

Data Protection Statement (“DPS”) for postgraduate students

This DPS sets out who will use the information you provide in connection with your Postgraduate Loan (“PGL”) (Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan [“PGTFL”] if applying through Student Finance Northern Ireland [“SFNI”]) application (your “personal information”) and how they will use it.

This DPS is applicable to PGL/PGTFL applicants applying through Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales or SFNI.

Your personal information will be used to process your PGL/PGTFL application.

Certain functions relating to PGL/PGTFL applications have been transferred to the Student Loans Company Limited (“SLC”) by:

- the Secretary of State for Education;
- the Welsh Ministers; and
- the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland

For Northern Ireland (“NI”) domiciled applicants, certain functions relating to PGTFL applicants are to be exercised by the Education Authority (“EA”).

SLC (and the EA where applicable for NI applicants) will use your personal information to:

- determine whether you are eligible for student finance and, if so, your maximum entitlement to financial support; and/or
- make payment of student support.

The relevant Administration (either the Department for Education, the Welsh Ministers or the Department for the Economy, NI) and/or SLC (and the EA where applicable) are joint data controllers for your personal information. If you would like to see your personal information please contact SLC who can advise you in relation to the subject access request.

SLC retains personal information about you to:

- allow the assessment and payment of student finance to be audited;
- maintain or develop systems and processes; and
- provide you with customer services, respond to any questions you may have and update your account information.

The information which you provide will be checked for accuracy and used to detect and prevent fraud and/or money laundering. To do this, SLC may obtain information from and/or share information with other organisations or individuals such as, by way of example without limitation:

- the Department for Work and Pensions (“DWP”) to check your National Insurance number (“NINO”) (if this has not been checked previously) and personal details;
- the Home Office, including Her Majesty’s Passport Office (“HMPO”), to check your passport details and/or any residency/identity documents if you have provided them;
- HM Revenue & Customs (“HMRC”) to check your NINO to facilitate collection of loan repayments. HMRC may have shared access to your loan account information to help SLC collect loan repayments;
- Jobcentre Plus may ask SLC to provide confirmation of your eligibility for a loan in order to help you obtain a NINO; and/or
- other bodies including banks; building societies; the General Register Office; UK Visas and Immigration (“UKVI”); third parties with whom they have contracted to carry out identity, residency and income checks; utility providers; HMRC; HMPO; and fraud prevention and law enforcement agencies such as the Police and the National Crime Agency, to check the accuracy of information and to prevent and detect fraud both in the student finance application process and more widely.

SLC must retain information provided in connection with your application to handle payments, as appropriate and is the data controller for this information.

SLC and other organisations may also access and use this information to prevent fraud and money laundering, for example, when:

- checking details on applications for credit and credit related or other facilities;
- managing credit and credit related accounts or facilities;
- recovering debt;
- checking details on proposals and claims for all types of insurance; and/or
- checking details of job applicants and employees.

If you would like details of the relevant fraud prevention agencies, please contact SLC at Counter Fraud Services, Student Loans Company Limited, 100 Bothwell Street, Glasgow, G2 7JD.

SLC may also, along with other organisations, access and use from other countries the information recorded by fraud prevention agencies.

If you breach any term(s) applicable to the provision to you of student finance, SLC may share information about you and your account with any person or organisation, which may assist SLC to establish your whereabouts and/or to recover outstanding loan amounts.

SLC will share information with your Higher Education Provider (“HEP”) so that SLC can:

- pay any loan you are entitled to; and
- confirm the details of your course of study.

Your HEP may have shared access to your application and account information in the future for these purposes.

If you study a course approved by the General Social Care Council, Care Council for Wales (“CCW”), or Northern Ireland Social Care Council, you may be entitled to assistance to receive a bursary from the National Health Service Business Services Authority, CCW or the Department of Health if studying in Northern Ireland. Should you apply for funding assistance from one of these organisations, SLC may share personal information relating to your loan and attendance at the HEP. Only the personal information required for the assessment of eligibility for funding shall be passed to the relevant organisation.

The relevant Administration will have access to your account information to provide customer services to you and may use the information you have provided to monitor the performance of the student finance system and to develop future policies or initiatives. Both the relevant Administration and SLC may share data with third parties for research and statistical purposes. Any published output will be anonymous and will not identify individuals.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (“HEFCE”), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (“HEFCW”), and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (“HESA”) which carries out certain functions on behalf of HEFCE and HEFCW may, in carrying out HEFCE’s statutory functions relating to the funding of education, use the information provided for statistical analysis. HESA, HEFCE, HEFCW will not identify individuals in any published results.

By law, SLC and your university, college or training organisation must protect the public funds they handle and may use the information you have provided to detect and prevent fraud. They may also share the information, for the same purposes, with other organisations which handle public funds.

SLC may compare the information it holds on its systems with that on systems used by other organisations including HMRC, the Home Office (including HMPO and UKVI), the Prison Service, Royal Mail and third parties with whom we have contracted to carry out ID and income checks. This helps SLC to improve the accuracy of the information it holds and to reduce fraud.

You will be able to access your account online securely via the Internet.