

## FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND ELC CLAIMS

### A GUIDE FOR CLAIMANTS NO LONGER IN SERVICE (CNLIS)

# READ THIS FIRST



- Do not commit any funds to a Learning Provider until you receive valid written authorization for your chosen course from Learning Forces at Headquarters Personnel and Training Command
  - This authorization comes in the form of a Claim Authorization Note (CAN).
  - You must be in possession of a CAN before you pay any money to a Learning Provider.
    - A CAN will only be issued to an Approved Learning Provider
- Write your telephone contact details in Section 1 of the Claim Form beside your address. This will allow staff at Learning Forces, Headquarters Personnel and Training Command to contact you quickly if there is a problem with your application.
- Please apply at least 6 weeks in advance of your course start date to ensure that you receive your CAN in time.

#### Definitions

- Individuals who are no longer serving with the RAF and who wish to submit a claim for Enhanced Learning Credit (ELC) funding are designated as Claimants No Longer In Service (CNLIS).

#### Background

- The ELC may be claimed by individuals who have left the Service up to 10 years from their exit date from the Service. The procedures to be followed by those personnel classified as CNLIS differ from those for serving personnel and therefore this separate guide has been compiled.

## Eligibility

- Before being eligible to make an ELC claim individual scheme members must have completed **not less than four** years' eligible service. In order to claim at the higher tier (up to £2000 per annum), they must have completed **not less than eight** years' eligible service.

## Your Role in the ELC Process

- As a Claimant No Longer in Service (CNLIS), through the ELC scheme, the RAF offers you a level of support for your continued learning and personal development that is unrivalled by other ex-employers.
- In return for this level of continued support you are expected to take responsibility for organising your learning. This means that you will need to research your favoured Learning Provider thoroughly. Furthermore, you should also be prepared to justify your course and ensure that it meets the rules for it to be eligible for ELC support.
- Having left the Service, you no longer have access to the Learning Centre support, advice and facilities present on many RAF stations. You will therefore have to carry the research burden yourself. This need not be daunting, as much of the information that you require is readily available on the Internet. Some website links that may be of use to you are given elsewhere on the Learning Forces website.
- The authoritative MOD document for ELC at present is Defence Council Instruction (DCI) JS 30/04. This is supplemented by any in-year policy amendments, which MOD and the RAF may make. These notes are a guide to ELC for CNLIS. They do not supersede the DCI.

## Membership of the Scheme

- Individuals wishing to make a claim using the ELC scheme **MUST** have been accepted as members of the ELC scheme, under the regulations described in DCI JS 30/04, whilst they were still serving.
- Individuals will have received notification of scheme membership from the Enhanced Learning Credit Administration Service (ELCAS).
- Retrospective applications to join the ELC scheme from personnel no longer in the RAF will not be accepted.

## Making a claim under the ELC scheme - First Steps

Those individuals who are ELC scheme members and who wish to make a claim must follow the process detailed below:

1

- **Develop your Personal development Plan.** You are required to submit a current Personal Development Plan with each ELC claim that you apply for.
- Take time to evaluate and, where necessary, update or revise your PDP to ensure its currency and applicability to your personal development objectives.
- Copies of a suggested PDP and guidance on how to undertake the planning are available from the Learning Forces website. [www.learning-forces.org.uk](http://www.learning-forces.org.uk)
- You can of course choose to use your own version of a PDP. This is perfectly acceptable provided it answers the main questions about your plans:
  - Where am I now?
  - Where do I want to be? (What are my objectives?)
  - How can I get there? (How can I achieve my objectives?)

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- **Check if your chosen Learning Provider is on the database of ELC Approved Learning Providers.** This database is maintained by the ELC Administration Service (ELCAS) and it can be found on the ELCAS website: [www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk](http://www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk)
- The database provides brief details of the course offered by a Learning Provider as well as information regarding the support that they can provide.
- If your chosen Learning Provider is not already on the approved list, you should contact them and ask them to download the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) from the ELCAS website. Your Learning Provider should complete the PQQ and submit it to ELCAS in accordance with the instructions provided.
- Having received and considered a PQQ from your chosen Learning Provider, ELCAS will notify the provider whether it has been approved or not. If the provider is approved in principle, ELCAS' letter of notification contains further paperwork required for the payment of bills from MOD to the provider.
- You may well find your chosen provider takes longer than expected to complete and return the further paperwork. Until it does so it can not be placed upon the approved provider's database and your ELC claim can not be processed. Accordingly you need to ensure your provider competes the ELCAS procedures as quickly as possible.
- You should assume that it may take your learning provider 2 months to complete the approval process. Our experience to date shows that ELCAS are both efficient and speedy. However, the performance of the providers is variable, especially in completing the paperwork from ELCAS. You may well have to contact your provider to ensure they are responding to ELCAS' requirements as quickly as possible.

- When you make contact with your Learning Provider, you should be able to reserve a place on the course that you wish to undertake, but you should not pay them any money until you have your CAN. ELC is not a refund scheme and it will not repay you any money. ELC monies are paid to the Learning Providers, only prior to the onset of the learning.

**NOTE: Not all courses offered by an approved learning provider will attract ELC support. the course must also meet the criteria detailed below.**

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- **Check that the Qualification that you wish to obtain equates to Level 3 or above on the National Qualification Framework (NQF).** Some examples of acceptable uses for ELC funding are as follows:
  - i. Study towards first degrees (inc Foundation Degrees).
  - ii. Study towards post-graduate qualifications (eg PGCE).
  - iii. Other academic study, such as A2/AS level study.
  - iv. Accreditation of Prior Learning assessment fees leading to partial or complete qualifications providing that there is evidence that the individual has produced new, original work.
  - v. Vocational courses.
  - vi. Examination fees in respect of the types of courses listed above, whether preceded by course fees or not.
  - vii. Initial registration fees and accreditation fees for professional bodies and institutes expressly to gain qualifications (ie. Certificates or Diplomas rather than categories or membership).
  - viii. Overseas Courses and Qualifications. However, the Learning Provider must be on the Approved Provider list and the course must lead to a qualification recognised by UK NARIC as equivalent to Level 3 or above on the NQF.
- **Proof of qualification level:** Where the course applied for does not lead to a qualification that is accredited and present upon the NQF you will be required to provide proof of the qualification level. Your provider should be able to provide proof of the Awarding Body (AB) for your course and the authority which it has from the AB which permits it to offer the course to learners like you. Should it be unable to provide such proof, you will need to contact the AB directly.

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### Completing the Claim Form

1. The claim form is available to download from the ELCAS website at: [www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk](http://www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk)
2. Carefully read and complete the Claim Form. Any mistakes that you make, or information that you fail to provide may result in the form being returned to you and a subsequent delay to your claim being approved.

#### CLAIM FORM PART 1

3. Write your telephone contact details in Part 1 of the Claim Form beside your address. This will allow staff at Learning Forces, Headquarters Personnel and Training Command to contact you quickly if there is a problem with your application.

## CLAIM FORM PART 2

4. If you are being partially sponsored by a civilian employer (ie. Not the MOD) and wish to use ELC funding in addition to the Sponsorship, you must include the Sponsorship sum as part of the personal contribution. You must ensure that each claim only relates to learning that commences in the current Financial Year.

## CLAIM FORM PART 3

5. You must sign and date the Claim Form.

## CLAIM FORM PART 4

6. Part 4 of the Form is irrelevant to CNLIS and should not be completed.

7. Having completed the form, your Claim must be sent to Learning Forces at Headquarters Personnel and Training Command. **Your claim form can only be approved by authorised personnel at Learning Forces, Headquarters Personnel and Training Command.** They will process your claim in the same way as Learning Centre staff at RAF stations.

### Submitting your Claim

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- Your claim form is not a stand-alone document. It must be supported by further documentation.
- Individuals classified as CNLIS are required to provide a number of proofs of identity in addition to their claim form so that the financial probity of the scheme can be ensured.
- In order to prevent fraud, claim forms submitted without the required supporting documentation will be returned to sender.
- You are required to submit the following:
  - a. Photocopy of passport or driving licence with photograph of claimant.
  - b. Photocopy of claimant's Service discharge documentation.
  - c. Photocopy of utility bill showing claimants' home address.
  - d. Proof of membership of the ELC scheme.
  - e. Personal Development Plan.
- If you do not include all of the above items, we will be unable to process your claim.
- You should forward all the required documentation to the following address:

Learning Credits Administrator (CNLIS)  
Learning Forces  
Rm S84  
Bldg 255  
HQ PTC  
RAF Innsworth

Authority: PTC/462206/TD  
CNLIS#1

DATE: 6 Oct 2004

## What Happens Next?

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### Confirmation of Your Claim – The Claim Authorization Note

- On receipt of all the required information, Learning Forces staff will approve the claim and forward it to ELCAS who will process the claim and prepare your CAN.
- You will then be sent the CAN by Learning Forces.
- The CAN is the sole authority which tells your Learning Provider that you are being supported financially and that the MOD will pay its part of the bill.
- On receipt of the CAN you should confirm your course with the Learning Provider by sending them the CAN and making arrangements for paying your part of the bill.

### Commencement and Completion of Training

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- Having undertaken a course of study you are expected to complete the course unless there are extenuating circumstances for not doing so.
- You are also required to obtain a proof of course completion from your Learning Provider when you have qualified. This may be in the form of a certificate or letter.
- You are also required to complete the ELCAS Course Evaluation Form.
- You will be required to submit this proof if you wish to apply for a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> ELC claim.

## **SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND THE ANSWERS TO THEM**

**Q.** When can I start claiming my ELC?

A. If you have registered as a member of the ELC scheme and have been serving since 1 Apr 00 you are eligible to start claiming lower tier funding (up to £1,000 per annum, maximum of three claims) from 1 Apr 04.

**Q.** The DCI states the course must be at Level 3 or above. What does Level 3 mean?

A. An A Level or NVQ III are typical examples of Level 3 qualifications. ELC can also be used to fund higher- level study (Level 4 or 5), examples being Open University Diploma/Degree courses.

**Q.** How do I know if the course I want to do is Level 3 or above?

A. If the level is not obvious, check with the Learning/Training Provider to confirm the level in writing. Details of most qualifications can be found in the British Qualifications Directory or on the website [www.openquals.co.uk](http://www.openquals.co.uk)

**Q.** Can I use ELC for a Plumbing course?

A. Not whilst serving, because it could not be justified as being of benefit to the MoD in your current military role. If you are in your resettlement phase it would be acceptable if it is part of a PDP and Resettlement Plan. It is certainly permissible after you have left the Service. However the course must be Level 3 or above and generally plumbing courses start at Level 1/2 for people with no previous experience. The Training Provider must be on the Approved Training Provider list as shown on the ELCAS website (see above for website address).

**Q.** If I do an Open University module for £450 can I use the rest of my £1000 money later in the same financial year for a different course?

A. No, ELC is a "one hit" claim. You must consider carefully that the course you are wishing to pursue in the financial year is the most appropriate one to use ELC for. If the course is a lower cost it may be more appropriate to use Standard Learning Credit (£175 per annum).

**Q.** Can I still use the Standard Learning Credit in the same financial year?

A. Yes, if it is not for the same course/module of study.

**Q.** The Training Provider I want to use is already on the Resettlement preferred Training Provider list. Does this mean they do not have to seek a separate approval for ELC?

A. No. A number of the resettlement Training Providers offer courses which are below Level 3. They need to apply separately for ELC approved status. Part of the approval process ensures that potential Learning Providers understand the payment mechanism established by the Defence Bills Agency and can work with it.

**Q.** If a company is on the approved Learning Provider list, does it mean I can do any of their courses?

A. No, only the courses meeting the criteria in the DCI, including the stipulation that all courses should be at Level 3 and above.

**Q.** If I leave the RAF before 1 Apr 08 and I haven't used my ELC, will I be able to claim £1000 per year or £2000?

A. Your claim entitlement would remain at the £1000 level. You must accumulate 8 years of qualifying service before being eligible to claim the higher tier of ELC. This can only be achieved whilst serving.

**Q.** Can I pay a deposit to secure my place on a course?

A. You must not part with any money up front. You need to receive the Claim Authorisation Note from ELCAS, via your Learning Centre staff before paying any money to your provider.

**Q.** I am working in an overseas location. Who can I get to authorise my claim?

A. All RAF CNLIS claims should be forwarded to the Learning Credits Administrator at HQ PTC.

**Q.** Can I get my line manager to sign my claim?

A. No, the Learning Centre staffs are the people responsible for authorising ELC claims.

**Q.** Do I pay up front and claim the money back?

A. No, refer to the flow chart on the back of DCI JS 30/04. ELC pays up to 80% of course costs to a maximum of £1000. You are responsible for the balance. (Only after you have a Claim Authorisation Note from ELCAS).

**Q.** My location and discharge date have changed since I registered for ELC. Do I need to contact ELCAS to inform them?

A. No, they can make changes to your details when you make a claim. Do, however, inform them if you leave the Service and later rejoin.

**Q.** I have paid for tuition fees for a course, using ELC. I now need to pay for the exam fees for this course. Can I use SLC for this?

A. No. The rules are quite clear on this. You can not use ELC and SLC for the same learning purpose, ie the same module or part of a course. Interestingly, some providers working in the same subject areas offer an all-inclusive package of tuition and exam fees. You should ask providers to offer you as complete a package as possible.

**Q.** My provider has told me that he can put all the costs of my 2-year HNC into the one invoice for a single ELC Claim. Is this permissible?

A. No. ELC is not to be regarded as an account and so learning should normally be undertaken and completed within a 12 month academic year or period, supported by one payment from the relevant financial period. (NB “normally” is included to take account of genuine operational commitments, which may delay you completing a course you have started). In other words, the principle the MOD is applying is in year funding for in year learning. A course lasting more than 12 months must always be invoiced separately for each year of its duration. Providers are aware of this stipulation from the PQQ, which they completed for Approved Provider status. ELC is designed to support learners and has always been intended to complement SLC. Fundamentally, if a complete course was to attract, say, 2 or 3 SLC claims, then it should attract 2 or 3 ELC claims.