead to a qualification recognised by UK NARIC.
- m. Resettlement preparation courses. ELC can be used for resettlement purposes once a SL has formally commenced their resettlement. Fees for courses or training, which form part of a SLs resettlement strategy may be eligible for a partial refund as follows:

Ser	Time period eligibility & admissibility	ELC for educational purposes (incl personal development)	ELC for resettlement purposes
1	Throughout career up to last 24 months	YES	NO
2	Last 2 years of Service	YES	YES ^{1, 2}
3	Earlier than last 2 years of Service for those over 50 years of age, or with 30 or more years Service.	YES	YES ^{1, 2}

¹ Providing the SP meets the ELC qualifying criteria and has identified a higher level qualification. The course of study must be an integral part of, and result, in the cost effective achievement of a nationally recognised qualification at Level 3 (A level and equivalent) and above as defined by the NFQ; a Level 6 or above on the SCQF or, if pursued overseas, an approved international equivalent higher level qualification.

² The LP must be on the Approved Provider List held by the CSP.

¹⁹ It may well be, however, that the modest scale of expenditure would make SLCs, together where appropriate with IRTC, a more useful vehicle, thus enabling SP/SL to reserve for future use the larger-scale support which ELCs provide.

²⁰ A list of JSAT courses can be found in, JSP 419: Joint Services Adventure Training Scheme.

33. **Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD).**²¹ SP with SpLD may be eligible for funding support under the ELC scheme. Funding arrangements for an assessment of SpLD are dealt with under separate sS funding arrangements or through the use of SLC. ELC may be used to support training designed to assist SP with SpLD.²² The LP must be approved by the CSP. Where such training is considered to be essential for military Service, however, the costs should be met from sS training budgets, not through ELC.

34. **Where ELC may not be claimed.** ELC may not be claimed for:

- a. **Service training.** General Service training, courses or qualifications undertaken for the benefit of a Service branch, trade or specialism.
- b. **Civilian Accredited Service training.** The funding of qualifications and examinations of this kind is not permitted. The only case for authorising a partial refund under ELC in this area is where both these criteria are met:
 - (1) A minimum of thirty hours of additional work, which is not an integral part of the Service course syllabus and is completed in the SP's own time.
 - (2) An examination, assessment or assignment which is not an integral part of the Service course syllabus, is assessed by an external assessor and is undertaken by the SP electively.
- c. **Professional bodies and institutes.** Annual membership fees for professional bodies or institutes.
- d. **Course material.** Course material, for which there are additional charges.²³
- e. **Pure sport and AT.** All sporting and AT, or courses where the aim is solely to learn the sport or activity, or improve by undertaking that sport or activity.

Administration

35. **Procedure for submitting a claim.** Forms are available from the ELCAS website. SP are only to use the current version, which ELCAS has placed on the website. The procedure:

- a. Claim Forms must be completed by the SP and authorised by Ed Staff, with course attendance approved by the line manager, before electronic submission to the CSP database. A copy of all paperwork is held in the SP's PDR and personal records where appropriate. The claim process is explained at Annex A.
- b. Claim forms must be submitted to Ed Staff / sS Authority for approval at least 25 clear working days prior to the course start date. SP must ensure there is sufficient time to receive the CAN, in order to present to their LP before the course starts.
- c. Payments will be made direct to the LP on receipt of a correctly completed invoice on or after the course start date. LP invoices will be accepted by MOD (through ELCAS) no earlier than six weeks and no later than 9 months after the SL starts their course. LP must confirm that the SL has completed six weeks of study. The SP is responsible for meeting the personal contribution balance ensuring that the personal contribution is rounded up. Any calculation less than the 20% minimum will be rejected by Ed Staff.

²¹ As described in Defence Direction on Specific Learning Difficulties contained elsewhere within this JSP.

²² Where SpLD needs have been formally assessed and diagnosed (noting that assessment leading to a diagnosis comes under separate sS funding arrangements).

²³ Textbooks may be obtainable on loan from the Joint Service Central Library through Education/Learning centres or via sS arrangements.

d. Retrospective claims will not be allowed under any circumstances if received after an agreed course/module start date. Any money paid to LP (as a deposit or to secure a place, for example) prior to receiving the CAN is paid purely at the personal risk of the SP. When making a claim, such an amount may count as part of the SPs personal contribution, but any money that exceeds this amount is not reclaimable under the Scheme. SP are not to commence a course without first receiving the CAN and presenting it to the approved LP. SP are not permitted to transfer the CAN to a different course or LP. SP may not pay a LP and then seek reimbursement directly from the LP on receipt of their CAN.

e. On receipt of the CAN, the SP is to submit the CAN to the LP and pay the balance of the total cost of the course. Thereafter, LP will deal direct with the CSP.

Cancellation of CAN and reinstatement of ELC

36. **Cancellation.** SP may only cancel their place on a course by adhering to the scheme cancellation regulations. Under certain operational or compassionate circumstances, SP will be permitted to cancel their course, and their CAN, but only if the LP has not yet sent the invoice to the CSP. If the LP has sent the invoice, the CSP are obliged to honour it and the SP is then to follow sS ELC reinstatement regulations. Where approval is given for cancellation, then the ELC earmarked for the [cancelled] course will not be used. SP who do not follow the procedure become personally liable for the payment of all fees and other costs due to the LP, and risk forfeiting their ELC and membership of the scheme.

37. **Reinstatement.** SP may only withdraw from the course by adhering to the scheme regulations. Under certain operational or compassionate circumstances, SP will be permitted to withdraw from the course and have that particular ELC instalment reinstated. The procedure may well involve money being reimbursed both to MOD and the SP. The MOD will not be held liable for any losses incurred in the recovery of personal contributions previously made by the SP to the LP. SP should note that they may not be reimbursed to the full value of the personal contribution. SP who do not follow the procedure become personally liable for the payment of all fees and other costs due to the LP, and risk forfeiting their ELC and membership of the scheme.

38. **Amendment.** SP may amend their submitted application by adhering to the scheme regulations governing amendments. What constitutes an amendment can be found at the ELCAS website. Under certain operational and compassionate circumstances, SP may be able to arrange with their LP to extend the duration of their course dates, in order to complete their qualification. SP cannot transfer their CAN to a different course or start date, unless under exceptional circumstances, they are authorised to do so by their sS Authority.

39. **Service quality assurance process.** On completion of a course SP are required to evaluate their learning using the Electronic Course Evaluation form available via the ELCAS website. The CSP will collate evaluations and forward an annual summary report to the Designated Officer. Failure to complete the end of course evaluation will result in future claims being denied.

Second and third claims

40. Claims will not be approved without receipt of the required documentation. For SP see Para 25. For Claimants No Longer in Service, see Para 34.

41. LP may require SP to register prior to the onset of the FY in which the course is due to start. This is likely to affect SP whose course starts early in the FY (April and May) and those who may be progressing from one module or element of a course to the next. In such circumstances, SP may be permitted to submit a claim no more than 3 months before the FY in which the course is due to start. The Ed Staff will send the CAN, which SP can give to their LP, with the balance of payment (their personal contribution). SP are to ensure that the LP

understands that the CAN cannot be honoured until after start of the relevant FY, for which the ELC instalment is being drawn. The CSP will not accept or authorise invoices before the course start date.

42. **Submitting a claim.** sS ELC claims should be submitted through:

RN	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. Education and Resettlement Staff seeking further clarification of sS instructions should contact SO3 EL3R, at DII: 'NAVY TRG HQ-EL3R RESET SO3C' (Mil: 93832 5954 Civ: 02392 625954).
Army	Individual Education and Resettlement Officers (IERO), at Army Education Centres, which must be used by SL on resettlement. Education and Resettlement Staff seeking further clarification of sS instructions should contact the relevant SO2 Retention and Resettlement in Regional command(RC) : DII: RC-Pers-ETS-N-RetResSO2 or RC-Pers-ETS-S-RetResSO2
RAF	Personal Learning Advisors (PLAs), and Resettlement and Education Coordinators (REC) at RAF Learning Centres. Education and Resettlement Staff seeking further clarification of sS instructions should contact SO2 Accreditation at DII:'22TrgGp-CTS-AndEWg-SO2' (Mil:95751 6888 Civ: 01400 266888).

43. **Procedure for Claimants no Longer in Service (CNLIS).** SL²⁴ may apply within their post service eligibility period. Forms are available at the ELCAS website and is to be submitted to sS for endorsement:

RN²⁵	SO3C EL3R Resettlement NCHQ, Mailpoint 3.3, Leach Building, Whale Island, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth, PO2 8BY NAVY TRG HQ-EL3R RESET SO3C@mod.uk 02392 625954
Army	Learning Credit Scheme (LCS) Manager, Education Branch Zone 4, Floor 2, Army Personnel Services Group, Home Command Ramillies Building, Army HQ Monxton Road, Andover, SP11 8HJ Tel: 01264 381580 Email: elc@detsa.co.uk
RAF²⁶	Learning Credits Administrator No 22 (Trg) Gp, Rm 221b Trenchard Hall, RAFC Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 8HB 22TrgGp-CTS-AndEWg-LCA@mod.uk 01400 268183

44. SL claiming after they have been discharged from Service must submit all of the documents listed below:

- Claim Form.
- Information about the course.
- Copy of Service discharge document.
- Copy of utility bill (for address).

²⁴ Who meet the eligibility criteria and left Service.

²⁵ SP still serving are not to use this POC but are to consult the staff in their local RN Education Centre.

²⁶ SP still serving in the RAF are not to use this POC but are to consult the staff in their local Learning Centre. CNLIS are encouraged to refer to the RAF Learning Forces website for further information.

45. **Claims by eligible adult dependants.** Eligible adult dependants or nominated proxies may submit ELC claims to the sS Authorities utilising the same procedures as those detailed above for CNLIS.

46. **Payment approval.** Approval Authorities are:

RN: NCHQ, Training HQ, DACOS Trg.

Army: Army HQ, I Dev.

RAF: Air Command, 22 Trg Gp, Cmdt CTS.

47. **Tax liability.** Most courses undertaken by SP will be exempt from taxation either as income or as a benefit in kind if they can be justified as being 'work related'. Evidence that the course has a demonstrable developmental value (for example, within the PDR) will aid the establishment of a course as 'work-related'. SP should be able to demonstrate that the Learning Purpose will directly benefit the Service in order to qualify as 'work-related'. However, if in doubt, a SP should always seek the advice of HMRC. With effect from 2 Sep 12, ELC awards for courses undertaken after leaving Service are unlikely to be chargeable to tax. However, if in doubt, a SL should always seek the advice of HMRC.

48. **Authority for travel and subsistence.** There is no entitlement to travel at public expense, or to claim subsistence allowance, for ELC Learning Purposes, unless the ELC is used by a SL as part of their resettlement.²⁷ Where ELC is being used in conjunction with IRTC and/or Graduated Resettlement Time, it may be permissible to claim both subsistence and travel.²⁸

²⁷ in accordance with JSP 534: Tri-Service Resettlement Manual.

²⁸ in accordance with JSP 752: Tri-Service Regulations for Allowances.

3.5.3 Further Education and Higher Education Scheme for Service Leavers

The Government announced to Parliament on 17 Jul 08²⁹ a package of cross-government support to Armed Forces people, their families and veterans,³⁰ which included a commitment to establish the Further Education and Higher Education Scheme to provide 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 vocational equivalent) free from tuition fees. Subsequently, the MOD engaged with Other Government Departments (OGDs)³¹ and Devolved Administrations (DA)³² to define and agree the parameters of this support, develop the policy and implement the proposals.

It has been reviewed by MOD and OGDs to ensure that it correctly meets the needs of SL. This guidance outlines the eligibility criteria for further education and higher education support (“FEHE support”) under the scheme (pertinent to submissions after 6 Apr 11).

In addition to the Defence Direction regarding the ELC scheme, given above, the following additional Direction applies to SL seeking to receive FEHE support using their enrolled ELC scheme entitlement. The rules of the FHEC Scheme set out in this JSP are based on legislation apply to SL applying for FEHE support.³³

Aims

49. The aims of providing FEHE support for SL are:

- a. To provide full state subsidised tuition fees for eligible SL undertaking their first FE or HE level qualification. This commitment comprises employer contributions to the Armed Forces ELC scheme, supplemented by resources made available by partner OGD/DA.
- b. To build on the extensive range of professional and personal development opportunities made available to SL during a Service career and provide an incentive, especially 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 high quality SL to the UK skills pool, by providing the opportunity for them to raise their skill levels by achieving nationally recognised qualifications in economically viable skills which benefit the nation.

Supported qualification levels

50. **A first full Level 3 or a first HE qualification.** The scheme specifically supports the achievement of a **first qualification** at either Level 3 or HE.³⁴ If the scheme is used to achieve a Level 3 qualification, or the SL has achieved 120 credits at Level 4 in higher level studies, it cannot be used 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 a Higher National Diploma (HND) is already held or a higher level qualification at Level 5, 6, 7, or 8. It is, however, permissible for

²⁹ 2009DIN07-042 refers.

³⁰ Cm 7424 dated Jul 08 - The Nation’s Commitment: Cross-Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans.

³¹ Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

³² Scottish Government (SG) and Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI).

³³ The Armed Forces (Enhanced Learning Credit Scheme and Further and Higher Education Commitment Scheme) Order 2012, S.I. 2012/1796 (as amended most recently by S.I. 2016/310).

³⁴ Learners are not permitted to take a Masters Degree (unless a Masters qualification is inherent to the initial (Level 4-6) qualification (Integrated Masters).

SL to use the scheme to extend their in-progress³⁵ studies, for example, from foundation degree studies to a full degree, or if study is for first undergraduate degree (including foundation degree or an integrated masters degree) as long as this intent is declared at the start of the study.

51. **Level 3 or national equivalent.** This refers to a full UK Level 3 qualification such as the achievement of two GCE A levels³⁶ (A2) (passes at A-E) or vocational equivalent.³⁷

52. **A foundation degree or full undergraduate degree or vocational equivalent.** This refers to a full UK Level 4-6 qualification based on the Framework for HE and Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) for Scotland; for example, a first undergraduate degree (including foundation degree) or Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Diploma for which the entry qualification is lower than a degree and which normally takes place at a publicly funded institution.³⁸ Individuals holding equivalent international higher level qualifications, such as an undergraduate degree, will not be eligible for support.

Features

53. The additional features of the FEHE scheme are:

a. The FEHE scheme does not cover SL who left Service before 17 Jul 08. SP who left on or after 17 Jul 08³⁹ are eligible, if they meet the qualifying criteria.

b. If a SL's ELC has already been exhausted, or are used up during the course of supported studies, the commitment to fund the full tuition fees for eligible SL, transfers to the relevant OGD/DA.

c. Only publicly funded UK institutions delivering FE and HE qualifications may be approved LP for this scheme. If not already listed as an ELC approved LP, they must apply for ELC provider status and agree to work within the specific administrative requirements of the ELC scheme. Non-publicly funded UK based LPs delivering FE/ HE qualifications are ineligible to be approved LP. In all cases, the final decision regarding eligibility for course funding rests with the relevant OGD/DA, with consultation by authorising Designated Officer or Ed Staff.

Eligibility criteria

54. In order to make claims for FEHE support, a SL must:

a. Be a member of the ELC scheme

b. Have left Service on or after 17 Jul 08.

c. Complete the required eligible service before submitting the FEHE claim form and prior to commencing the course of study for which FEHE support is being claimed (see paragraphs 54 and 55); and

³⁵ In-progress studies are defined as a continuous period of study within the initially named subject discipline, without a break.

³⁶ Or in England, Wales and Northern Ireland the equivalent AS levels.

³⁷ As defined by the QCF (England, Wales and Northern Ireland); or in Scotland a Level 6 qualification (SVQ Level 3) on the SCQF.

³⁸ In Scotland the equivalent qualification is a HNC, HND or a first undergraduate degree, undertaken at a FE college or HEI.

³⁹ This includes if SP has died or has an attributable medical discharge on or after this date, and FEHE support is transferred to the SP's eligible adult dependant.

- d. Be applying for payment of tuition fees to undertake at least half of a full-time course which is either a first full Level 3 or a first HE qualification (Level 4-6).
- e. Start the course before the end of the period in which they must claim FEHE support (see paragraph 56).⁴⁰
- f. Meet the residency requirements specified by the relevant OGD/DA.

55. **Length of eligible service requirement.** SL must complete 'eligible service' (i.e. sufficient qualifying service⁴¹):

- a. For SL who complete 4 years' qualifying service before 1 Apr 17, at least 4 years' qualifying service; and
- b. For SL who complete less than 4 years before 1 Apr 17, at least 6 years' qualifying service; and
- c. For SL who became a member of the ELC Scheme on or after 1 Apr 16, at least 6 years' qualifying service.
- d. For SL who have an attributable medical discharge⁴², the completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 training.

56. 'Eligible service' commences as follows:

- a. For SL who were already serving before 1 Apr 03 and who registered on the ELC scheme by 1 Apr 04, eligible service runs from 1 Apr 00 or date of enlistment, whichever is later.
- b. For SL who entered Service on or after 1 Apr 03 and registered on the ELC scheme during the initial registration opportunity (paragraph 5), eligible service runs from the date of enlistment.
- c. For SL who joined at the second registration opportunity (paragraph 6), eligible service runs: for a member who left service before 1 Apr 16, from the date of the 8 years' service point; and for SL who were in service on 1 Apr 16, from 1 Apr 00 or date of enlistment, whichever is later .
- d. For SL who registered on the ELC scheme through late registration (paragraph 7): if the SL was serving before 1 Apr 03, whichever is later of 1 Apr 00 and date of enlistment; and if the SP or SL was serving on or after 1 Apr 03, from the date of enlistment.
- e. For SL who were auto-enrolled in the ELCscheme while in service on 1 Apr 16, eligible service runs from 1 Apr 00 or date of enlistment, whichever is later.

57. **Period to use FEHE support:** SP and SL must commence the course in relation to which they are claiming FEHE support before the end of the entitlement time limit, which is defined as follows:

- a. For SL who ceased to be members of the Armed Forces before 1 Apr 11, 10 years after discharge.

⁴⁰ See paragraph 11.

⁴¹ 'Qualifying service' means service in the armed forces and includes time spent on ordinary maternity leave, additional maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave, additional paternity leave, ordinary adopting leave or additional adoption leave, but does not include time spent on any unpaid career break.

⁴² Medical discharge due to an injury or illness wholly or predominantly caused by or worsened by Service. An injury or illness which is made worse by service is described in JSP 765: MOD Compensation Schemes.

- b. For SL who ceased to be members of the Armed Forces between 1 Apr 11 and 31 Mar 16, until 31 Mar 21.
- c. For SL who ceased to be members of the Armed Forces on or after 1 Apr 16, 5 years after discharge.
- d. Notwithstanding the above, for SL who is medically discharged on or after 1 Apr 11 and who receives a disablement pension under the War Pension Scheme or a guaranteed income payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, 10 years after discharge.

58. **Transfer of eligibility to spouse or eligible partner.** In the event of the death of a SP on or after 17 Jul 08 which is caused by service, or the attributable medical discharge of a SP who cannot use FEHE support due to their injury or illness, FEHE support may be transferred to the SP's "eligible adult dependant"⁴³.

59. The eligible adult dependant can claim FEHE support if:

- a. the SP was a member of the ELC Scheme at the date of death or attributable medical discharge. For attributable medical discharge on or after 1 Apr 17, the SP must also be in receipt of a disablement pension under the War Pension Scheme or a guaranteed income payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.
- b. The SP had completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 training before that date.
- c. the eligible adult dependant meets the residency requirements specified by the relevant OGD/DA.

60. The eligible adult dependant must start learning before the tenth anniversary of the SP's death or attributable medical discharge.

61. **Residency requirements.** FEHE support is available only to ELC members who reside in the UK. To qualify SL must have been resident in the UK for at least 3 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). Any period during which the SL served outside the UK as a member of the armed forces is treated as a period of ordinary residence in the UK. SL who reside outside the UK after leaving 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 eligibility window but only after having first completed a minimum of 3 years residency. Funding responsibility lies with the OGD/DA region within which the SL has established their residential status. If an SL moves between regions (for example, from England to Wales) funding responsibility remains with the initial department, until 3 years residence has been completed in the new location. It is also possible that some SL may have resided overseas in excess of 3 years whilst on Service duty prior to application.

62. **Foreign and Commonwealth people.** This support is available to eligible Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) SL including Gurkha SL residing in the UK who must also meet the residency requirements. In addition, F&C people who have left Service will also be required to meet the relevant OGD/DA requirements in regard to settlement and citizenship in the UK to attract funding. The residency and citizenship rules for dependants are different. For further guidance, covering members of the Armed Forces and their dependants, see www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/IDs/idischapter15/

⁴³ See paragraphs 17 -19 above in Part 3.5.2 of this JSP.

63. F&C SL who have been medically discharged prior to achieving sufficient qualifying service are still required to meet the residency requirements specified by the OGD/DA before they can apply to study using this support. Medically discharged F&C SL who have achieved eligibility to access the scheme and are remaining in UK may apply to commence studies after the required residency period has been achieved. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for a SL to submit a case to the relevant OGD/DA for exceptional treatment; with the decision resting with the OGD/DA, not the MOD.

Education provision attracting support for SL

64. This support is targeted at eligible SP during their last 2 years of service (their resettlement phase) or SL generally for 5 years after discharge.⁴⁴ Application may be made for payment of tuition fees to undertake at least half of a full-time course⁴⁵ or full-time study and SL must have enrolled to undertake an eligible first full further or higher level course of study (level 4-6) or vocational equivalent (level 4-6) which results in the achievement of a nationally recognised qualification. Only qualifications listed on website links below are eligible for support:

a. **FE** (Level 3 or national equivalent):

(1) **England, Wales and Northern Ireland.** Learning Aims Database (<http://providers.SFA.gov.uk/>) for full Level 3 qualification, that is a qualification equivalent in size and breadth to two GCE A-Levels or vocational equivalent, or a qualification that if achieved would mean the SL has reached the full Level 3 threshold. Full details at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>. Additionally, for Wales, <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/090115creditsleaflet.pdf>

(2) **Scotland.** Working towards a first Level 6 qualification (SVQ Level 3) within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The qualification must be delivered by a FE college, holding a valid registration with the National Learning Opportunities Database (NLOD). Full details at www.sqa.org.uk

b. **HE** (HND, foundation degree, full undergraduate degree (including integrated Masters degree) or national equivalent):

(1) **England and Wales.** Working towards a HE course at levels 4-6 on the FHEQ. Full details at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk> and www.gaa.ac.uk

(2) **Scotland.** Working towards a HE course at levels 7-10 on the SCQF, holding a valid registration with NLOD. Full details at www.sqa.org.uk

c. **Private Pilots Licence and courses not listed on the national databases.** 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.

50. **Accreditation of Service courses.** An SL who has attained a Level 4 (eg HNC) qualification purely by dint of completing Service training courses, and has undertaken no extra personal study in order to obtain the qualification which has been accredited by the relevant civilian awarding body, may still be eligible to apply for support. SL should note the FEHE

⁴⁴ See paragraph 56.

⁴⁵ SL must be applying for an award to undertake at least the equivalent of half of 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 vocational equivalent). If studying part time, SL must be studying at a minimum of 25% of the full time commitment.

Scheme aims to provide support for SL without a first HE qualification. MOD will confirm with BIS,⁴⁶ the status of these courses, on a case by case basis.

51. Foundation/Introduction to HE courses. SL who undertake a Foundation Year/Introduction to HE course will be allowed to continue with it through this support, provided that they give an undertaking that they are completing the foundation year/intro to HE course as preparatory work for a full degree to commence immediately after the end of their initial studies.

Approved LPs

52. LPs are limited to approved institutions in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.⁴⁷ The relevant national bodies and websites⁴⁸ are:

a. **FE:**

(1) England - The Skills Funding Agency (SFA). www.ukrlp.co.uk

(2) Wales - The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) (DCELLS). <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en>

(3) Scotland - Scottish Funding Council (SFC). www.sfc.ac.uk

b. **HE:**

(1) England - HE Funding Council of England (HEFCE). www.hefce.ac.uk
www.direct.gov.uk www.ucas.ac.uk

(2) Wales - HE Funding Council of Wales (HEFCW). www.hefcw.ac.uk/index.htm

(3) Scotland - Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). www.saas.gov.uk

53. Having identified a LP, the onus is on the SL to first check that the provider is eligible to participate in the scheme. If the institution is not already listed on the ELC website as an approved publicly-funded LP, the institution may apply to join the scheme. This will require the LP completing an application and agreeing to participate within the rules of the ELC scheme. To comply with audit procedures a new LP's details will be referred by ELCAS to the relevant national education authority for verification. Full details of LP status can be obtained from ELCAS at the ELC website. New LPs will, therefore, be added progressively to the ELC approved database on evidence of student demand.

Administration

54. In the case of courses funded by BIS or DA, MOD (the relevant sS) will initially pay the course fees in full for each FY. BIS or DA contribution will be refunded to MOD for reimbursement to sS TLBs. 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. Before applying, SL must consider:

- a. Relevance of the course or qualification to development goals and funding choice.

⁴⁶ [UK Central Government] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

⁴⁷ SL must use approved English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Ireland based LPs delivering publicly-funded FE/HE qualifications listed on the national databases. If, for the purposes of this support, a LP is not already listed as approved ELC LP, the SL must first apply for approval through ELCAS.

⁴⁸ The websites are not exclusively limited to publicly funded institutions; they also contain ineligible non-publicly funded LP.

- b. Their ability to cope with the pressures of study (or provision of evidence for assessment), particularly during Resettlement, and the flexibility of the study method.
- c. The time to process the claim form as Ed Staffs may make enquiries about the Level of the proposed qualification and/or the LP may have to apply to ELCAS for registration. The ELCAS registration process is dependant on a range of external factors and therefore may take a significant length of time.

55. The effects of any assignment within the resettlement phase and withdrawals from the scheme should be carefully understood. Normally, failure to complete the activity or breaks in study outside of the usual term time breaks, will result in any further application being denied. A Gap year is not permitted under the Scheme unless this is integral to the course eg to undertake a work placement as part of a 'year in Industry' requirement. This must be declared at the outset otherwise no funding under the Scheme will be provided. If failure to complete the course of study is due to Service or compassionate reasons that could not have been foreseen, then this ruling will not apply. The single Service representatives will need to keep TESRR informed.

Making an application / claim

56. SL can apply on entering their resettlement phase,⁴⁹ or for up to 10 years after leaving Service.⁵⁰ 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 2 year point in accordance with ELC and resettlement policy.

57. Forms are available from the ELC website. Current forms (as published online) must be completed by the SL and countersigned by line managers and appropriate Ed Staff. Claims are **not** to be submitted directly to ELCAS. A copy of the form and interview record is to be held in the SL's Personal Development Record (PDR) and personal records where appropriate. **A separate claim must be submitted for each year of a course.** The application and claim process is described at Annex B.

58. The claim form must state the cost of the tuition fees to be paid; for longer 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. The claim form must state the MOD contribution (up to a maximum of £1k or £2k depending on tier eligibility) with the remaining balance (the amount which would have equated to the individual's personal contribution). The two amounts, when added together, should total the course fee quoted by the LP. As normal, 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 material, which are the SLs responsibility. The OGD/DA will meet the minimum 20% cost towards the tuition fees. Where all ELC has been exhausted but the SL still qualifies for full state subsidy then course tuition fees will be met in full by the OGD/DA with no MOD contribution.

59. On receipt of a properly completed and authorised application, the sS Authority will send a Claim Authorisation Note (CAN) to the SL. The CAN is effectively a promissory note to the LP that the SL is eligible to receive fully subsidised state support. All applications for study must be submitted at least 25 clear working days prior to start course date. The SL must ensure there is sufficient time to receive the CAN and present it to their chosen LP before the course starts, which, for many LPs, means the CAN must be submitted before final course registration date.

⁴⁹ Notwithstanding the general tenet that SL 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, SL may be authorised to commence a course under this scheme some months earlier if all other requirements are met. In these cases direction should be sought from the sS ELC managers and/or People-TESRR-Skills in TESRR.

⁵⁰ For SL who ceased to be members of the Armed Forces before 1 Apr 11, 10 years after discharge.
For SL who ceased to be members of the Armed Forces between 1 Apr 11 and 31 Mar 16, until 31 Mar 21.
For SL who ceased to be members of the Armed Forces on or after 1 Apr 16, 5 years after discharge.

60. All payments will be made direct to the LP by MOD on receipt of a correctly completed invoice once the applicant commences the course. LP invoices will be accepted by MOD (through ELCAS) no earlier than six weeks and no later than 9 months after the SL starts their course. LP must confirm that the SL has completed six weeks of study.

61. SL will not be able to claim a refund for any money paid to a LP. SL are not to commence a course without first receiving their CAN and presenting it to their approved LP. Furthermore, SL are not permitted to transfer their CAN to a different course or LP. SL cannot pay upfront to a LP and subsequently seek reimbursement from MOD on receipt of their CAN. If SL do not complete the first six weeks of study, the OGD/DA will not fund any tuition fee costs owed to the LP and the payment of all costs become the responsibility of the SL.

62. sS points of contacts are in accordance with ELC Direction.

63. **Length of support.** Support will be made available until normal completion date of the course of study. In some instances such as illness, compassionate circumstances or the SL being deployed during Resettlement or after Service (on transfer to the Reserves), it may be possible for the support to be made available beyond the normal length of the course of study.

64. **Evaluation and achievement tracking.** In accordance with MOD direction, ELCAS will conduct an evaluation of LP training and support including site visits and student feedback.

65. **Self-declaration.** SL are required to complete the Self-declaration [on the application form] confirming that they are eligible to receive support⁵¹ and that by receiving the support it is their intention to complete the full qualification. They must also declare that they meet the residency and citizenship/settlement criteria. Ed Staffs are to advise the SL as appropriate on what constitutes eligibility but it will be the SL's ultimate responsibility to ensure they understand and fully comply with the scheme Direction. SL should also be able to provide documentary proof from JPA or through the Learner Records Service once in receipt of a Unique Learner Number.

66. **Cancellation and withdrawal procedures.** SL that have used up their ELC and are claiming full state subsidy and do not comply with cancellation and withdrawal regulations, risk forfeiting their membership of the ELC scheme and thus their access to the FEHE scheme. SL are also subject to the criteria laid down by the OGD/DA, who will not fund any tuition fee costs owed to the LP, by SL who does not complete the first six weeks of study. See Para 60.

67. **SL re-entering Full Time Service.** SL who take up FEHE support during their resettlement, and subsequently remain in or re-enter Service may, with the agreement of the OGD/DA, continue with their chosen qualification until completion without incurring any financial penalty.⁵² The sS Authority 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 Service, having used up their opportunity to draw down subsidised tuition fees. Alternately, the LP and OGD/DA may agree to defer the completion of the course, for which final authority rests with the OGD/DA. A record is to be retained by the CSP if such circumstances arise.

68. **Other funding streams.** SL are not permitted to claim any other source of MOD funding including the IRTC or SLC related to any application made under this scheme.

69. **Cost recovery process.** JSP 368⁵³ sets out the policy and process for TLBs to recover costs from OGD and Agencies in accordance with HM Treasury guidelines, 'Managing Public

⁵¹ For their first full Level 3 or first HE qualification level 4-6.

⁵² This may require the SL to change the course to a part-time/blended learning basis, possibly with an alternate provider transferring CAT points and so forth.

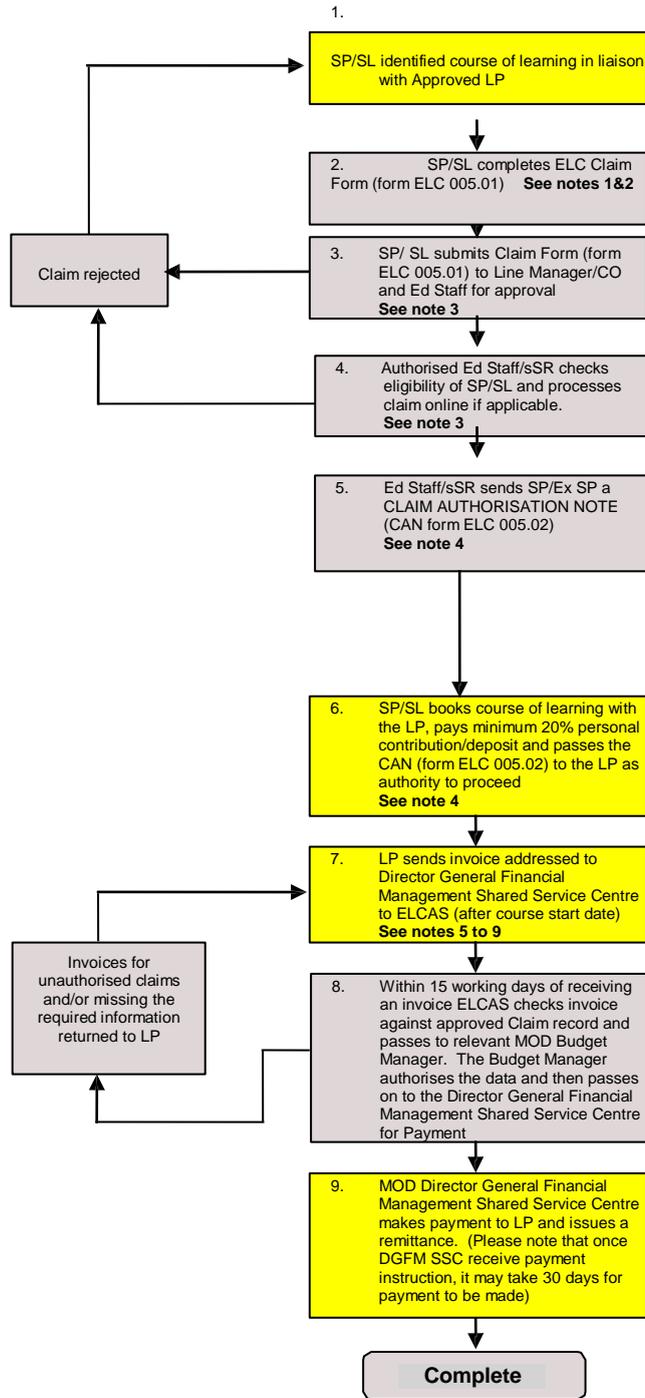
⁵³ JSP 368: The MOD Guide to Repayment.

Money'. ELCAS will provide a quarterly report to sS TLB budget managers, copied to OGD/DA, to enable recovery action between OGD/DA and MOD.

Annexes:

- A. ELC Scheme Process for SP and LP.
- B. FE/HE Support Scheme Process for SL and LP.

Annex A to Pt 1, 3.5.2: ELC Scheme Process for SP and LP



Key LP activities

Notes

1. All claims must meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in the current JSP and on the ELC website.
2. All forms required for the ELC process are available from the ELC website.
3. All claims must be received by Ed Staff/sSR, 25 clear working days prior to course start date.
4. The Claim Authorisation Note (CAN form ELC 005.02) confirms that the SP will receive ELC support to fund their chosen course with the identified LP. LPs should not accept confirmed bookings from SP unless they have received the original CAN (form ELC 005.02) and 20% personal contribution from the SP. LP should not accept a booking for a course, other than that detailed on the CAN (form ELC 005.02).
5. Invoices should be addressed to the MOD and must include:

- The Invoice Number
- The LP Number
- The unique number (Claim Number) shown on the CAN (form ELC 005.02)
- The SP Service Number
- The LP own course code
- Confirmation that the SP has paid the minimum of 20% of the course fee

6. Invoices must be received by ELCAS on or after the course start date and within nine months of the course start. An example invoice is available from the ELC website.

7. The amount claimed should include VAT or indicate that VAT is not applicable, and should not exceed the value of the CAN.

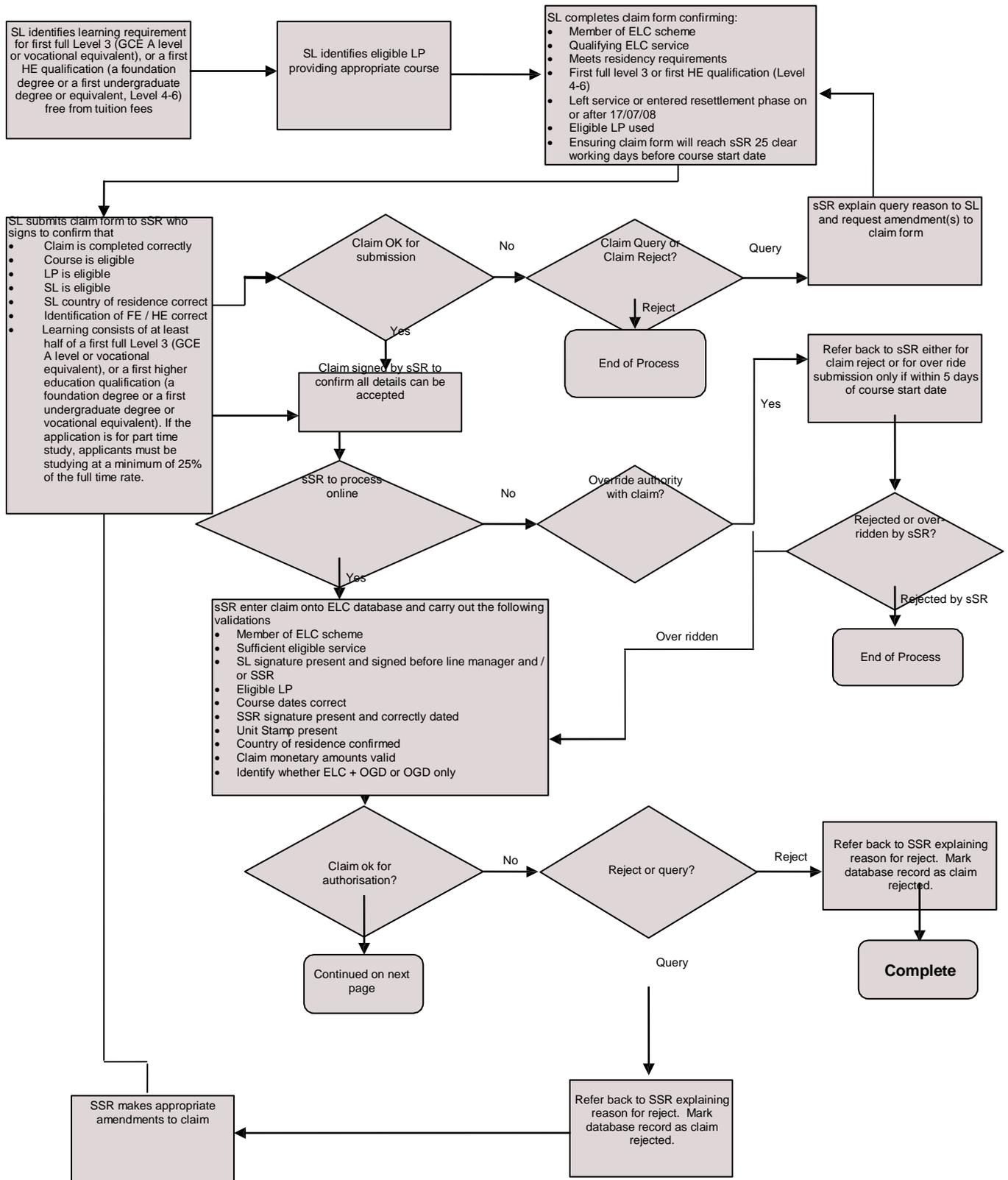
8. The LP invoice number will be quoted as the bill reference on the remittance sent by MOD.

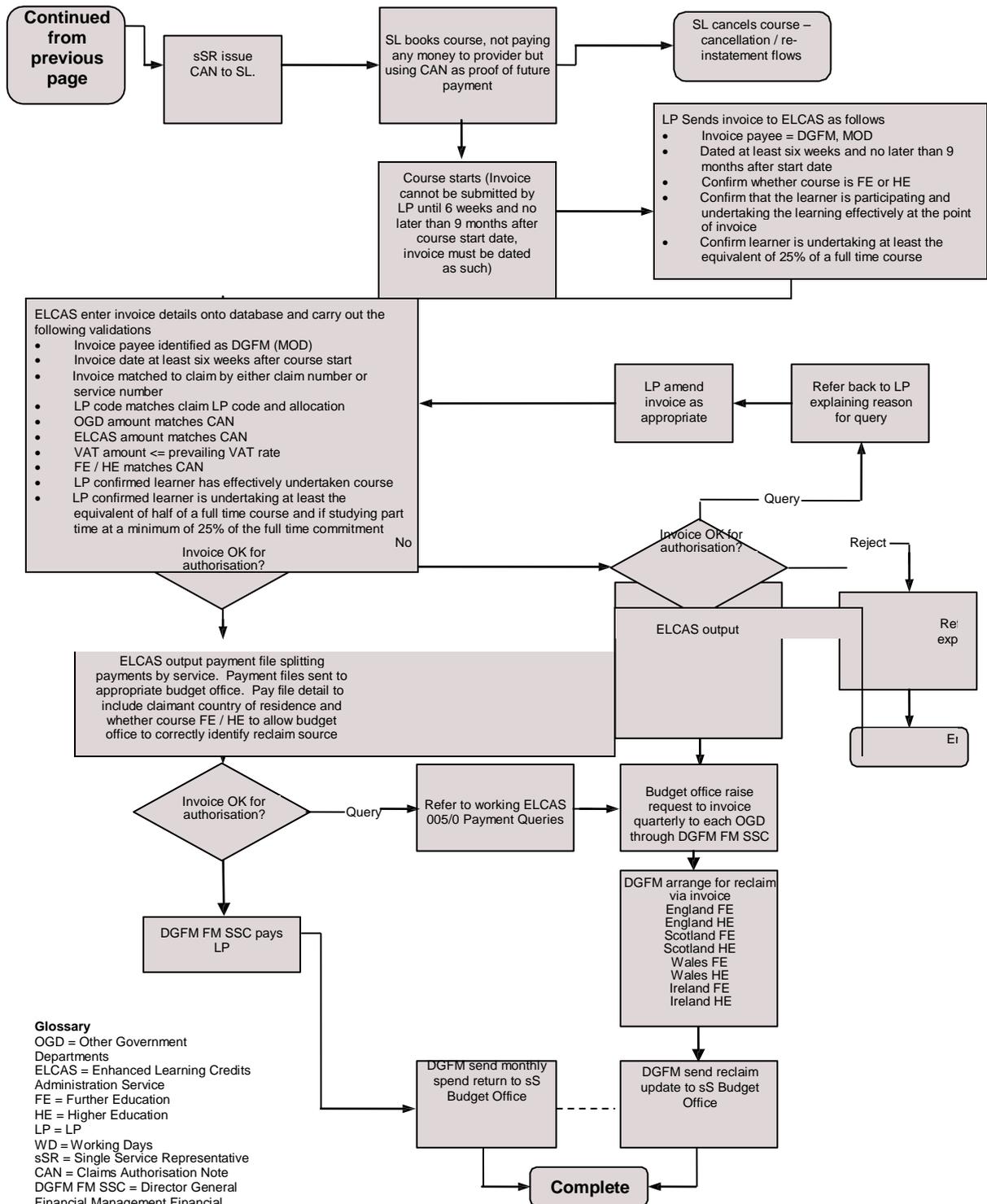
9. Where a SP withdraws from the course before a payment file has been generated to the LP, by ELCAS, then the cancellation process should be followed. Where a SP withdraws from a course after a payment file has been generated to the LP, by ELCAS, the reinstatement process should be followed. Both of these processes are outlined on the ELC website.

Glossary

ELC website refer to ELCAS = Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Service
 LP = Learning Provider
 sSR = Single Service Representative
 Ed Staff = Education Staff
 CAN = Claims Authorisation Note
 DGFMSSC = Director General Financial Management Shared Service Centre
 SL = Service Leaver

Annex B to Pt 1, 3.5.3: FE/HE Support Scheme Process for SL and LP





Glossary
 OGD = Other Government Departments
 ELCAS = Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Service
 FE = Further Education
 HE = Higher Education
 LP = LP
 WD = Working Days
 sSR = Single Service Representative
 CAN = Claims Authorisation Note
 DGFM FM SSC = Director General Financial Management Financial Management Shared Service Centre
 SL = Service Leaver

