



Correspondence

ESFA Update further education: 17 June 2020

Published 17 June 2020

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1. Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department for Education has published guidance about [COVID-19 in educational settings for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students](#) on GOV.UK.

There is [also guidance on the apprenticeship service about COVID-19](#).

Please check [GOV.UK](#) regularly for updates.

2. Action: July financial collection from colleges

On Monday 15 June, we released [templates for a simplified, COVID-19 specific financial return from colleges](#). We are asking colleges to complete and return the following documents by the 31 July 2020:

1. Monthly cash flow template – this is a slightly updated version of the template used in July 2019
2. Financial Health Calculator – this newly developed template calculates financial health with minimal information
3. Commentary – as with most ESFA returns we will be asking for some narrative to provide some context for the financial information.

The submission process will be the same as that used for the February 2020 IFMC collection, via the document upload portal on GOV.UK.

We will be running webinars, and will provide guidance and support through the [ESFA's online enquiry form](#) in place of the mailbox previously used. Please ensure you select 'College Financial Returns' under query type, and reference 'COVID-19 July financial return' in the body of the query. We believe moving to a web form-based approach in our correspondence with you will ensure we can respond to queries more efficiently. We don't anticipate colleges needing as much support as with the February IFMC return but we will monitor requests to ensure support is adequate.

We are only requiring accounting officer to sign-off the return, as we acknowledge that it might not be possible to convene a full governing body sign-off meeting ahead of the return deadline.

We continue to honour our commitment to simplify the IFMC with the sector, however, we appreciate it is not the right time to liaise with the sector on further improvements. Over the past months we have focused on improving the model and removing the errors while simplifying where possible.

3. Information: college corporation financial management good practice guides

We are launching a new resource for FE and sixth-form college corporations that want to adopt good practice in certain areas of their financial management. The [college corporation financial management good practice page](#) is now available on GOV.UK.

The good practice guides will be developed in consultation with sector representatives and other expert specialists. The concept mirrors that which ESFA has developed with the academies sector and which has been well received.

The factsheets themselves do not introduce any new requirements, but rather build on aspects of the existing framework for financial management and governance and provide suggestions and models for how they may be best fulfilled. It is for college corporations themselves to decide how much of the practice set out in each of the guides is adopted.

The first of the good practice guides sets out how college corporations might best adopt, on a voluntary basis, the reporting requirements for Streamlined Environmental and Carbon Reporting (SECR) set out in [The Companies \(Directors' Report\) and Limited Liability Partnerships \(Energy and Carbon Report\) Regulations 2018](#). However, other guides are currently under development and will be launched in due course.

If finance and governance professionals working in the sector have suggestions as to other topics where a good practice guide would be beneficial then they should [contact ESFA](#).

4. Information: T Levels – 2022 providers and criteria to deliver T Levels in 2023

We have announced the [providers selected to deliver T Levels from September 2022](#).

We have also announced the [criteria that providers wishing to deliver T Levels in 2023 must meet](#). This will open up delivery to significantly more providers as T Levels become more widely available as a technical education route.

We will confirm the process for providers to register their wish to take part in 2023 delivery in January 2021.

5. Information: version 1 of ESFA adult education budget (AEB) funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021

We have published version 1 of the [ESFA AEB funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021](#). There are no updates to the section on subcontracting. We will review this section this once the [government consultation response](#) is published.

Thank you for your feedback on the draft we published in May. We have considered all the comments and we've listed any changes in the summary of changes section. Some of the main changes are:

- addition of the performance management rules for 2020 to 2021
- removal of a paragraph in the fees and charging section because we will be consulting on co-funding
- a new section on funding rules for the digital entitlement. Essential digital skills qualifications will be the only qualifications funded under the digital entitlement in the 2020 to 2021 funding year and will be approved for funding as they are added to Ofqual's [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) and meet our [approval principles](#)

The rules apply to all providers of education and training who receive AEB funding from the ESFA. If you have any queries, please use our [online enquiry form](#).

6. Information: Advanced Learner Loans – launch of the 2020 to 2021 application service

The 2020 to 2021 [Advanced Learner Loans application service](#) will open on Monday 15 June 2020 for learners who wish to start eligible qualifications from 1 August 2020 funded with a loan.

7. Information: new Advanced Learner Loans funding letter templates

We have updated the [learning and funding information letters for 2020 to 2021](#). You must issue these to learners, including for offenders in custody, who are considering funding their qualification with a loan. We have also published guidance on [how to complete the letters](#).

8. Information: changes to the UK Register of Learning Providers Service

The UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) is the portal for government departments, agencies, learners, and employers to share key information about learning providers.

As part of the ongoing improvement of the UKRLP service a set of changes were released on Monday 15 June 2020.

The changes are described below.

8.1 Changes to the site design and user experience of the UKRLP website

The site has been updated to reflect the design, branding, and user experience of UK Government design standards. These changes are intended to simplify the experience for users and ensure that the service is seen as integrated with the Department for Education's set of services.

8.2 Collection of additional fields in the registration process

As part of the registration process, we are now collecting two additional fields:

- reason for registering, inviting the providers to indicate why they are applying for a UKPRN. This is a mandatory field. This is being collected to increase our knowledge of how the service is being used, this will not be used as part of the verification process.
- information Commissioners Office Registration Number, a field to allow providers to indicate their ICO registration number. This is not currently mandatory, but is likely to be made mandatory at a future date.

8.3 Functionality that has not changed.

The following UKRLP functionality has not changed:

- the public website is still accessible from <http://www.ukrlp.co.uk>
- the functionality of the provider search on the front-end website is unchanged
- other than the addition of the two new registration fields, the registration and verification process is unchanged
- the existing web services will continue to operate as they do currently

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