

Information about the SFE maintenance loan for students on an opportunity year that will/might be split between study abroad and work placement

The maintenance loan for an opportunity year is based on whether this is a study abroad year or a work placement year. The general funding for these activities is:

- Students on a study abroad year are eligible for *full funding*;
- Students on a Turing work placement year are eligible for *full funding*;
- Students on a special case work placement year (unpaid in an area of public service) are eligible for *full funding*;
- Students on a work placement year (not Turing and not Special Case) are eligible for *reduced funding* – this is a significantly lower amount of maintenance loan.

Where a student is **on a year split between activities** that would attract full funding (study/Turing/special case work placement) and reduced funding (work placement, not Turing, not special case) **the maintenance loan is NOT allocated pro-rata**. SFE state that where a year includes any period that would attract reduced funding (so, any period of work placement), potentially the student **could be assessed for reduced funding for the entire year**. Students are therefore advised to budget on this basis. SFE have a complex formula for calculating the funding where a year is split between study and work, and, depending on individual students' circumstances, this could result in the awarding of reduced funding for the entire year, or full funding for the entire year, or an amalgamation of reduced and full funding across the year.

Students who will be embarking on a study abroad year but have the option during the year to switch to work placement if an internship becomes available, should apply for their loan on the basis that they will be on study abroad for the entire year. You will be awarded the full maintenance loan for the year. However, you should be aware that **if you do switch to work placement** during the year, the University is required to inform SFE and **this will prompt a reassessment of your loan for the year**. It is therefore possible that subsequently **SFE could award reduced funding for the entire year**. If this happens and you have already received funding for part of the year at the full rate, you may find you are in overpayment with SFE. In these cases, **SFE will deduct any overpayment from the remaining funding due to you**. You are therefore advised to budget for this possibility.

Students who will be embarking on a year where they know in advance they will be undertaking both study abroad and work placement should apply for their loan and provide as much information as possible about what they will be doing through the year and the dates. This will enable SFE to carry out an accurate assessment of the maintenance loan and award the correct rate from the start of the year, reducing the opportunity for overpayment.

Any questions, please contact placement-funding@leeds.ac.uk