



Issue 114 – December 2016

Inform is a monthly newsletter from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). **Inform** focuses on funding systems and data management in further education and skills.

Individualised learner record (ILR): R05

The ILR R05 data collection for the 2016 to 2017 funding year will open at 9am on Wednesday, 21 December and will close at 6pm on Friday, 6 January. As always we recommend that you submit your data as early as possible.

If you need to submit an Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS) and you do not have access to this on the Data Returns tab in the Hub, please [email our Service Desk](#) or call us on 0370 267 0001 to request this.

Final reconciliation statements 2015 to 2016

For Colleges and other training organisations funded through a grant for Adult Skills Budget (ASB), Discretionary Learner Support (DLS), Advanced Learning Loans Bursary (ALLB) and Community Learning (CL) you will be able to view your final reconciliation statements on the [Skills Funding Service \(SFS\)](#) from Monday 19 December and final reconciliation payments/recoveries will be **processed in January 2017**.

We have published additional policy information on [GOV.UK](#).

Finance records 2015 to 2016

We have updated the [Finance record 2015 to 2016](#) and the latest version is available on our website and the [Association of Colleges website](#). We have listed the details of the amendments in the version control record on the contents worksheet.

The following documents should be submitted to the pfm@sfa.bis.gov.uk mailbox by the published deadline on 31 December:

- Audited annual report and financial statements
- Finance record signed by the accounting officer (scanned copy of signed version and unsigned excel version)
- External auditor's management letter, including the college's response
- Annual report of the college's audit committee
- Where appropriate, audited annual report and financial statements of subsidiary company accounts.

For further information or related queries, please email pfm@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

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feconnect is an online community for data professionals to discuss data issues and assist others to resolve data queries.

Follow [@sfadata](#) for all SFA data-related information on Twitter.

For web alerts, please go to <http://gov.uk/sfa> to sign up and stay in touch with the latest news.

To register for **Update**, the weekly newsletter from the SFA for colleges, training organisations and key stakeholders, email: Update@sfa.bis.gov.uk

For information

Learning aims reference service (LARS): updated hierarchy files 2015 to 2016

We have published the [LARS hierarchy files](#) for 2015 to 2016 in three formats: csv, mdb and psv.

The LARS hierarchy file provides a static set of learning aims information that is used by the SFA when producing qualification achievement rate and minimum standards dashboard for education and training. The LARS hierarchy file can be used by providers and software developers who wish to produce qualification success rate and minimum standards reports for classroom and workplace learning.

Apprenticeship levy guidance for employers

HM Revenue and Customs has published [new guidance](#) on when you have to pay the apprenticeship levy and how to report your payments. The guidance is included in the December issue of the [employer bulletin](#).

This information may be useful to providers if they are levy payers or during apprenticeship discussions with employers who may pay the levy.

The guidance also includes advice for schools and academies.

If you have any questions about paying the apprenticeship levy, please [contact HMRC](#).

ILR document updates for 2016 to 2017

We will publish updates to several documents before the end of December 2016. Many of these updates relate to changes required to fund apprenticeships from 1 May 2017. We are planning to publish the following documents:

- Provider support manual version 3: changes include updates regarding references to apprenticeships starting on or after 1 May 2017, and updated guidance about Learning difficulty assessments (LDAs)
- Appendix A data collection timetable version 3: the timetable has been updated to include the data collection requirements for apprenticeships from 1 May 2017. The layout has also been updated to group together requirements for apprenticeship data
- Appendix H class codes version 2: updated to include the new Funding model for apprenticeships from 1 May 2017

A new guidance document that details how to record apprenticeships from 1 May 2017 will be published with the update to the provider support manual.

Business Operations Service Centre – Christmas opening

The Service Centre will be operating an email service between Wednesday, 28 December and Friday, 30 December for customers requiring support over the festive period.

The full service will resume at 8:30 am on Tuesday, 3 January 2017.

Inform

Digital apprenticeship service: new presentation

The SFA has created a new narrated presentation to explain the main features of the digital apprenticeship service.

The video is aimed at levying paying employers. It shows screens taken from the prototype system although these are still in development and may be changed before the service is fully live in May 2017. The video outlines the employer journey from the account home screen and registration to the funding and apprenticeship management sections. You can find the presentation on the [Skills Funding Agency YouTube channel](#).

Software writers group

We held a meeting for software writers on 12 December. The group heard details about likely ILR changes for 2017 to 2018, a progress update on the development of the digital apprenticeship service and an update about the 2015 to 2016 qualification achievement rate dashboard.

The group also received an update from the Learning Records Service team.

New look Inform

We will change the look of Inform from January 2017 to meet government digital service standards. We will continue to summarise the data and funding news from the SFA, bring you relevant news from other agencies and organisations, remind you of current activity and give you advance notice of consultations and procurements.

If you have any new members of staff or existing staff that you think might find Inform useful, please ask them to email us at informnewsletter@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

About us

The Skills Funding Agency

The Skills Funding Agency exists to fund and promote adult further education (FE) and skills training in England.

SFA staff are responsible for developing and publishing the annual specification for the Individualised Learner Record and for supporting the governance processes for the collection of data from the FE and Skills sector.

The SFA provides a single, central point of data collection and information for FE and Skills. It also provides services to the Education Funding Agency and the wider education sector.