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Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

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## Introduction

The ESFA funded LAs for the financial year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 to deliver learning to young people in England. For learners over the age of 16, in receipt of funding in accordance with the [16 to 19 funding guidance](#), LAs are required to upload CFO signed grant return and use of funds statement to the ESFA's Information Exchange. This requirement is specified in the post 16 [Audit Code of Practice](#) between LAs and the ESFA. This guide explains how to complete and submit these returns.

## Guide to completing your grant return and use of funds statement

There are 2 forms to complete:

- the grant return at Annex 1; and
- the use of funds statement detailing the funds paid to the LA by ESFA at Annex 2

The CFO must certify the grant return and the use of funds statement.

#### Annex 1: Grant Return

- within the 'Exceptions' section of Annex 1, please confirm whether there have been any exceptions by selecting 'Yes' or 'No'
- if 'Yes', please provide details of the exception(s); this should detail the funding streams, providers' names, values of funding affected including reasons for the exception and any other relevant information

#### Annex 2: Use of Funds Statement

- the statement will be populated with details of the payments made by ESFA to LAs. The LA should in turn complete the 'Local Authority Received Total' with the actual amounts received from ESFA
- if the figures do not reconcile with the prepopulated figures, the difference should be explained in the 'Explanation of Variance (1)' column
- the LA should also complete the 'Authority Transfer of Funds' column with the amounts paid to LA controlled learning providers and maintained school sixth forms. Any instances where the amount has not been transferred in full should be explained in the 'Explanation of Variance (2)' column

Please do not alter the wording of the grant returns or the figures included in the use of funds statement instead add any extra narrative you wish to include within the 'Additional Comments' box on the use of funds statement.

The CFO needs to be satisfied that the appropriate controls are in place and the return has been checked internally. There is no requirement for the grant return and use of funds statement to be audited, but the return may be subject to review by LA external auditors, at their discretion.

### **Submit your grant return and use of funds statement**

Your LA grant return and use of funds statement for the 2017 to 2018 financial year has been uploaded to ESFA Information Exchange via Secure Access. The LA grant return and use of funds statement are saved in the Document Exchange, Local Authority (xxx) 'finance and payments' folder under AY 2017 – 2018. (Please ignore the heading AY in the 'finance and payments' folder this document relates to the financial year).

You can access ESFA Information Exchange by logging onto [Secure Access](#) and selecting ESFA Information Exchange from your list of applications. Once you are in the ESFA Information Exchange, select the Document Exchange tab at the top of the page.

Please submit your CFO signed LA grant return and use of funds statement to us by uploading it to Document Exchange by 31 October 2018. Please print your LA grant return and use of funds statement, physically sign it and scan it as a pdf. You then need to upload the CFO signed pdf version and the excel version to the 'finance and payments' folder under AY 2017 – 2018 in Document Exchange.

To upload your LA grant return and use of funds statement, navigate to the 'finance and payments' folder under AY 2017 to 2018. Select 'actions', then 'upload content'. Once your return has been selected, choose 'stage 2 grant return' as the document purpose when prompted. It is important 'stage 2 grant return' and not 'stage 2 use of funds statement' is selected as the document purpose when uploading your return.

Please note: The ESFA populates a national spreadsheet direct from this return. We ask that you do not

amend the format or include links. This helps our data input and validation processes.

If you have any questions about your LA grant return and use of funds statement, please use our [online enquiry form](#).

For support and guidance about ESFA Information Exchange, please visit our [support page](#).

## Scope

The payments made by ESFA to LAs within the scope of this return are for 16 to 19 provision in LA controlled providers and maintained schools with sixth forms, together with any funding provided for 14 to 19 partnerships.

'Vulnerable student' 16 to 19 bursary funding paid to Local Authorities during the 2017 to 2018 financial year is also within scope. This funding is managed on behalf of ESFA by the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS). SBSS make direct payments to local authorities in respect of successful vulnerable bursary claims placed by local authorities or maintained schools. Information on [vulnerable student bursary arrangements](#) may be viewed on GOV.UK.

Given the ad hoc nature of this funding, it does not feature in ESFA documentation (e.g. the contract or the annual payment profile). However, each payment made by SBSS is accompanied by remittance advice, which is sent to the same primary e-mail address that the ESFA uses for financial correspondence. Therefore LAs should have this information available to support this grant return.

LAs are the assurance lead for these organisations and are therefore responsible for the assurance of these funds. Under JACOP, LAs are also responsible for the assurance of other funds paid to LA controlled providers and schools with sixth forms.

There are a small number of LAs who have collaborated to operate shared service arrangements for the payment and financial performance management of providers. For these arrangements, it is expected that the CFO of the host authority for the shared service will sign the returns on behalf of all the authorities for which the service is provided. However, which CFO signs the return is for the relevant LA to decide.

ESFA has produced guidance to assist LAs in obtaining assurance over funding paid to them, which includes guidance for financial assurance on funding relating to [local authority-maintained institutions with sixth forms](#) and [16 to 19 Bursary Funds](#).

## Additional information

If after reading this e-mail, you require further information on the updated process, please contact us using the [enquiry form](#).

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