

Circular Number: FE 11/26

Date of Issue: 13 August 2026

Subject: Advance ME Further source of funding and CDR guidance

Target Audience:

- Principals of Further Education
- FE College Finance Officers
- FE College MIS
- FE Advance ME Further Co-Ordinators

Summary of Contents:

This circular provides guidance on the Advance ME Further Source of Funding Code.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the contents of this circular should be addressed to:

Skills Initiatives Branch
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Adelaide House
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Related Documents: None

Superseded Documents: None

Expiry Date: **This circular will remain in effect until otherwise notified by the Department.**

Website: www.economy-ni.gov.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 **Advance ME Further** is the primary upskilling and reskilling strand of the EIZ skills programme, focused on addressing skills shortages that constrain productivity and growth within the Advanced Manufacturing sector.
- 1.2 It supports delivery of accredited qualifications at Levels 3–5 in identified sector priority areas of engineering, digital and business skills. Its purpose is to enable individuals to develop skills immediately required within Advanced Manufacturing workforce, while strengthening the sector's skills pipeline.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 In addition to any stipulated entry requirements, Providers must apply the eligibility criteria set out below to all potential participants for Advance ME Further.
- 2.2 Applicants must meet all the following criteria:
 - a) Applicants to be 18 years or older at point of enrolment.
 - b) Applicants must have a right to work and undertake training in the UK at the point of application and for the duration of the course and must not be disqualified from doing either by reason of their immigration status. Proof of this will be required to progress application.
 - c) Individuals will be available to register in person at provider campus as required.
 - d) Individual courses may have enhanced eligibility, details of which will be provided by The Provider.
- 2.3 The Provider will inform participants at point of registration that, for the purpose of DfE compliance checks, they may be required to attend the Provider's campus as part of a random selection to confirm eligibility criteria.

3. DATA AND CLAIMS

- 3.1 All participants will be registered on the College's Learner Management System (LMS), and each college will enter data relating to individual participants to allow identification of payments due. Data relating to individual participants must include the participants ULN and Student ID to allow the Department to manage the risk of duplicate payments.
- 3.2 As funding will only be given for those participants who meet the eligibility criteria, the College must not create entries in the CDR report for participants aged below 18 at the point of enrolment.
- 3.3 The College must also ensure that for each participant, one of the following codes is used to show enrolment status:

Progress Code	Description	Student Status
ENROL	Enrolled	1
WTHD	Withdrawn	3
COMP	Completed	2

4. CODING FOR MIS

- 4.1 Colleges are required to make the necessary amendments to their systems to enable input for all current Advance ME enrolments.
- 4.2 The Course and Student Source of Funding for Cinemagic and Inclusive Futures is shown in the table below. Colleges should add this value to the relevant CDR Verifier lists.

Code	Year	Description
81	2026	Advance ME

NB: The 81 code will remain in place for all subsequent years, should the programme receive funding beyond 2026/2027.

- 4.3 Colleges are required to make the necessary amendments to their systems to enable input for all current Advance ME enrolments.

5. VALIDATION AND AUDIT

- 5.1 Colleges will be responsible for ensuring that the revised coding guidance is implemented in full and ensuring any changes throughout the academic year are reflected in the data.