



Student Loans Company Official Statistics - Statement of administrative sources

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Background

Official Statistics published by the Student Loans Company Limited (SLC) are derived entirely from data in administrative systems hosted by SLC: the Higher Education Student Finance Application and Assessment system (Protocol); and the Customer Ledger Account Servicing System (CLASS). In addition the Welsh Government publishes data taken from the company's Further Education Student Finance Application and Assessment system.

The UK Statistics Authority requires all producers of official statistics to publish a "Statement of administrative sources" that lists:

- The administrative systems they currently use to produce official statistics; and
- Other administrative sources that are not currently used for statistical purposes but which have the potential to be so used.

This document will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated when necessary.

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Administrative data sources held by SLC which are used for producing Official Statistics

Higher Education Student Finance Application and Assessment System (Protocol)

Collection

All information relating to applications for student finance in the UK (except for applications in Scotland and for Open University) is captured in this system which is hosted by SLC. The information is provided by applicants (online or by paper), and higher education providers (course details). If the applicant is seeking means-tested support the system captures income information from their sponsors (normally the parents on whom they are dependent).

Application

The information is used to check the eligibility of the applicant for student finance and, if they are eligible, the level of support they will receive for the course they plan to attend.

Access and dissemination

A wide range of personnel have access to the appropriate section of this operational database to perform their assessment and customer support tasks: for England and EU this means assessment and contact centre staff at SLC in Glasgow and Darlington; for Wales this means assessors in Welsh Local Authorities and SLC contact centre staff in Glasgow and Colwyn Bay; for Northern Ireland this means assessors in the Northern Ireland education and library boards and SLC contact centre staff in Glasgow. In addition there are a wide range of SLC corporate personnel who have access to all of the data in this database for their corporate role e.g. Complaints, Internal Audit and Customer Insight. There are other corporate functions that do not have direct access to all the data but do receive Management Information derived from the data. These functions include External Affairs, Strategy and Policy.

Non-statistical publication

Management Information from this database is published to key stakeholder groups throughout the application period that leads up to the start of the academic year in question.

Statistical publication

For England data from this database is used to publish Official Statistics on the progress of applications for student finance: *Student Finance England Student Support applications*.

For Wales data from this database is provided to the Welsh Government who publish a monthly Official Statistic *Student Support Applications for Higher Education*.

For England, Wales and Northern Ireland this database is used to publish National Statistics on the student finance that has been approved by the relevant assessing organisations: *Student Support Awards (Loans and Grants)*.

Synergies

Data from this database is supplied to the relevant Government administrations to assist them in their understanding of who applies for student finance so that they can forecast future student finance expenditure.

Customer Ledger Account Servicing System (CLASS)

Collection

All information relating to the payment and repayment of approved student finance accounts is held within this system. Some of the accounts will have been approved in systems other than the assessment systems hosted by SLC. These other accounts include those for Scottish domiciled students and those for students studying at the Open University.

Application

The information is used to make sure that eligible students receive the student finance payments for which they have been approved. For those students who take out loans the information is used to manage the repayments they are required to make once they finish their course of study.

Access and dissemination

A wide range of SLC personnel have access to the appropriate section of this operational database to perform their customer support and/or account maintenance tasks. In addition there are a wide range of SLC corporate personnel who have access to all of the data in this database for their corporate role e.g. Complaints, Internal Audit and Customer Insight. There are other corporate functions that do not have direct access to all the data but do receive Management Information derived from the data. These functions include External Affairs, Strategy and Policy.

Non-statistical publication

None.

Statistical publication

For England, Wales and Northern Ireland this database is used to obtain data for the payment tables in the National Statistics: *Student Support Awards (Loans and Grants)*. For Scotland it is used to obtain details of the maintenance loans paid on their behalf and the Scottish Government includes this data in their National Statistics publications: *Higher Education Student Support in Scotland*.

For all UK administrations, the data from this database is used to publish National Statistics on the amount of student loan debt and the changes in the debt during the year (including an analysis of interest added and debt cancelled during the year by reason for cancellation). The publication is: *Student Loans debt and repayment*.

Data from this database is used to publish Official Statistics for the Income Contingent Repayment scheme (ICR) on the average amount of debt, the average repayment amount via HMRC, and the profile of repayment status at

each year end. The publication is: *Income Contingent repayments by repayment cohort and tax year*.

Monthly data on loan payments and repayments is supplied to the Bank of England for inclusion in their Official Statistics on *Lending to Individuals*.

Synergies

Data from this database is supplied to the relevant Government administrations to assist them in their understanding of the rate of student loan repayments so that they can forecast future student loans repayment amounts.

Further Education Student Finance Application and Assessment System

Collection

All information relating to applications for the Education Maintenance Allowance in Wales and Northern Ireland is captured in this system which is hosted by SLC. It also captures all information relating to applications for the Further Education Assembly Learning Grant and the Pathways to Apprenticeship grant in Wales. The information is provided by applicants (by paper), and further education "learning centres" (attendance details). All of these grants are means-tested so the system captures income information from their sponsors (normally the parents on whom they are dependent).

Application

The information is used to check the eligibility of the applicant for the relevant further education grant and, if they are eligible, the level of support they will receive. The system raises payment instructions which are passed to the CLASS system which handles the actual payment.

Access and dissemination

A wide range of SLC personnel have access to the appropriate section of this operational database to perform their assessment and customer support tasks. In addition there are a wide range of SLC corporate personnel who have access to all of the data in this database for their corporate role e.g. Complaints, Internal Audit and Customer Insight. There are other corporate functions that do not have direct access to all the data but do receive Management Information derived from the data. These functions include External Affairs, Strategy and Policy.

Non-statistical publication

None.

Statistical publication

Statisticians in the Welsh Government use data from this database (via the SLC Data Warehouse) for their monthly National Statistics on applications for the Education Maintenance Allowance, and their annual National Statistics on the Further Education Assembly Learning Grant.

Synergies

Data from this database is supplied to the relevant Government administrations to assist them in their understanding of who applies for the grants so that they can forecast future expenditure.

Administrative data sources held by SLC which are not used for producing Official Statistics but have the potential to do so

Contact Centre systems

This suite of systems allows SLC to measure performance in responding to customer calls about applications and accounts. Management Information from this database is published to key stakeholder groups throughout the application period prior to and beyond the start of the academic year in question.

Governance Arrangements

The following sections provide information about the Student Loans Company's governance arrangements with regards to its own administrative and management sources.

Arrangements for providing statistical staff (whether inside or outside the organisation) with access to administrative or management sources for statistical purposes

Inside the organisation: statistical staff have access to copies of the live HE applications database and the CLASS database that are cloned frequently and specifically for use by them. They also have read only access to the application systems that overlay those databases so that they can check individual records to see that they are being categorised correctly in statistical publications. They also have access to the Data Warehouse that is populated daily from those two databases and from the FE applications database.

Outside the organisation: statistical staff in the Government administrations have access to the Data Warehouse via a secure Internet-based Business Intelligence tool. Their access is controlled to restrict their access by business function and by domicile of student/borrower. Their access allows them to count and group individuals but not to see their personal identifiers.

Arrangements for auditing the quality of the original data source

The data in these databases comes from the individual customers, from education institutions, from HMRC and from system functions that process the data. Standard validation checks are applied to the data input. These are supplemented by a series of business rule exception reports that are produced frequently for the business to correct that data. The main purpose of these checks is to maintain accurate customer records but it does also assist the accuracy of the statistical outputs from these sources. If statistical staff identify new data anomalies they will raise them with the Information, Communications and Technology division (ICT) and, if appropriate, adjust the statistical output to remove the distortion that the erroneous data would otherwise cause.

Procedures for handling changes, and possible discontinuities, in the underlying source data

The statistical staff are actively involved with the business and ICT on a day to day basis. They also participate in all business change programmes such as those that change annual profiles of work, customer profiles etc. From this involvement they identify those changes that affect statistical series and include details under "Factors affecting the time series".

Procedures for ensuring the security of the statistical processes which use administrative or management sources

The access provided to statistical staff is compliant with the company's overall security policy. The statistical staff receive training on National Statistics protocols as well as training on the protection of information. See the company's Statement on confidentiality and data access.