

Learner Assessment and Payments System (laps) FAQs

Getting started:

I am a new user on laps; what training and support is available to me?

Within laps there are a number of areas designed to give information, advice and guidance on how to use laps; for example, adding Users and learners, amending learners' details and setting up Study Patterns. These include the interactive e-learning tool, a "Handy Hints" guide and the laps Operating Manual. If after using these you are still unclear on any aspect of the system you can ring the Provider helpline on **0845 600 7979**. If your query is more specific, or you would like additional support, then you can also contact your local Field Force representative whose details are on the Handy Hints document within laps.

You asked us to nominate a Super User for our organisation if it is different from the person you nominated. Who should the Super User be: member of teaching or line management staff or chief clerical, administration or EMA personnel?

The Super User can be anyone in your organisation. However, we recommend that it be whoever is appropriately placed to oversee laps usage most effectively within your organisation, and who is in a position to make decisions around the Site Administration tasks of Locations, Groups, Study Patterns and Standard Users.

What are the timescales before laps 'times out'?

Timeouts occur when the system has not "sent" confirmed information within a 20-25 minute timeframe. In order to avoid this, we suggest that you keep Group sizes manageable so that you are able to confirm decisions within this timeframe. If you are timed-out whilst making payment decisions, on re-login you will either be returned to the previous screen you worked on or the Latest News page depending on the length of time you have been timed-out.

Do term dates need to start at the beginning of a week? If so, what do I do if a term starts, or ends, mid-week?

In order to ensure accuracy of payments, term dates should be input correctly even if a term starts or ends mid-week. However, the payment week will begin from the Monday of that week. To make a payment decision for these weeks, you will only consider the possible days a learner can attend, and this would count for a full week's payment.

Am I required to change my password on a regular basis? How often will this be?

Laps is a secure website-based portal. It is a standard security protocol for secure websites to regularly change passwords. Therefore you will be required to change your password on a regular basis, which will typically be monthly.

I know that we can only have one Super User. Is there a limit on the number of Standard Users?

There is no maximum limit on the number of Standard Users that you have at your organisation. We would recommend that you create the adequate number of Standard Users required to service your Locations and the Groups of learners within them.

Will the Super User be the same for EMA and ALG?

There can only be one Super User for each organisation, and so this person will cover both EMA and ALG.

My organisation finished term before the 3rd August; I do not work over the summer and will return in September. Will my username and password for laps still be active when I return?

Laps usernames and passwords were issued before laps went live on 3rd August 2009. These will still be available and operational for those Users returning in September.

Is laps accessible and readable on a mac as well as a PC?

We do not envisage any problems with laps being accessible on macs, however you may want to check your internet settings to ensure that this is the case.

If we are set up as Users but do not have any EMA or ALG pupils requiring payments in an academic year, will the accounts still be available in the following academic year?

Accounts will lapse if they are not used within this timeframe.

Administration:

I have put End of Learning on laps for a learner who left my organisation, but they have now returned. Do I need to set up a new learning pattern for them?

You will need to re-add the learner to laps if you have already recorded End of Learning (EoL). You will not need to set up a new Study Pattern if the learner is studying on an FE course, whose Study Pattern is already in existence for other learners as you will be able to attach them to the existing Study Pattern. However, if the learner is studying on an e2e, PLA or FE Short Course then you may need to set up a new learning pattern for them.

Does laps allow you to change a learner receiving EMA to ALG?

Learners need to take in their Notice of Entitlement (NoE), or their Letter of Continuing Entitlement, to their Learning Provider to enable you to register them on laps. The NoE will have a reference number printed that relates to that specific learner. Laps will recognise which scheme the individual learner's number relates to, which will either be for EMA or ALG. This is to prevent enrolling a learner onto the wrong course of study i.e. enrolling an EMA learner onto ALG or vice-versa. Therefore when a learner moves from EMA to ALG they will receive a new NoE and will need to be re-added onto laps.

Will I need to re-add learners each year for learners that are following a course that spans more than one academic year?

At present you will need to re-add learners for each academic year that they are in learning.

Do we continue to use the EMA or ALG number or the laps number once a learner has been added to laps?

Once a learner has been added to laps you should use their laps number. You should inform learners whose number will have changed that this is the case as the new laps number will be the reference when contacting the Learner Support Service.

How many learners per page will laps display?

Laps will display a maximum of 200 learners, and will have the facility to scroll down the page.

Some learners' names are incorrect from the 2008/09 academic year. Also, some learners' names and bank details are different from how the learner is known, for example, because of divorced parents. How do we correct this on laps?

You should direct learners affected by this to contact the helpline on **0800 121 8989** and the Learner Support Service will amend their records on laps. If a learner is known by something other than what is recorded on laps, the User can create a Learner ID using these details, which will allow them to be able to search and easier find the learner in the future.

We use a Third Party Interface (3Pi). What are the changes to the set-up?

We have communicated to all organisations that use Third Party Interface to inform them of the changes as they develop their interfaces. You will need to check with your individual supplier for information on where they are up to in this process.

Students currently have to call the helpline to change bank details, which sometimes means them having to wait longer for their payments to be processed. Is there a way that we can change the details ourselves or forward them onto the LSS to make this process quicker?

Due to the restrictions placed upon us by the Data Protection Act, we cannot discuss the details of a learner's bank account with anyone other than the learner without their permission. The updating and changing of bank account details is a tightly controlled process which requires additional evidence to be provided by the learner. Once the new details have been updated, the evidence is returned to the learner along with confirmation that the new bank account details have been recorded.

What happens if an EMA learner no longer meets the guided learning hours requirement, for example they drop a subject but continue in learning?

If a learner drops below the minimum weekly guided learning hours, we recommend that an End of Learning is completed with a "left learning" reason.

You will have the option to enter additional information about the reason in the box alongside this for further reference. You should refer to the EMA Guidance for more specific information on guided learning hours.

How should I record dates for a roll-on roll-off programme of study, for example e2e?

You should enter a specific start and end date for each learner that this applies to. The Super User should set up Study Patterns, and laps will allow them to create specific Study Patterns for individual learners.

Can we set up a learner as e2e if they have not filled in the e2e section of the application form?

Any EMA eligible learner can be added to an e2e Programme of Study regardless of whether they have been income-assessed or not.

How do we record on laps a learner who finishes an e2e course and progresses onto PLA?

You will record this on laps by recording an End of Learning for the e2e Programme of Study and re-enrolling the learner under the new PLA Programme of Study.

Returning learners' numbers will be changing to the 12-digit laps numbers. Will you inform them of this change or am I required to do so?

You will need to inform returning learners of the change to their number. Any subsequent correspondence between the LSS and the learner will feature the new laps number as reference.

If a learner's course is going to overrun the existing Study Pattern that they are registered on laps for, will I be able to extend this towards the end of the academic year?

You will be able to amend the Study Pattern to extend this, if necessary, at any time.

What happens if I set the term dates incorrectly so that I haven't given a learner the sufficient number of weeks?

You will need to amend the Study Pattern for the learner(s) affected, and you can amend this at any point before the end of the year.

Not all term dates follow the default term dates that are defined on laps; can we change these?

Users can cater for their specific term dates by creating individual Study Patterns before they enrol learners. Users can then apply all, or some, of the learners to this Study Pattern.

Can I amend the Programme of Study of an e2e learner progressing onto an FE course in the middle of the year?

You will be unable to amend the learner's Programme of Study to an FE one if the learner was originally assessed on the e2e variant of the EMA application without income assessment. If this is the case, the learner will have to complete a new application and be income-assessed.

If the learner was originally income-assessed, you will have to record an End of Learning against the e2e course and re-enrol the learner on their new Programme of Study. The learner will not need to complete a new application in this case.

Payments:

In laps will I be able to authorise less than ten weeks' payments for e2e learners during their first ten weeks of learning?

Learners on Entry to Employment accrue bonus payments at a rate of £5 per week from the start of their course. The Provider will have to authorise this on a weekly basis on laps, but payments will not be released until the learner has completed ten weeks. It is up to the Provider to authorise the bonus payments in this first ten weeks based upon the criteria as set out in the EMA Provider Guidance, and only those weeks that have been authorised will be released to the learner from the ten-week point.

When making payment decisions by Location on laps, will I be able to access all Groups or will I have to make decisions by individual Groups?

You will make payment decisions by Location. Within Locations may be a number of Groups. If you have set up learners into a number of different Groups you will need to make payment decisions in individual Groups. We recommend that you set up Groups to include a manageable number of learners to make payment decisions.

Will it be possible for me to run payment reports from laps?

There are a number of pre-defined reports on laps, which include payment reports. You can download report data into other applications, such as Excel, that you can then edit to suit your needs. This might be useful for you to use to make anonymous non-payment reports to inform learners whether they have not received a payment decision for that week. However, please note that this facility is not available on a Monday or Tuesday; this is because the system is locked down to allow the processing of the new payments.

Will we be able to see the date that payments have been authorised?

Laps records learners' payment history, which you can access from the Learners tab, and this will display the dates that payments have been authorised for any particular learner. A learner's mini-statement will also display the date that payments were made.

Will there be space on laps to record individual notes on why a learner is not getting paid for any particular week rather than having specific default categories?

There are a number of options to choose from the drop-down menu when recording a non-payment decision on laps. There is also a comments box on the payment decision page where you will be able to record any more specific reasons for non-payment to a learner.

Is it possible to make changes to past payment decisions?

Laps will allow you to amend past payment decisions from a No to a Yes and vice versa. This may mean that a learner receives two weeks' payment at once, or does not receive payment one week to ensure that they receive the correct number of weeks' payments.

If I pay a bonus in error, how will this be recovered?

If you pay a bonus in error, you will need to correct the specific decision in laps to a "No". The Learner Support Service will liaise directly with the learner about the recovery of the overpayment.

Is there a cut-off date for learners to bring in their Notice of Entitlement?

Learners can apply for EMA or ALG at any point in the academic year and will be issued with a Notice of Entitlement if they are assessed as eligible. Payments will be back-dated to the point at which the Learner Support Service received the application if this is beyond 28 days after the start of the learner's course. There is no specified cut-off date at present.

Is there a cut-off date for changing payment decisions?

You can change payment decisions for learners at any point during the EMA or ALG year.

Will we make payment decisions alphabetically each week?

Payment decisions are made by Group on laps, rather than alphabetically.

Further help:

I would like to find out about local network groups in my area at which I can share and gather good practice. Where can I find this information?

Your local Field Force representative will be able to discuss with you what may be in place locally.