

Student Support Information Note (SSIN)

**The Education (Student Support) Regulations 2008, and
The Education (Student Support) Regulations 2009**

**TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES
(For the attention of the Student Support Manager)**

TO THE STUDENT LOANS COMPANY

SSIN 07/09

28/10/2009

Dear Colleague

Revised guidance on Architecture

We have recently revised guidance with regard to the Student Finance Regulations and how they apply to students studying Architecture. The changes have been posted to the relevant guidance chapter on the Student Finance England administrators' website (www.practitioners.studentfinanceengland.co.uk)

Attached as Appendix 1 are the relevant changes: I hope you find this information useful.

Any queries with regard to the changes should be referred to If you require any further clarification on fees or student support please e-mail ssin.queries@slc.co.uk

Student Finance Policy
Financial support for learners
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Appendix 1

Architecture courses

271. The Department's understanding is that in order to potentially qualify to register as an architect a student must complete five years' study - years 1 to 3 being Part 1 (leading to a first degree) and years 4 and 5 being Part 2 (leading to a professional Diploma or equivalent qualification). Students are also required to complete two years worth of relevant practical experience. Students following the typical pattern of study normally complete one year of practical experience between Parts 1 and 2 and a further year at the end of Part 2.
272. Regulations 6(7) and 6(8) of the Regulations allow the two parts of the architecture course, which may be undertaken at different institutions, to be treated as one single course for student support purposes. The Department is of the view that this position is unaffected by a student undertaking a year's practical experience between the two parts. The final year of Part 1 will therefore attract the full-year loan rate, rather than the final- year loan rate. The Department is also of the view that the two Parts can still be treated as a single course even if a student takes a break of more than one year between them provided it is clear that the student had not withdrawn from the overall course at the end of Part 1. So, for example, if a student completes Part 1 and a year of practical experience and then decides to take a year out before starting Part 2, he can still be treated as attending the same single course provided the facts of his case do not show that he withdrew from the course at the end of Part 1.
273. The Regulations do not require a student to declare, before starting or completing Part 1, his intention to attend both Parts 1 and 2 in order for the two Parts to be treated as a single course. However, establishing the student's intentions at the outset of or during Part 1 may assist SLC in

determining how to treat a student who does not follow the typical pattern of study.

- 274.** The Department is of the view that a student who takes more than a single year out between Parts 1 and 2, and notifies his LA/SLC of this and his intention to resume his studies at a later date, should be treated in the same way as any other student who has temporarily suspended his studies. For example, if after completing his year of practical experience a student decides to take a year out, then provided that he has notified his LA/SLC that he is doing so, he should normally remain eligible for full support for Part 2 of the course. This would apply equally if a suspension of study notice was received from the student's HEI.
- 275.** If a student does not follow the typical study pattern and the LA/SLC has not received a notification from the student or the relevant HEI, the Department is of the view that an LA/SLC should only treat that student as having temporarily suspended his studies if it is clear on the particular facts of the case that the student had not withdrawn from the course at the end of Part 1. The Department is of the view that where a period of three years has elapsed since the student completed Part 1 (in other words two years after one would expect the period of practical experience to have been completed), it may be reasonable to determine that the student has withdrawn from the single course. However, LAs/SLC will need to satisfy themselves, on a case by case basis, that such a decision would be appropriate.
- 276.** If a student applies to LAs/SFE for support in respect of Part 2 of the architecture course where this is not being undertaken in conjunction with a Part 1 course, and thus cannot be treated as part of a single course, the student is not likely to be eligible for fee support or maintenance grant for the Part 2 course. The reason for this is that the student will probably already hold a first degree or equivalent qualification and as a result they would be ruled out of any further fee support, and consequently maintenance grant or special support grant, by

Regulation 20(1)(a).

277. It should be noted that there is also a Part 3 to an architecture course but the Department is of the view that this is of a standard higher than a first degree and as such is not covered by the Regulations.
278. Students who are on courses covered by regulation 6(8) that meet the definition of a sandwich course in regulation 2(10) are potentially eligible for support during their year of practical experience. They may only be eligible for reduced amount of fee support if their periods of full-time study are below certain levels (under regulation 24(3)(b) if they are current system students or under regulation 31(2) if they are old system students). Any student whose periods of full-time study in the relevant academic year are in aggregate are less than 10 weeks and whose periods of work experience do not constitute periods of unpaid service will qualify only for the reduced loan for living costs under regulation 72(1)(b) in that year (because regulation 38(5) will apply). This is of course subject to the student satisfying the other eligibility criteria for the loan.
279. In cases where a student takes a free-standing Part 1 course followed by a year of practical experience, then subsequently takes a free-standing Part 2 course, it is the Department's view that he or she cannot be said to be on a sandwich course as defined in regulation 2(10). Consequently, such a student will not be eligible for support during the year of practical experience.

Intercalated study

280. Certain courses which are not higher than first degree level and which lead to more than one qualification, either as an optional or integral part of the course, will be considered to be single courses (regulations 6(7) and (8)). These are:
- Medical, dental and veterinary science courses which include an intercalated first degree such as a BSc;
 - Courses in landscape architecture,

landscape design, landscape management, town planning and town and country planning where qualifications are awarded both at an intermediate point in the course and at the end. However, LAs/SLC should note that where the second part of a course leads to a postgraduate degree, that part should not attract support.

- Courses in architecture which are prescribed by the Architects Registration Board and which cover Part 1 and Part 2 but not Part 3. Part 2 of the course (years 4-5 of study) will attract support even if the student is additionally awarded a postgraduate degree (such as MArch) as long as the content of the course is undergraduate level and undergraduate level fees are charged. However, LAs/SLC should note that Part 2 should only be funded when taken by a student who has already taken Part 1 (or is exempted from Part 1)