

2 April 2026

Dear [accountable officer]

Maintenance loan eligibility for students studying at weekends

You may already be aware of an issue affecting a large number of students studying on full-time weekend-only courses. These students have received student support, including maintenance loans, for which they are ineligible. These students are in this position through no fault of their own, and our immediate priority is that their interests are protected.

If this issue affects your students, we expect you to contact them promptly, explain clearly what has happened, set out what it means for them, and make sure they receive the support they need. Students should not be left unclear about their options, their entitlements, or how your institution will support them.

The issue was caused by the way that some institutions have registered weekend-only courses on the Student Loan Company (SLC)'s systems. I'm grateful to the many institutions that are already engaging with SLC and the Department for Education to correct the errors and protect students.

You should confirm to the SLC whether or not you are affected by this issue. If you haven't already responded, please contact them as soon as possible.

I have attached an annex setting out our expectations for affected institutions, including the support we expect to be provided to students. Our immediate priority is that students are kept informed and provided with the right support.

If you do not offer, or have not previously offered, full-time weekend-only courses, it is unlikely you will be affected by this situation.

Thank you for your help in supporting students affected by this issue.

Yours sincerely

Josh Fleming, Interim Chief Executive

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Annex: Student support expectations for affected institutions

Support for affected students

We expect you to contact students promptly to explain why this issue has arisen and what the next steps are. We anticipate that affected students will be particularly concerned to understand whether or not they will receive their maintenance loan payments they are expecting in April and also how any historical overpayment will be dealt with by the Student Loans Company.

We understand that you may decide to offer students the opportunity to transfer onto courses that include delivery on a weekday, to ensure that ongoing maintenance eligibility is secured. You may also decide to amend the existing weekend-only provision to include an element of weekday delivery, again to allow entitlement to student support. We would consider both of these to be a material change to how a course is delivered, as it changes the overall mode of study.

This means that you should seek the affected students' express consent for transferring them onto courses that include delivery on a weekday and offer compensation if they are adversely affected by the change. If students do not agree to the change, then our expectation is that you will allow them to continue on the weekend course; if this is not possible or they wish to withdraw, offer refunds and compensation in compliance with consumer protection law. In all cases, students should be made aware of your complaints processes, and the role of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator in dealing with a complaint if they remain unsatisfied.

We are conscious that the timing of your contact with students is likely to be over the Easter holidays and we expect you to make sure you have appropriate staffing in place to respond to student queries over this period.

In addition, we expect you to signpost students to the Student Loans Company, which has hardship protocols in place for students who may need support and is taking steps to ensure it can process hardship applications in a timely manner.

Information required by the OfS

We have already written directly to a small number of providers that we require to submit a reportable event to us. If we are subsequently told by the Department for Education that your institution is affected by this issue, we will be in touch to explain what further information we need from you.