

Message from David Wallace, Deputy CEO of the Student Loans Company

Absolutely everyone has had to come to terms with change this year. The feeling that life has been placed “on hold” is understandable – but it also provides an opportunity to get things done.

So many people are finding creative and flexible ways to use time to their advantage, and one of the things we’d urge students in England who may be considering going to University this year to do, is to make sure they get their applications for student funding in as early as possible.

It doesn’t matter if you are not certain of which course or in which University you will ultimately enrol. The main thing is to invest time now to ensure funding will not be an issue later on. Everything else can be altered once your University place is confirmed.

There’s lots of help available for new students (see links below) and applications can be completed online at www.gov.uk/studentfinance

Returning SLC customers; those not requesting student finance for the first time, are also urged to get their funding renewal applications in as soon as possible. New and Returning students can apply at www.gov.uk/studentfinance.

I can’t stress enough that there are good reasons to get applications in early – not least that it’s the best way to ensure your funding will be in place for the start of the new term.

Like everyone else, the Student Loans Company has had to radically change how things are done and I’m immensely grateful to colleagues who have shifted their location and way of working, allowing us to continue processing and administering the millions of loan applications we receive each year.

It’s what we do and our work is ongoing, but we are aware that some people have experienced delays in getting online at busy times of day. We know this is frustrating and appreciate your patience and understanding. We are usually less busy after 5pm so if you are unable to get online right away, please try again later.

SLC exists to enable students to invest in their future through access to further and higher education.

Information for new students in England applying for student finance online

The easiest way to apply is online at gov.uk/studentfinance and SLC has produced the following guide and a video to help with the process: [student finance quickguide](#)

[How to Apply](#)

There is also a dedicated resource for parents and partners who are supporting applications here <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/>

Student Finance England has more information on the online student community forum, [the student room](#) and also on a dedicated area on the [UCAS website](#)

Students can also follow SFE at [facebook.com/SFEngland](https://www.facebook.com/SFEngland), twitter.com/SF_England or [youtube/SFEFILM](https://www.youtube.com/SFEFILM) to keep up with all the latest news alerts.

[PM award for Gateshead woman making vulnerable children's dreams come true](#)

Press release

Alisar Taylor receives the Prime Minister's daily Point of Light award.



A woman from Gateshead who is beaming magical fairy-tale experiences into hospitals where sick children are cut off from family and friends will today receive the Prime Minister's daily Point of Light award.

Alisar Taylor is using her party planning business 'Dreams on Moonbeams' to offer free video calls and Zoom parties with an array of magical characters including Princess Rapunzel and Queen Elsa. Alisar's initiative is delighting children in hospitals as well as children with special educational needs across the North East.

In a personal letter to Alisar, the Prime Minister said:

Being in hospital as a child can be daunting at any time, and only more so when the necessary restrictions to save lives from Coronavirus mean family and friends can no longer visit freely. It

is also difficult for children with special educational needs to understand the sacrifices we are all having to make.

So I am lost in admiration for the way you have used your “Dreams on Moonbeams” business to create free virtual parties that are bringing some company, kindness and love into the lives of young people when they need it most.

With your magical characters, like Princess Rapunzel locked down in the tower with her long hair, you are brightening up some of the toughest days for children where you live.

Reacting to the Prime Minister’s announcement, Alisar said:

Thank you. I am delighted to be recognised for this honour, which I, in full heart, deeply accept on behalf of the wonderful children that I have been supporting throughout this difficult time. Helping children to overcome their fears and protecting their mental health has been paramount. This pandemic has isolated so many people and knowing that I have made a real difference to them means the absolute world to me.

The Prime Minister’s UK daily Point of Light award was first launched in April 2014 to recognise outstanding individuals making a difference where they live. Alisar is the 1370th person to be recognised.

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[UK and Italy together to commemorate Florence Nightingale](#)

World news story

Florence Nightingale commemorated in Rome on 12 May 2020.



The British Embassy in Rome, together with Florence Nightingale Museum in London and the Italian Federation for Nurses, the Spallanzani hospital in Rome, and the St. Thomas and Guy's hospitals in London, held a commemorative event in honour of the founder of modern nursing, Florence Nightingale, on the evening on 12th May, at the [Spallanzani hospital \(pics\)](#).

The event marked the final moment of a programme of celebrations in honour of the bicentenary of the birth of Florence Nightingale: a touching moment, with projections created for the occasion illuminating the façade of the hospital, and a declamation of the Italian Nurses Pledge, based on the 1893 Florence Nightingale Pledge, by a group of Spallanzani nurses.

A UK-Italy bilateral initiative for our nations to thank “those who nurse” on the International Day of Nurses.

As we mark International Nurses Day, I am struck by how much we have overcome since the time of Florence Nightingale, yet still how many challenges we face. Nurses of all the world, of the Spallanzani, and of the Guys & St Thomas': I am in awe of everything you do each day. Of your sacrifices, your passion, your professionalism, your humanity. Thank you

British Ambassador to Italy Jill Morris said.

The event happened in synchronisation with similar projections taking place at the Guy's and St. Thomas Foundation Trust, and a spectacular projection on the British Parliament.

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[IFA surrenders Ofqual recognition](#)

News story

The Institute of Financial Accountants is no longer an Ofqual-recognised awarding organisation.



The Institute of Financial Accountants (IFA) has surrendered its status as an Ofqual-recognised awarding organisation.

IFA informed Ofqual in 2018 of its intention to surrender recognition. The surrender took effect as of 27 November 2019. From this date, no qualifications offered by IFA are regulated by Ofqual.

IFA previously had five regulated qualifications and issued 12 certificates in the last year. We understand no learners are affected by this surrender.

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[Migration Advisory Committee seeks views on skills shortages](#)

News story

The Migration Advisory Committee launches a 6-week call for evidence.



Getty Images

The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) is today (Wednesday 13 May 2020) launching a 6-week [call for evidence](#), asking business organisations and employers to share their valuable recruitment experiences as part of a review of the shortage occupation lists.

The responses will provide the Committee with a well-rounded picture of the current migration issues and will support the evidence-based recommendations delivered to the Home Secretary in September 2020.

The government has said that whether an occupation is in shortage will be one of the key factors for which a migrant will be able to score tradeable points under the new points-based immigration system when it is introduced. The Home Secretary has asked the Committee, an independent body, to gather views from businesses on what skills are currently in short supply across the UK labour market.

Interim Chair of the MAC Professor Brian Bell said:

We appreciate that the coronavirus outbreak has placed businesses in an enormously difficult situation, but their input is vital.

Any time they can give, or information they can provide will be greatly valued and aid us in providing the government with robust recommendations.

We must proceed with this Call for Evidence now in order to deliver our report in September 2020 as requested.

The shortage occupation list is a government compiled list of occupations for which the evidence suggests there are not enough UK workers to fill vacancies. There is also a Scotland specific list in addition to the UK-wide one.

The Home Secretary commissioned the Committee to consider what medium-skill occupations, requiring RQF 3-5 qualifications (A-levels and equivalents), should be added to a UK wide list of occupations in shortage.

The Committee does not intend on asking for evidence for the roles covered on the current lists, which are roles for which a degree or its equivalent is needed (RQF 6), as they plan for these to remain in place at this review.

It is recognised that coronavirus will impact the ability of businesses and employers to respond to the call for evidence and this will be reflected in the final report.

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