



# **Student Loans Company Independent Assessor**

## **Candidate information pack**

# INTRODUCTION

The Student Loans Company (SLC) is a non-profit making government-owned organisation which was incorporated as a private limited company in 1989, and began operating in 1990. It administers loans and grants to students in colleges and universities in the UK and is entirely government-funded, which means that it also operates within the public sector arrangements for Arm's Length Bodies.

Playing a central role in supporting the higher education (HE) and further education (FE) sectors, the SLC makes timely and accurate payments of maintenance loans and grants to learners and tuition fee loans to HE and FE providers across the UK. The SLC works together with the Department for Education (DfE, England) and the Devolved Governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (the Shareholders). In addition to being subject to the provisions of the Companies Acts, the SLC is required to operate within the limits of a Framework Document between the company and the government.

The SLC has almost 10 million customers, and manages a loan book approaching £300bn. In the 2024/25 academic cycle there were 2 million fulltime undergraduate applications received and processed; c.£24 billion paid in total to students and education providers. The SLC employs over 3,300 staff across four sites - Glasgow (Clyde Place and Hillington), Darlington, and Llandudno Junction.

SLC's mission is to enable people to invest in their futures through further and higher education by providing trusted, transparent, flexible and accessible student finance services. Customer experience is central to the SLC's vision to ensure that SLC is widely recognised as enabling student opportunity and delivering an outstanding customer experience in the efficient delivery of the four UK Governments' further and higher education finance policies.

Looking ahead, the next academic cycle brings new challenges for SLC delivery including the implementation of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) and the Enable transformation programme.

The introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement will be a step change of the student finance system, introducing new flexibility for learners in England to support them to train over their working lives broadening access to high-quality, flexible education and training. LLE will be introduced within academic year 2026 to 2027 for learners studying courses starting on or after 1 January 2027.

Enable will transform the SLC into a modern, digital, organisation, introducing a new digital platform and transforming the customer experience. It will reduce application times for customers and improve the customer journey through the new platform, enabling SLC colleagues to provide enhanced support for those who need it.

Further information about SLC can be found here:

SLC website: [Student Loans Company](#)  
[SLC Framework Document](#)

SLC [Annual Report and Accounts 2024-5](#)

SLC [Corporate Plan 2022-3 – 2024-5](#)

[Independent Assessor' annual report 24/25](#)

# YOUR WORK

While SLC has robust processes in place, a small proportion of SLC customers make complaints about the service they have received or choose to appeal decisions regarding their eligibility for student finance. These complaints and appeals are managed through SLC's internal complaints and appeals handling system. If the customer remains dissatisfied after the SLC internal complaints process has been exhausted, the customer can request that the case is adjudicated by Independent Assessors (IAs) of Student Finance Appeals and Complaints. IAs are jointly appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Welsh Ministers. Scottish Government and the Department for the Economy Northern Ireland have separate processes for their customer appeals, but their customers can make complaints to SLC about the repayments process.

The IAs provide an independent review of complaints and appeals made to SLC and impartially take a view on whether an error or service failing has been made and whether SLC have provided the correct resolution to the customer. Review by an IA represents the final stage of the complaint and appeals process. Following the IA review, if the complainant or appellant remains dissatisfied, they can ask the Ombudsman [Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Public Service Ombudsman for Wales, Scottish Public Service Ombudsman, Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman] to consider their case or initiate Judicial Review proceedings.

IAs play a vital and expert role in the functioning of the student finance system by ensuring SLC is accountable for the decisions it makes and customers have an independent review route where necessary. IAs are allocated cases once collated by SLC and there is an expectation of timely, accurate, and well considered reports which are cognisant of the relevant legislation – in order that they can be shared directly with the customer.

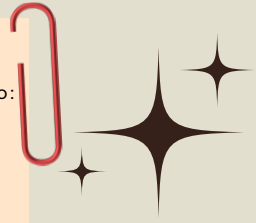
The Secretary of State for Education and Welsh Ministers have currently appointed eight IAs to review complaints and appeals, who work collaboratively to share best practice and knowledge. The IAs are further supported by policy officials, the SLC Sponsorship Team in the DfE and Welsh Government (WG) who update the IAs on any changes to legislation or policy direction which may affect decision making. IAs are also supported by a dedicated team at SLC, who ensure access is provided to relevant customer information, transcripts, and audio recordings necessary for a thorough case review.



# ABOUT THE ROLE

The main responsibilities and duties of an IA will be to:

- Complete and report on a minimum of four complaints or appeals cases per month, as required, plus attendance at a minimum of three meetings per year.
- Consider appeals from Student Finance England (SFE) and Student Finance Wales (SFW) customers in relation to decisions made by the SLC about eligibility or entitlement to financial support.
- Consider complaints regarding the standard of service received from SLC, where they have not been resolved through the SLC's internal review process. This includes goods and services delivered by third party suppliers on SLC's behalf.
- Conduct formal investigations (including call-listening, a formal written review of the evidence presented, interpreting relevant legislation, seeking further written evidence where necessary).
- Keep up to date with new legislation and guidance relating to DfE or WG publications, and the SFE/SFW Practitioners guide.
- Provide written reports to customers and the SLC following assessment of individual appeals and complaints cases within the guidelines and timescales set by SLC.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

In your application you should demonstrate clearly how you meet each of the following requirements of the post. If there is a high volume of applications, preliminary sifting will be conducted using only the lead essential criterion. Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria:

## **Essential criteria**

- Possesses a legal qualification and/or equivalent relevant experience from regulatory environments, together with the ability to distinguish clearly between facts and assertions, and to interpret and apply statutory criteria, legislation and guidance in a consistent, clear and evidence-based manner. (lead criterion).
- Able to assess large volumes of complex material efficiently and accurately, producing objective findings, justifiable conclusions, and practical recommendations, and contributing to or conducting investigations, reviews, complaints or appeals.
- Demonstrates an understanding of fair, empathetic and evidence-based complaint-handling, with experience working with or within large, complex organisations to achieve effective resolutions.
- Strong written communication skills, demonstrated by the ability to produce clear, persuasive and accessible reports within agreed timescales, and capable of organising own workload efficiently (and independently where required), maintaining accurate records, and using IT systems confidently.

## **Desirable criteria**

- Awareness of, or willingness to develop knowledge in, relevant Higher and Further Education Law applicable in England and Wales – particularly the Student Support Regulations.
- Demonstrable experience working with and/or applying immigration law, including interpreting relevant legal frameworks, guidelines or casework.

# **DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

We encourage applications from talented individuals from all backgrounds and across the whole of the United Kingdom. Public Bodies are most effective when they reflect the diversity of views of the society they serve.

We collect data about applicants' characteristics and backgrounds, including information about people's educational and professional backgrounds, so that we can make sure we are attracting a broad range of people to these roles and that our selection processes are fair for everyone. Without this information, it makes it difficult to see if our outreach is working, if the application process is having an unfair impact on certain groups and whether changes are making a positive difference.

When you submit your application, your responses are collected by the Cabinet Office and the government department(s) managing your application. The data is used to produce management information about the diversity of applicants. You can select "prefer not to say" to any question you do not wish to answer. The information you provide will not be seen by the Advisory Assessment Panel who review applications against the advertised criteria and conduct interviews.

## **DISABILITY CONFIDENT**

We are a member of the government's Disability Confident Scheme (DCS). We use the Disability Confident scheme symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in employing people with a disability. The scheme helps recruit and retain disabled people. This competition will operate in accordance with the Disability Confident Scheme, [Level 2: Disability Confident Employer - GOV.UK](#).

When you apply you will have the opportunity to select if you would like your application considered under this scheme. Indicating that you wish your application to be considered under the scheme will in no way prejudice your application.

## **DUE DILIGENCE CHECKS**

Due diligence checks, including referencing, will be conducted on all shortlisted applicants at the sift stage of the selection process.



# HOW TO APPLY

## Further Information

If you wish to discuss the role please contact: [SLC.SPONSORSHIP@education.gov.uk](mailto:SLC.SPONSORSHIP@education.gov.uk)

You will need to [create an account](#) or [sign in](#) to our Apply for a Public Appointment Service. Once you are logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role' and follow the on-screen instructions.

To apply, all candidates are required to provide:

- a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- a supporting statement detailing with examples how you meet the essential criteria no more than 750 words
- equality information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues.

In the event that we receive a high volume of applications, we will sift only on the lead criterion in the preliminary sift: Possesses a legal qualification or equivalent relevant experience from regulatory environments, together with the ability to distinguish clearly between facts and assertions, and interpret and apply statutory criteria, legislation and guidance in a consistent, clear and evidence-based manner.

**We will be holding information sessions to provide more detail about the role and answer questions from candidates. We are aiming to hold these sessions on Friday 8 May at 12-1pm and 6-7pm via Microsoft Teams. Please register below if interested:**

**Friday 8 May, 12-1pm**

**Friday 8 May, 6-7pm**

**If you are shortlisted, we will send you a short report writing test to assess your written communication skills and regulatory analysis; the score will form part of your overall interview assessment.**

We will ask you to check and confirm your personal details to ensure your application is accurate.

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application. Please contact us should you wish for us to consider any adjustments to support your application: [SLC.SPONSORSHIP@education.gov.uk](mailto:SLC.SPONSORSHIP@education.gov.uk)

The Advisory Assessment Panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all the elements listed above, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

Please note the following:

- **We cannot accept applications submitted after the closing date.**
- **Applications will be assessed on the documentation provided. Please refer to the advert and checklist to ensure you have provided the necessary documentation.**
- **We will assess applications based solely on documentation provided. Applications will be acknowledged upon receipt.**
- **Feedback will only be given to candidates unsuccessful following interview.**

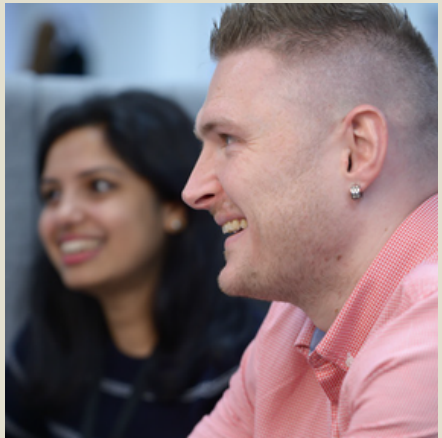
### Complaints

Please contact the Public Appointments Team if you would like to make a complaint regarding your application at: **PublicAppointments.DFE@education.gov.uk**.

We will acknowledge your complaint upon receipt and respond within 15 working days.

If you are not content with our response please contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments at: **publicappointments@csc.gov.uk**

Further information on complaints can be found on the Commissioner for Public Appointment's website: **<https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>**



# **TERMS OF APPOINTMENT**

## **Location**

Working from home, attending a minimum of three meetings per year at DfE and SLC Offices across the UK.

## **Number of Vacancies**

Up to 4

## **Time commitment**

8 days per month

## **Term**

The appointment will be for an initial term of three years. At the end of this period, Ministers may, at their discretion, recommend reappointment for a further term, subject to satisfactory performance and with the agreement of the appointee.

## **Remuneration**

A daily rate of £500 per day, pro rata, a day being 7 hours.

## **Expenses**

You will be reimbursed for any reasonable travel and subsistence expenses in line with SLC's policy to attend meetings at DfE/SLC offices.

## **Pension**

The post is not pensionable.

## **Appointing Department**

DfE in with agreement from the Secretary of State for Education and Welsh Ministers.

## **Conduct and standards in public life**

IAs are expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and are required to adhere to the code of conduct for board members and demonstrate a sound understanding of and commitment to the principles of public life, both of which can be found here:

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies>**

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>**