

Confirmation of Entry Level Funding

Q: We have always understood that each entry level SfL qualification would receive full funding in Train to Gain as it does in Learner Responsive). That is, for Entry Level they will receive £772, and then if they move up to Entry Level 2, they would again receive £772. We have written the guidance and answered questions based on this assumption, but given the constant questioning we just wanted to make sure we hadn't missed any change to this that you may be aware of? Have DIUS mentioned anything different, for example?

A: Taken from paragraph F of flexibilities document

- All 3 subjects at all levels – literacy, numeracy and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at all levels (Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2)
- Both literacy and numeracy needs will be funded
- Those with prior qualifications at NVQ Level 2 (or equivalent) or above will be eligible for funding through Train to Gain where they have an identified Basic Skills need
- Where a learner is identified as needing progression, non-target bearing Basic Skills qualifications will be funded (08/08/08)
- Literacy and numeric are fully funded – Entry Level will be funded at the same rate as Levels 1 and 2.

I understand that SfL qualification in Train to Gain is worth 0.18 SLN and therefore would be worth £514, add the Train to Gain weighting, which then brings the answer to £772 – so your assumption is correct.

Contribution to wage costs

Q: Regarding contribution to wage costs – does the contribution apply to Train to Gain eligible Level 3/4 learners in this funding year? Last year Level 3 jumpers were entitled now Level 3 Trials are ended is this contribution widened to include all Level 3?

A: Regulations can be found in the Funding Guidance 2008/09, page 201 Annex M. Further guidance will be issued via the Bulletin in due course.

Eligibility – Train to Gain

Q: A question around ONAs came up at one of the colleges. Where they are recruiting new starts for Employer Responsive, they will need to be eligible within the TtG criteria.

My understanding is that a learner needs to be attached to an ONA for TtG. A considerable number of new learners will come through from the college enrolment days with no direct employer involvement (other than possibly paying the fee) is an ONA required here or just an EDS (employer URN) on the ILR?

A: As per the eligibility rules for Train to Gain, if a learner is engaged by a college or training provider on an enrolment day (e.g. directly with the learner) and there is no direct engagement with the employer of the individual, this person is not eligible for Train to Gain funding.

Q: Query from provider - 'We have been given some conflicting information regarding ULN's. My colleague attended a presentation (not in the West Midlands) where the subject of ULN's was discussed and no reference was made to Employer Responsive funding or TTG. However, the Employer Responsive Provider Support Manual page 16 L45 / A55 states that learners through Employer Responsive funding the use of the ULN is mandatory, are ULNs mandatory and how do Providers get hold of them?

A: Refer to page 151 of the Individualised Learner Record 2008/09 available from the Information Authority which details the process and validation rules.

Funding

Q: Can you confirm if assessment only NVQs can be funded as part of the ER programmed?

A: This has always been the case in Train to Gain – the Lower rate funding was designed to encompass this type of delivery and paragraph 529 in the Funding Guidance 2008/09 refers.

Q: Can you also confirm co-funded SLNs for L3 for High Rate and Low Rate funding please.

A: Regarding SLNs refer to page 38, Annex E of the Funding Guidance: Funding Rates (vers 3) from December 2007.

Q: Are Au Pairs eligible to participate in Train to Gain? I've been asked this question by a Partnership Manager on behalf of a provider. I do not think they are but cannot find anything relating to Au Pairs.

A: As a general rule Au Pairs would not be eligible and the individual training route might well be the best one for them. However, if they meet both the Train to Gain and the Learner Eligibility guidance AND work for an agency that is using the Train to Gain service, they would be eligible. We would envisage that training providers working with such an agency would wish to be satisfied that learners such as this were in a long-term position.

Q: Learning Hours: 15hrs of learning – what learning components can be included in this 15hrs? Does it have to deliver the NVQ underpinning knowledge only or can it be wider ranging: job and employer relevant.

A: This area is fully covered in the Funding Guidance 2008/09 para 529.

Q: Is it correct that 'Evidence of a learner being on programme can simply be the signed tutor/assessor visit report (no need for timesheets).

A: The regulations are set out in para 527 of the Funding Guidance 2008/09 plus a full understanding of the ILR Funding Advice and Audit Guidelines 2008/09 (especially Section 5) would cover this area. Reference should also be made to Section 2 of the Funding Formula guidance 2008/09.

Q: The questions are around the 12 wk rule (LSC Funding Guidance 2008/09 ILR Funding Compliance, Advice and Audit Guidance for Providers – Draft version 1 June 08) (1) Where a learner is going to be off for some weeks should a provider record this (and if so what happens to success rate/planned end date) or should they be terminated from the programme? (2) Where they are terminated from the programme and start again on returning to work; is this a 'new' start with start funding or is there a re-start, picking up on where the original payments left off?

A: The Region and provider should take a view as to whether the learner will return and therefore institute a planned break in learning as per existing procedures. Section 5 of the same guidance provides additional detail for withdrawals. This would be the case for all learners on any funding stream.

Terminating and then re-starting a learner would on any funding stream result in potentially a new start being registered and Regions always refer to their local BSU to amend ILRs where needed to avoid this occurrence.

The Region would need to decide whether a new start payment is justified or not – and the impact on the provider achievement rates.

Q: When does a Train to Gain person become a start is it straight away they are signed up or upon completion of 2 hours of training/assessment (this was the old criteria) but I can't see any reference to it in the new guidance.

A: The 2 hour rule within Train to gain ceased to operate from 1st August 2008. The Funding Guidance 2008/09 does make specific reference to this area in paragraph 513 and 530. Paragraphs 35 onwards in the ILR Funding Advice and Audit Guidelines 2008/09 would also apply.

FLT and NVQ Level 4 (non jumpers)

Q: Is there any intention/willingness to open up the delivery of FLT and NVQ 4 (non jumpers) to private providers?

A: In line with the recently published [Train to Gain flexibilities document version 3](#), only providers that have historically delivered employer-based NVQ Level 4 provision in 2007/08 will be able to continue to do so in 2008/09 via Train to Gain. This includes new starts in 2008/09. The qualifications must be on the agreed list of eligible qualifications negotiated between the provider and the LSC.

In 2008/09 NVQ Level 1s are only fundable through providers with provision which forms part of the FE NVQ in the workplace transitional arrangements; this mainly applies to colleges. As the FLT is developed and sector compacts agreed, it is anticipated that FLT provision will be available for funding under Train to Gain. This will be open to all providers delivering Train to Gain.

Skills for Life/ Basic Skills

Q: Can you define what a non target bearing qualification is?

A: Target-bearing Skills for Life qualifications are:

- Literacy or ESOL Level 1
- Numeracy at Entry Level 3

Therefore any other Skills for Life qualifications are not target-bearing.

Q: Is there any movement on progression of learners through S4L qualifications, if not, can FE College providers (including ACL), deliver a progression route using what was FE mainstream (Type A) and TtG?

A: In line with the recently published [Train to Gain flexibilities document version 3](#), where a learner requires progression within SfL the LSC will fund this through Train to Gain. We will fund learners needing progression from Entry Level 1 up to and including Level 2, across all subjects, both on target bearing and non-target bearing qualifications.

Q: Can learners take two target bearing SFL qualifications? i.e. can they take Literacy Level 1 and then progress to Literacy Level 2? If not, is there a timescale in which this rule will be relaxed (can they come back in a year's time and do another target bearing SFL qual?)

A: Progression is permitted as per the Funding Guidance 2008/09 para 522.

Q: Does the right to take a non-target bearing SFL qualification to enable progression to a target bearing SFL qualification exist for a learner in both literacy and numeracy? i.e. can a learner do one non-target bearing literacy qualification and progress to a target

bearing literacy qualification and also do a non-target bearing numeracy qualification and then progress to a target bearing numeracy qualification?

A: As per the [guidance](#), we will fund progression from Entry Level 1 to Entry Level 2 in response to learner needs. Therefore, a learner can undertake as many non-target and target-bearing qualifications as required, both in literacy and numeracy.

Paragraphs 514 through 522 in the Funding Guidance 2008/09 refer to this point and detail the assessment of learner need that must be demonstrated.

Q: Can stand alone SFL qualifications be delivered under Train to Gain under any learner eligibility criteria? (i.e. employer status / volunteers / LEP etc)

A: As long as the learner meets the usual Train to Gain eligibility requirements then stand alone Skills for Life qualifications can be delivered.

This has been available since 1st August 2007 and is re-sated in para 517 of the Funding Guidance 2008/09.

Q: Flexibilities inconsistencies; Page 4 Basic Skills All Levels (Entry, 1, 2, 3, L1 & L2); Page 9 Basic Skills Entry Level 1, 2, 3 but no mention of L1 & L2. Should page 9 also include L1 & L2 as being fully funded?

A: Please refer to version 3, dated 11/08/08 of [Train to Gain Additional Flexibilities 2008/09 – A Guide for Colleges and Training Providers](#).

Q: Is there a 6 hours minimum delivery rule for SFL?

A: No – however colleges and training providers must be mindful of paragraph 527 of the Funding Guidance 2008/09 regarding learner hours.

Level 2

Q: City and Guilds have a bricklaying qualification at Level 2 but it is not a full Level 2. Will we be able to deliver a 1st Level 2 to a learner with this award or will it need to be a 2nd Level 2.

A: If the qualification is not a full Level 2 or subject to a Sector Compact Train to Gain funding is not available. A learner who has no first full Level 2 has always been eligible to undertake a first full Level 2 qualification.

Level 3

Q: What evidence requirements are needed to confirm the 42.5% employer contributions for Level 3 in TtG?

A: The funding rates for 08/09 must apply to all learners either starting in 08/09 or carrying over from 07/08. There is an expectation that the employer will contribute towards training at the rates identified (42.5%), although there is no formal requirement to evidence this contribution. This means that where L3 (pilot) learners from 07/08 transfer to mainstream TtG activity, there is no longer a requirement to evidence the employer contribution.

Q: I have had queries from private providers regarding second or subsequent L3s – As we know 2nd/subsequent L3's will need to be on SSC lists. How will the SSC lists be communicated to ourselves (LSC colleagues) and providers? When will the lists be published? How will we be notified of their publication?

A: For Level 2 second qualifications, the qualifications that will be supported are identified by the Sector Skills Council in a sector compact and/or the Sector Qualification Strategy. The SQS list will be available on 1st September and the list of qualifications identified for funding through the sector compacts will be available as each sector Compact is published.

For subsequent Level 3 qualifications, only those qualifications identified by the Sector Skills Council in a sector compact will be funded. The list of qualifications identified for funding through the sector compacts will be available as each Sector Compact is published.

Q: The new guidance has removed the words stating that additional Level 3 qualifications must be a qualification identified by the Sector Qualification Strategy (Approved list available from 1st September). Does this mean an approved list will not be made available?

A: It means exactly as it says in the guidance – additional Level 3 qualifications will only be available if identified in a sector compact.

Public Sector

Q: Are the Fire service/police/ambulance service considered to be 'front line services' (see enhancement E, page 4 of A Guide for Colleges and Training Providers), and, are they therefore covered under the public sector eligibility?

A: The LSC National Office is still seeking clarity from DIUS on this point. As soon as clarity has been received regarding public sector eligibility, we will share this information with regional colleagues.

Prison Service

Q: Can you clarify the current position of HM Prisons in accessing Train to Gain?

A: There are two answers depending upon the status of the prison:

1. If the prison is a **private** prison: They are eligible for Train to Gain support;
 2. If the **prison** is a public prison: No answer as yet. The LSC National Office is still seeking clarity from DIUS on this point because of them being considered to be part of the public sector. As soon as clarity has been received regarding public sector eligibility, we will share this information with regional colleagues.
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Providers: training of own staff

Q: Is there confirmation yet that providers can train their own staff and receive funding? In the past they could – but what is the situation now in the new funding year?

A: There has been no change to the rule that providers can train their own staff subject to the quality guidelines and audit regulation.

Providers: FE NVQ in the workplace transitional arrangements

Q: Can an Out of Region College deliver second Level 2's that they have historically delivered in the West Midlands region. The College is arguing that because of cross regional working arrangements and the fact they have historically delivered 2nd Level 2's out of region they should be allowed to continue.

A: We refer you to [version 3 of the guidance, page 10](#) – if the region is satisfied that the college has historical patterns of delivery of 'additional' full Level 2s, and then they can continue delivering. The guidance is quite clear – it says nothing about 'in region' or 'out of region' – the decision should be made by the region based upon the historical patterns of provision in that institution.
