



Issue 113 – November 2016

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

Individualised learner record (ILR): R04

The ILR R04 data collection for the 2016 to 2017 funding year is now open and will close at 6pm on Tuesday, 6 December. As always we recommend that you submit your data as early as possible.

This is a mandatory return for all providers delivering 16-18 apprenticeships, adult apprenticeships and the Adult Education Budget. The SFA uses the data submitted for the R04 data collection to assess growth requests and to apply the performance management calculations. You can read the details of these in the [SFA common and performance management funding rules 2016 to 2017](#).

It is important to ensure your return is as complete as possible. If you have any queries regarding your ILR return, please contact the SFA Service Desk.

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

Thank you for submitting your signed final funding claims following the ILR R14 final data return for 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 \(SFS\)](#) in early December. Reconciliations will be processed in January 2017.

Feedback on the draft apprenticeship funding rules

Since October, we have been receiving feedback on the [draft funding rules for 2017 to 2018](#). We are working with employers and providers to improve the clarity of the rules. This includes the meaning of a 'genuine job' at the end of the apprenticeship and the definition of off-the-job training.

We have been asked about apprenticeship funding for English, maths and learning support. To deliver these within apprenticeships you need to be on the [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers](#).

We will publish the next version of the rules in early 2017. Please send feedback on the funding rules to FundingRulesQueries@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 action

Data collection: subcontracting in 2016 to 2017

If you are in scope, you will have received an email with detailed instructions on how to submit your subcontracting commitments for the funding year 2016 to 2017.

This email will include a Subcontractor Declaration Form detailing your current subcontracting arrangements which you should complete and return to the [CF Subcontracting inbox](#). This is in accordance with the [Common and performance management funding rules, Version 3](#) (paragraph A69).

To ensure we can successfully validate your form we would strongly recommend that you complete and submit it ahead of the deadline. We will not contact you again if your data successfully passes our validation processes. If your form fails validation, you will receive an email with a supporting failure report. You will need to address the errors as highlighted in the report, update the version number and resubmit to the [CF Subcontracting inbox](#).

If you do not subcontract, you must still provide a 'nil return'. We will include further details on how to submit this through the [Skills Funding Service](#) (SFS), or by using the existing form, in the email.

We require your declaration by **Wednesday 14 December** and failure to submit a return will result in your payments being suspended.

If you have any questions relating to this collection, please contact the [Service Desk](#).

Apprenticeship readiness self-assessment survey

We have launched a [self-assessment survey](#) to help providers of apprenticeships understand what they need to do to prepare for the apprenticeship reforms in May 2017.

The [survey](#) is open until Friday, 16 December.

Completing the survey will enable you to assess your progress towards being ready for the reforms. The results will also help us identify any further support you might need, to make sure you are ready to provide apprenticeships to employers paying the levy, and those accessing the co-investment model.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact providerreadiness@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

For information

Qualification achievement rates 2016 to 2017: business rules

We have published the [qualification achievement rates: business rules](#) for the 2016 to 2017 funding year. These explain how qualification achievement rates (QAR) are calculated.

Please share this with your curriculum, quality, data or management information system managers.

You can find the document on the [qualification achievement rates 2016 to 2017](#) section of GOV.UK. We will publish further information, including the dataset specifications, in Spring 2017.

Please contact the [Service Desk](#) if you have any queries.

Known issues: validation 2016 to 2017

Listed below is an update about the known issues affecting [validation for 2016 to 2017 ILR returns](#). We are working to resolve these issues will as quickly as possible.

To allow data to pass ILR validation, we have temporarily set the affected rules to warnings rather than errors. Once the issues have been resolved these rules will be set back to errors. Any data that continues to trigger these rules will fail validation.

The following rules have temporarily been set to warnings:

- DateOfBirth_45 – there is a known issue affecting this rule. We have temporarily set this to a warning, however you should check the Section 96 status of any aims triggering this rule. This rule checks the learning aim is approved on Section 96 if the learner is under 19 years old.
- EmpStat_18 – there is a defect causing this rule to trigger if a learner on a traineeship programme has any Employment status record of ESMTType = E11 and not ESMCode = 2, even if the employment status record does not apply to the traineeship programme. This rule checks that traineeship learners are not employed for more than 16 hours per week when they start their traineeship programme.

We will implement fixes for these rules as soon as possible. We intend to deploy the fix for EmpStat_18 for the R05 return, the solution for DateOfBirth_45 is currently due to be implemented for the R06 return.

The following rules were previously identified to have defects and set to warnings. For the R04 return, these have been reset to errors:

- DateOfBirth_48: the learner must be over the school leaving age
- PlanLearnHours_01: the Planned learning hours must be returned
- PlanLearnHours_03: the total of both planned hours fields must not be zero
- EmpStat_16: apprentices must not be employed for less than 16 hours per week at the start of their apprenticeship programme
- ESMTType_15: each Employment Status monitoring type can only be returned once in each Employment status record
- Outcome_08: a traineeship programme cannot be recorded as achieved unless a positive Destination and Progression record is returned
- R94: Destination and Progression records must be recorded for applicable learners
- R97: learners must not have consecutive employment status records with the same Employment status, Employer identifier and Employment Status Monitoring.

There was also a known issue affecting the following rules: LearnAimRef_10, LearnAimRef_18, LearnAimRef_24, LearnAimRef_54, LearnAimRef_45, LearnAimRef_47, LearnAimRef_49. This issue allowed invalid learning aims to pass validation. Please check the validity details of your learning aims in the learning aims reference service (LARS) database if your R04 data triggers any of these errors.

Recording apprenticeships from May 2017: ILR data requirements

[Version 3 of the ILR specification for 2016 to 2017](#), published 30 September 2016, contains the ILR data requirements related to the changes to apprenticeship funding that come into effect from 1 May 2017.

These changes apply to all funded apprenticeship programmes that start on or after 1 May 2017, including both apprenticeship frameworks and apprenticeship standards.

The main changes are:

- Funding model code 36 has been assigned as 'Apprenticeships from 1 May 2017'.
- Collection requirements for a number of fields have been updated to include Funding model 36.
- Data for apprenticeships which start on or after 1 May 2017 using the Funding model 36 code will need to be returned monthly.
- For apprenticeship standards, the Learning planned end date of the programme includes both the training and end point assessment activities. In order for an apprenticeship standard programme to be recorded as 'complete' then both the training and end point assessment must have been completed.
- There is a new Learning Delivery Funding and monitoring type of 'Apprenticeship contract type'. This must be recorded on all Funding model 36 programme aims and any English and maths component aims. The Date applies from and Date applies to must also be recorded for this monitoring type.
- The field definitions and guidance for the Trailblazer Apprenticeship Financial Record entity have been updated to reflect the requirements for Funding model 36.

We will publish guidance to support completion of ILR data for apprenticeships from 1 May 2017 later in the funding year.

Qualification achievement rates 2015 to 2016: business rules (updated v1.1)

We have updated the [qualification achievement rates: business rules](#) and associated dataset production specification documents for the 2015 to 2016 academic year.

These explain how QAR are calculated.

Please share these with your curriculum, quality, data or management information system managers.

You can find these updated documents on the [qualification achievement rates 2015 to 2016](#) section of GOV.UK.

For any queries, please contact the [Service Desk](#).

Working with the SFA as an apprenticeship training provider

We have published a guide to help new and aspiring apprenticeship training providers prepare their organisations to work with employers. Existing providers might also find the guide a useful reminder of links to published resources and support materials.

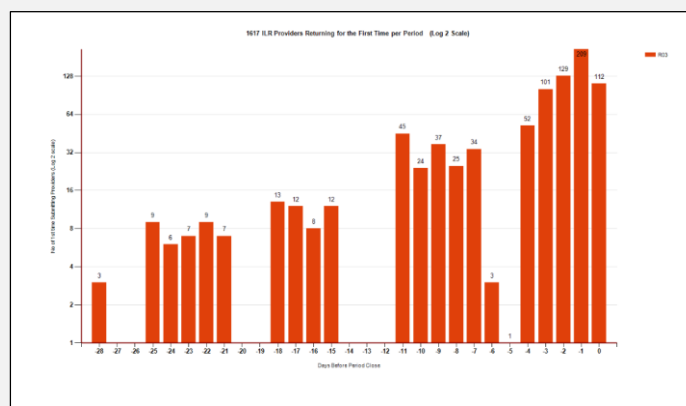
In addition to sections on data returns, assessment, funding and quality assurance, we have also included a brief section on organisational issues.

[Working with the SFA as an apprenticeship training provider](#)

We will keep the guide updated and we intend to add specialist guides to support you in due course.

Hub stats

In R03 we processed 3,004 files from 858 providers. 450 providers submitted their first R03 file in the last 3 days of the collection window.



Feconnect facts and figures

Since the last issue of Inform, **feconnect** has had some 5,000 users who between them realised over 41,000 page views.

So far this month, we have registered 25 new **feconnect** members.

If you have any new members of staff or existing staff that you think might find **feconnect** useful, please ask them to register. You can email any feedback on **feconnect** to feconnect@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.