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Education & Skills
Funding Agency

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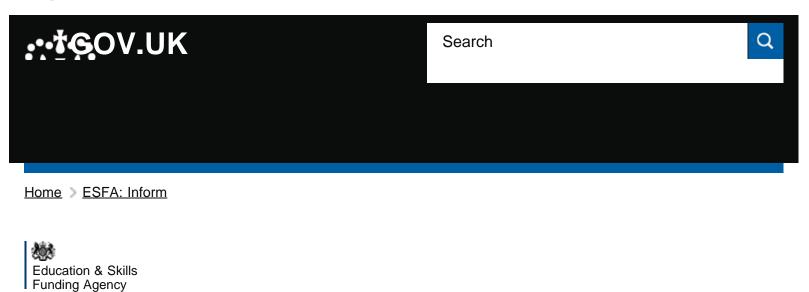
Data lock errors

For Action

Over the past few months we have seen a number of data lock errors that have an impact on payments made to providers.

These errors are caused when there is a no corresponding record or a mismatch of data against an apprentice's record held on the apprenticeship service and the training providers ILR return.

We are continuing to see large numbers of training providers submitting their first and final ILR on the last day of the ILR submission period and this does not allow any time to correct data lock errors with the employers you are working with.

The apprenticeship service provides a data lock report when you submit an ILR and you should use this to identify any errors which require further action.

It is important that you work with your employers to ensure information in the ILR and the apprenticeship service is accurate and up to date before the ILR submission window closes on the 4th working day of the month; so you receive timely payments for the training you deliver.

R14 hard close

For Action

It is critical that you make any amendments to your 2016 to 2017 ILR data before the ILR hard close on the 19 October. After this date you will not be able to fix any data lock issues from your 2016 to 2017 ILR return and will not receive payment for this activity.

Any creation, replacement or amendments to apprentice records held on the apprenticeship service will also need to be completed and approved by both you and your employer before this deadline.

Once the hard close deadline has passed you will be unable to:

- create and approve a new apprentice record with a start date within the 2016 to 2017 academic year
- create and approve a replacement record for any incorrect record that has been stopped and backdated
- make changes (such as the agreed costs) to any existing records to take effect prior to the 31 July 2017

For more information please refer to the [Apprenticeship technical funding guide](#) and [ILR guides and templates for 2016 to 2017](#).

You can review and submit your ILR file as soon as the collection period opens. We will provide an indicative data match using data from the apprenticeship service from the previous day. You will be able to access an Apprenticeship Indicative Earnings Report that will show a headline view of the cash value of all apprentices and highlight any errors.

If any data fails this match, you will need to ensure any necessary changes are made before the ILR collection is closed, 6pm on the 19 October, so we can release funding.

If you or your employer has issues regarding data lock errors contact the [helpdesk](#) or call 08000 150 600.

ESF Providers – dual running phase

For Action

Between August and October, you must include all your European Social Fund (ESF) learners who started on or before 31 July 2017, in your 2016 to 2017 individualised learner record (ILR) returns. From September, the calculation date for payments follows the 2017 to 2018 ILR return schedule. This calculation will use your latest 2016 to 2017 ILR submission.

As the calculation date for R02 will occur whilst the 2016 to 2017 R14 collection is open you must either not submit your R14 file until after the close of R02, or if you choose to submit then you must not remove any ESF learners from your submission. If any learners are not included in the file used to calculate payments, then your funding for 2016 to 2017 for those learners will be withdrawn.

R14 - Qualification Achievement Rates and Minimum Standards 2016 to 2017

Action

We are approaching the close of the 2016 to 2017 funding year for data collections and funding claims. We use this data to calculate provider [Qualification Achievement Rates](#) (QAR) and [Minimum Standards](#).

We have identified a number of common data issues that affected the calculation of QARs for the 2015 to 2016 year, following a review of the queries handled by the service desk.

To minimise the number of queries for the 2016 to 2017 year, please review the list of common issues below and ensure any amendments are made to your 2016 to 2017 ILR data before the ILR hard close on 19 October. After this date you will not be able to fix any issues from your 2016 to 2017 ILR return.

We only use R04 2017 to 2018 data returns to identify late notified Apprenticeship achievements, restarts for learners returning from a planned break and, in the timely QAR calculations, to identify achievements within 90 days. Returns up to R04 in the 2017 to 2018 year cannot be used to fix or adjust anything claimed in R14.

Common issues include:

- agreed breaks in learning - Please ensure that any planned breaks with a 'Completion status' of 6 (Learner has temporarily withdrawn from the aim due to an agreed break in learning) that were excluded from your 2015 to 2016 hybrid end year data, are recorded with an updated completion status by R04 in the 2017 to 2018 year. Those records will default to 'withdrawn' if the learning aim or apprenticeship programme aim has not restarted, or the completion status is not updated to reflect what has actually happened to the learner. Your Management Information (MI) system may need to be set up to export 2015 to 2016 actual end dates if you are changing the completion status from a planned break to a withdrawal
- continuing learners - Please ensure that all learning aims with a 'Completion status' of 1 (The learner is

continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the learning aim) in R14 of 2015 to 2016 are reported in your data for the 2016 to 2017 year. [Funding Rules Monitoring report 3](#) identifies any aims that we have not matched to an ILR record in 2016 to 2017. Those aims will default to 'withdrawn' if a matching record is not included in your 2016 to 2017 data. If you need to report an actual end date in 2015 to 2016 for those aims, then you need to make sure your MI system is set up to export 2015 to 2016 actual end dates

- changes to learner reference numbers - Changes to the 'Learner reference number' should be avoided if at all possible between years for continuing learners. If you unavoidably have to change the learner reference numbers used, for example because of a change to your MI system, you should ensure that the 'Learner reference number in previous year' field is completed. This is so we can match records across years.
  You should only tell us about a change of 'Learner reference number' in the first year of the change. If you report a change for a second year, then we will no longer be able to match the first change you reported and that ILR record will default to 'withdrawn' when we calculate your QAR.

- recording restarts correctly - You must ensure that the restart indicator and the same learning aim or apprenticeship programme aim that the learner originally started, is used. The 'Original learning start date' field must match exactly the 'Learning start date' field of the planned break record. Where the original aim record and restart aim record does not match, the original aim will default to 'withdrawn' when we calculate your QAR

- transfer exclusions – Transfers to another provider are only excluded from your QAR where the reason was due to intervention from us or to meet a specific government strategy, identified by these 'Withdrawal Reasons' - 7 (Learner has transferred between providers due to intervention by or with the written agreement of the Education & Skills Funding Agency) or 41 (Learner has transferred to another provider to undertake learning that meets a specific government strategy).

- duration of learning calculation – When calculating the duration of learning for the funding qualifying period exclusion, the first day in learning is counted, meaning the duration is the difference between the learning start date and actual end date plus 1 day

Further details can be found in the [Provider Support Manual for 2016 to 2017](#) the [ILR Specification 2016 to 2017](#), the [Funding Monitoring Reports User Guide and Monitoring Rules 2016 to 2017](#). We will also shortly publish the QAR dataset production specification documents for 2016 to 2017 alongside the [Business Rules](#).

Apprenticeship grant for employers –AGE

For Action

R13 ILR

The AGE report relating to the R13 data submission (14 September 2017) will be issued on 4 October 2017 and the payment date will be 25 October 2017. The early release of the AGE report is to give you the opportunity to correct any data in time for the final submission at hard close (19 October).

The R13 data has highlighted that a number of Providers have removed LDM codes from their ILR data or have overwritten the LDM with a 999 code. These changes have resulted in a significant number of recoveries. Please ensure prior to submitting the final ILR return for 2016 to 2017 (19 October) that the

LDM codes are checked, as this is the final opportunity for any change.

Using the apprenticeship service as a training provider

For Information

We have published information for [apprenticeship training providers](#) about using the apprenticeship service. It explains how to register on the apprenticeship service so you can add and approve apprentices for funding.

It is important that the apprentices added to the apprenticeship service account match the details you have on the Individualised Learner Record. This this will be checked as part of your month end submission.

We have also published information for [employers](#) about the key information they need to consider when using the [apprenticeship service](#).

Find apprenticeship training: ensure your apprenticeship data is up to date

For Information

[Find apprenticeship training](#) is an online service for employers to select apprenticeships and find approved training providers who offer that training. The service, launched last autumn, now has around 5,000 users per week.

Please make sure your apprenticeship data is kept up to date. We recommend that MI staff work with their marketing or business development colleagues on this data collection to make sure:

- the list of apprenticeships you offer is accurate
- the training sites and coverage reflects your provision
- your additional information is suitable for employers

There is information about how to submit your data. Any changes you make will be visible in the live service the following day.

For further help completing this data collection, please contact the [Course Directory Support Team](#) or call 0844 811 5073.

Employer co-investment update for providers delivering apprenticeships to their own staff

For Information

For providers delivering apprenticeships to their own staff; you do not need to record any co-investment payments on the ILR. In these cases, please record the Learning and Delivery Monitoring (LDM) code 356 ('Apprenticeship being delivered to own employees').

We will update the 2017 to 2018 'Recording co-investment payments' BIRST report (number 30) to exclude apprenticeships with this code recorded by R03 (November). We will also update the 2016 to 2017 report after R14 to show the correct year-end position.

We will monitor the use of this LDM code. If our investigations do not show that the employer workplace recorded on the ILR is connected to the provider, we may ask for evidence from you to show that the workplace is connected.

Hub return

For Information

In R01 we processed 3,374 files from 890 providers, over 500 providers submitted their first R01 file in the last 3 days of the collection window. In R13 we processed 3,525 files from 1,203 providers, over 450 providers submitted their first R13 file in the last 3 days of the collection window.

Individualised learner record (ILR): R02

For Information

The ILR R02 data collection for the 2017 to 2018 funding year is now open and will close at 6pm on 5 October. 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 0370 267 0001 to request this.

Qualification achievement rate changes for 2016 to 2017

For Information

We have published the high level changes to the qualification achievement rates (QAR) for the 2016 to 2017 funding year (1 August 2016 to 31 July 2017). We will shortly publish the updated QAR dataset production specification documents for 2016 to 2017 which will incorporate these changes.

You should read this document alongside the business rules we published in November 2016.

If you have any questions please contact the Service Desk or call 0370 267 0001.

Minimum standards 2016 to 2017: apprenticeships, AEB, ALL

For Information

We have published a document explaining how we will apply minimum standards for 2016 to 2017 to all age apprenticeships and to adult (19+) education and training provision funded through the Adult Education Budget and/or through Advanced Learner Loans.

If you have any queries, please contact the [Service Desk](#) or call on 0370 267 0001.

Feedback on withdrawal of frameworks

For Information

We are now [asking for feedback](#) on the 5th batch of frameworks until 6pm on 18 October.

We asked for feedback on the 4th batch of frameworks to be withdrawn earlier in the year and recently delayed the announcement of this process. We will announce the outcomes of both batches next year. The date for the frameworks we intend to withdraw for new starts will be no earlier than 1 January 2019.

For further information, refer to the [removal of apprenticeship frameworks](#) page on GOV.UK or contact the [Service Desk](#) or call 0370 267 0001.

R14 ILR

For Information

The AGE report for R14 will be issued week commencing 13 November and payment will be made on 24 November.

R14a ILR

For Information

There will be a further AGE report issued in the week commencing 18 December 2017 which will be based on the R14 ILR data; this is required to pay the final pipeline claims for starts in July 2017 that have reached their 13 weeks in learning.

2016 to 2017 year-end Reconciliation Statements

For Information

Following the 2016 to 2017 year-end funding claims process for the Adult Education Budget, Learner Support, 24+ Advanced Learning Loans Bursary and Community Learning; your year-end reconciliation statements will be available on the [Skills Funding Service (SFS)](#) in early October.

Final funding claims 2016 to 2017

For Action

Colleges and other training organisations funded through a grant for Adult Education Budget, Learner

Support, 24+ Advanced Learning Loans Bursary and Community Learning must submit their final funding claim on the Hub by 5pm Wednesday 25 October. The form will be available on Friday 20 October and will be pre-populated with your earnings following the R14 data collection return. The form will not be submitted unless you click on the submit button.

You have 2 additional days to sign your claim. The claim needs to be signed digitally on SFS by 5pm on Friday 27 October by your principal or a delegated authority.

We have published a user guide to help you complete the form. Failure to submit a signed funding claim may result in funding being clawed back.

We will publish final reconciliation statements on the Skills Funding Service by the end of November.

Monitoring the funding rules 2016 to 2017

For Action

If we have contacted your organisation identifying funding monitoring errors, please ensure you have corrected your data by R14 or provided us with evidence of eligibility before this time. Failure to resolve outstanding issues may result in a recovery being applied to your final claim or further assurance work being undertaken before your reconciliation statement can be published.

You can use the suite of BIRST reports available through the hub to identify any outstanding issues; R13 data will be available shortly. For further information on accessing and using the reports, please refer to the funding monitoring reports: user guide 2016 to 2017.

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