



Skills Funding
Agency

The Register of Training Organisations

Due Diligence Assurance Gateway

Read Me First – Guidance for Completion

February 2014

Of interest to all training organisations and colleges who wish to
deliver education and training services



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

Contents

1. [About the Skills Funding Agency](#)
2. [The Services We Fund](#)
3. [The Register of Training Organisations](#)
4. [Register Refresh](#)
5. [Organisational Changes](#)
6. [Publication of the Register](#)
7. [Subcontractors](#)
8. [Due Diligence Assurance Gateway \(Gateway\)](#)
9. [The Application Process](#)
10. [Evaluating the online Questionnaire](#)
11. [Structure of the online Questionnaire](#)
12. [Financial Health Assessment](#)
13. [Feedback](#)
14. [Help and support](#)
15. [Resubmissions](#)
16. [Removal of organisations from the Register](#)
17. [Company name change](#)
18. [Accompanying Guidance Documents](#)
19. [Freedom of Information](#)
20. [Appeals and Complaints](#)
21. [Links to helpful information](#)
22. [Definitions Appendix](#)

1. About the Skills Funding Agency

The Skills Funding Agency (the Agency) is a partner organisation of the [Department for Business, Innovation and Skills](#) (BIS). Our job is to fund and promote adult further education (FE) and skills training in England, including [Traineeships](#) and [Apprenticeships](#), in a way that supports economic growth.

What we do

We deliver £3.357 billion in 2014-15 of skills training through contracts with over 1,000 colleges, private training organisations and employers. Our highly effective supply chain means FE meets local need in the most cost-effective way, reaching into every sector of the economy. We are also a co-financing body for European Social Fund.

What are our priorities for purchasing?

Each year BIS sets out its policy priorities for the skills sector in a Skills Funding Statement (SFS), detailing the overall level of funding available to the sector to deliver the policy intentions of government. The Agency's task is to implement BIS's policy, as set out in the SFS, consistent with the Chief Executive's statutory duty to promote and secure reasonable adult FE in England. To achieve this, we influence and support the capacity and quality of the FE system so we can fund the expected demand for high-quality skills training.

A link to the [Skills Funding Statement \(SFS\)](#) can be found at:
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills>

A link to the Priorities and Funding letter for 2013-14 can be found at:
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/SkillsFundingAgency-P-130089.pdf>

2. The Services We Fund

We fund delivery of adult education and training services including:

- Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- ESOL
- Skills for life
- Workplace learning
- Pre-employment training
- Offender Learning and Skills Service
- Community Learning
- Employer Ownership Funding

The Chief Executive enters into funding agreements with colleges, employers and training organisations that can deliver one or more of these services. We commission education and training services based on government priorities and the associated funding made available to us.

Some of the delivery we commission will include education and training funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). We do not use a separate process for procuring this ESF funded provision, therefore organisations interested in delivering this provision will need to be listed on the Register of Training Organisations. This may include procurement on behalf of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs).

Occasionally, funding becomes available for initiatives outside of the planned procurement cycle. Entry on the Register means you will be invited into our procurements. The Agency will only invite organisations to compete for funding who have:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Stage 1 | Successfully entered the Register of Training Organisations and have, |
| Stage 2 | Successfully demonstrated they have the ability to deliver the education and vocational skills training service we wish to tender for. |

If, funding becomes available for new provision which we have not tested, to ensure we are equitable to all organisations we will invite all those organisations listed on the Register of Training Organisations to tender for this service.

Please note that at the time of publication, the policies and programmes referred to in this document are correct. However, this information may be subject to change and updating as appropriate. We recommend you check our website for the latest information <http://www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk>.

You should also look at the qualifications we fund currently fund <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/qcf/>.

Information on apprenticeships can be found here <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/types-of-apprenticeships.aspx>

3. The Register of Training Organisations (the Register)

Introduction

The Register is a single register of organisations that have passed our Due Diligence Assurance Gateway (Gateway), so are eligible to enter into our procurements and have demonstrated they are financially robust. The Register is our only market entry point for those organisations wishing to be considered to deliver education and vocational skills training services for the Chief Executive of Skills Funding (Chief Executive).

Entry on the Register means you will become **eligible** to receive funding. Entry on the Register does **not guarantee** you will receive funding or a contract. If you decide to continue in our procurement process you will be tested to determine if your organisation has the capability to tender in the future. You will be evaluated against the provision type you selected in your Gateway online questionnaire submission.

Organisations that do not want to progress to procurement and compete for direct funding but want to appear on the Register must select this in their Gateway on-line questionnaire.

Terminology

For the purposes of this document:

- Organisations are identified as Colleges, local authorities, private training organisations, employers, public sector bodies and all those organisations who deliver education and training funded by the Chief Executive.
- The Register means the Register of Training Organisations;
- Gateway means the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway;
- We, us, the Agency, the Chief Executive, refers to the Chief Executive of Skills Funding;
- Lead Provider means an organisation that has the direct funding agreement with the Chief Executive;
- Learners mean persons for whom education and training is provided and includes employees.
- Subcontractors mean organisations which have a subcontract with a Lead Provider to deliver education and training funded by the Chief Executive.

Background

The procedure we use when procuring education and vocational skills training services is consistent with EU procurement principles. The first stage is the Gateway to ensure that only suitable organisations are invited into our procurements.

The Gateway includes both financial and technical assessments which are designed to test that organisations are commercially sound in these areas and their ability to deliver to the required standard has been established before they are invited into our procurements.

Purpose

The Register has three distinct purposes:

1. To enable us to confirm that organisations with which we have an existing funding agreement for the delivery of education and vocational training, are suitable for us to continue to fund.
2. To provide us with a list of organisations that are eligible to progress in our procurement process and if successful, be invited to tender in the future for the provision of education and vocational training services.
3. To enable us to support the sector in subcontracting provision, by requiring subcontractors intending to enter subcontracts of £100K or more in aggregate, to pass the Gateway prior to entering into any subcontracting arrangements.

Appearing on the Register of Training Organisations

Please note organisations that pass the Gateway and enter the Register will **not** receive a registration number and are **not** entitled to use our logo.¹

Appearing on the Register also does not imply that we endorse you as an organisation and it is not a 'kite mark' nor 'award'.

As a Government department, we do not provide references for organisations.

4. Register Refresh

Your appearance on the Register is subject to you continuing to pass the Gateway at set refresh points. It is a **funding requirement** that you refresh your Register information when required.

All organisations listed on the Register must refresh their application when requested to do so.

Organisations will need to refresh both their Online Questionnaire and resubmit their latest full Financial Statements.

As per paragraph 395 of the Funding Rules 2013/14 you must successfully complete the Gateway when required as part of our refresh process. If you fail, or do not apply at the refresh, you must apply at the next opening of the Gateway. During this period your organisation:

- will not be listed on the Register
- will not be eligible to take part in tenders
- will not be considered for growth cases

NOTE: The above also applies to subcontractors with an aggregate contract value of £100,000 or more. We will suspend any growth cases submitted by the lead provider in relation to the subcontractor. This is because the delivery model may not be working effectively and funds could be at risk. If the subcontractor fails the Gateway after their second opportunity to apply, the lead provider will be required to end their subcontract.

We will contact organisations to advise them when they are required to next refresh their information.

The last refresh was in October 2013, those organisations that have failed to enter the Register, have one further opportunity to comply with this funding requirement to refresh their information at the February 2014 opening.

¹ Guidance on logos and design can be found at:

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/logoanddesignguidance/>

5. Organisational Changes

If your organisation changes its legal structure you must inform us immediately via the relevant message board on the e-tendering portal. You will then be required to apply to the Register at the next opportunity in line with your new legal structure and/or status.

6. Publication of the Register

We will publish information about the Register, including the Register itself, on our website at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/>

Timetable

The timetable for this opening of the Gateway is set out in the table below.

Launch date and Register opens	21 February 2014
Deadline for completion and submission of online questionnaire	28 March 2014
Feedback provided from Skills Funding Agency to provider	May 2014
Register published	May 2014

IMPORTANT: Dates for feedback and the publication of the Register are a guide only. Exact dates depend on the volume of applications we receive.

7. Subcontractors

Funding Rule 2013/14

It is a funding requirement that all subcontractors in our supply chain with an aggregate contract value of £100,000 and above enter the Register. In line with Para 403 of the Funding Rules 2013/14, from 1 August 2013 subcontractors must enter the Register **prior** to agreeing contracts with lead providers that would take them beyond the £100,000 threshold. The Agency understands subcontractors change during the contract year but lead providers must not contract with an organisation until they successfully entered the Register. Failure to comply may result in us contacting the lead provider(s) to request they terminate the agreement.

8. Due Diligence Assurance Gateway (Gateway)

Introduction

The Gateway process consists of two distinct parts:

1. Online questionnaire
2. Financial Health Assessment.

Organisations must check they have completed and submitted their online questionnaire to us accurately and they are happy with the content.

There is no right of appeal. The outcome of the Gateway evaluation is final.

Applications should reflect the whole of an organisation, and not just a particular department or individual. Subcontractors must apply in their own right and not using the information or Bravo account of their lead provider(s). Similarly, lead providers should not apply on behalf of their subcontractor(s). Submission of applications should be agreed at the appropriate level in your organisation before they are submitted to us.

Organisations that applied to the Register Refresh in October 2013 will have most of their responses to the online questionnaire pre populated. However, we have made some changes to the questions, and these will not be pre populated.

NOTE: Changes for February 2014 listed below:

	Question	Comment
2.5.2	ROTO-CO-01	New question - will not be pre-populated if you applied at the Refresh
2.2.13	ROTO-OS-11a	
2.2.14	ROTO-OS-11b	
2.2.15	ROTO-OS-11c	
2.5.8	ROTO-CO-05a.	
2.9.3	ROTO-QQ-02-SUPP	
2.9.5	ROTO-QQ-04a	
2.9.6	ROTO-QQ-04b	
2.1.12	ROTO-OD-07	Wording has been amended for clarity - the response to this question will be pre-populated if you applied at the Refresh. Please ensure your response is current.
2.1.13	ROTO-OD-08	
2.1.14	ROTO-OD-09a	
2.1.15	ROTO-OD-09b	
2.10.6	ROTO-DE-06	
2.2.17	ROTO-OS-13	
2.3.2	ROTO-DM-02	
2.4.1	ROTO-FM-01	
2.4.2	ROTO-FM-02a	
2.4.3	ROTO-FM-02b	

2.4.5	ROTO-FM-03b
2.4.6	ROTO-FM-04
2.4.7	ROTO-FM-05
2.4.8	ROTO-FM-06
2.4.9	ROTO-FM-07
2.4.11	ROTO-FM-08b
2.5.4	ROTO-CO-03
2.5.6	ROTO-CO-04a
2.5.12	ROTO-CO-07b
2.5.14	ROTO-CO-08b
2.6.1	ROTO-QU-01a
2.6.5	ROTO-QU-03
2.6.6	ROTO-QU-04
2.6.7	ROTO-QU-05
2.6.9	ROTO-QU-07
2.7.2	ROTO-AO-01b
2.7.3	ROTO-AO-02a
2.7.4	ROTO-AO-02b
2.7.5	ROTO-AO-03a
2.7.6	ROTO-AO-03b
2.7.7	ROTO-AO-04
2.9.1	ROTO-QQ-01

Organisations that did not apply in October will **not** have their responses for the online questionnaire pre-populated.

The Financial Health Assessment is based on the financial statements uploaded as part of completing the questionnaire.

Your responses to the online questionnaire will be evaluated and your financial statements assessed in order to determine whether you pass or fail the Gateway. You must pass both parts in order to be approved to enter the Register.

Only those organisations that are able to demonstrate they are financially robust will enter the Register.

Before you start the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway process

Before making an application you should ensure that:

- Your organisation is a legal entity.
- Your organisation is included on the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) and has a valid UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN).

NOTE: The name listed on UKRLP should be the full legal name as registered with Companies House (if applicable).

You also need to check:

- Important Documents which can be found on our webpage,
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register>.
- Funding Rules for 2013/14
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingrules/>
- Funding agreements for 2013/14
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingdocuments/>

Who should complete the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway?

It is a funding requirement that all organisations in our supply chain, either direct contract holders who receive funding from the Chief Executive or subcontractors with an aggregate contract value of £100,000² or above must be listed on the Register. We only fund organisations listed on the Register.

Your organisation should complete the Gateway if it is not already listed on the Register and one or more of the following apply:

- You have an existing funding agreement with us for the delivery of education and vocational training.
- You are an organisation that wants to be selected to compete in future tenders for education and vocational skills training provision and wish to hold a direct contract with us.
- You wish to enter into a subcontract with an existing lead provider for the delivery of education and vocational skills training, where the aggregate value of the contract would be £100,000 or more.

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) Direct Grant Large Employers

It is a funding requirement that large employers who are in receipt of, or are in the process of applying for grant funding from NAS, apply to the Gateway and enter the Register. Please contact your National Apprenticeship Service Account Manager for advice before completing the Gateway.

How many times can I apply to the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway?

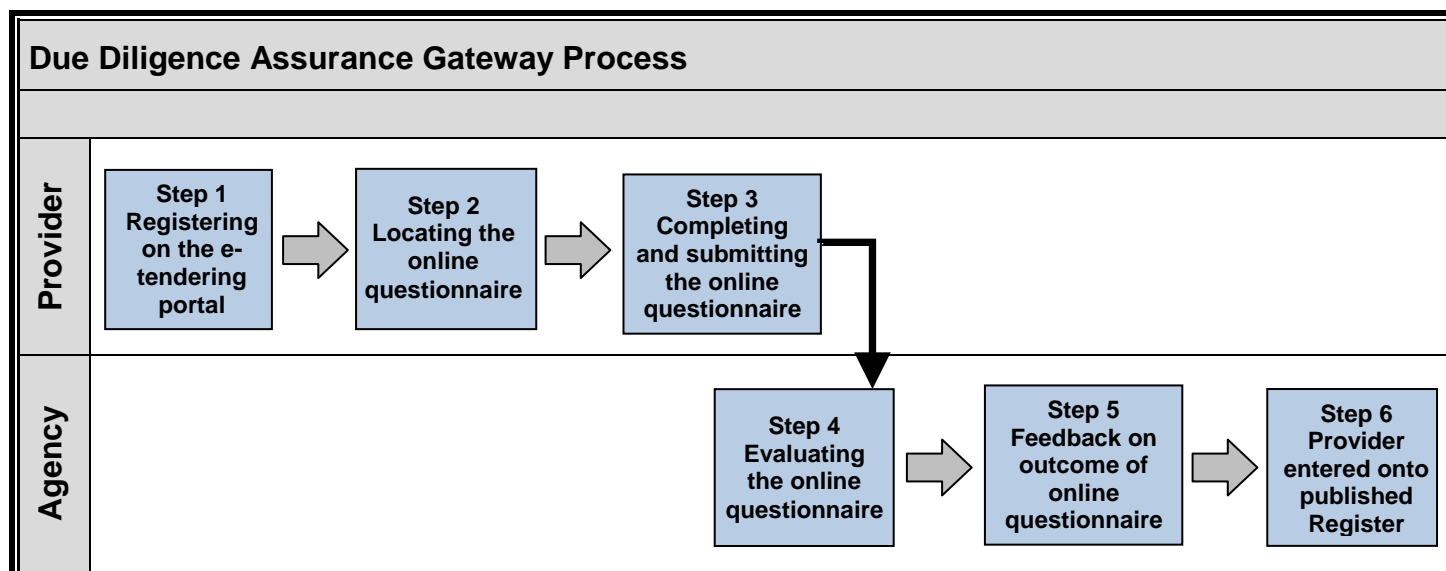
Organisations who do not have a contract and are not in our supply chain, but wish to be considered for a direct contract and be invited into procurement, are not restricted on the number of opportunities to apply. However, an organisation that repeatedly fails the Gateway needs to consider if continuing to apply would be appropriate for them. If your organisation keeps failing the Gateway we would advise applicants to reflect on their

² According to the latest and therefore current version of the Agency's Subcontracting Register
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/Subcontracting>

commercial and financial status before they apply again; especially if their circumstances have not changed since their previous submission.

9. The Application Process

The process for the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway is as follows:



Please see the accompanying *Quick Reference Support Guide for the e-tendering portal* for technical information for Steps 1-3, which can be found at:

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/>

Registering on the Bravo e-Tendering Portal (Step 1)

Organisations which have yet to register with Bravo on the e-tendering portal will need to do this in order to access the questionnaire. Registration can be done at any time, even if the Gateway is not open. More information can be found here: [Guidance note BRAVO email account](#)

If your organisation has already registered on the e-tendering portal, then you do not need to do it again. You can use your current username and password.

If you are not sure whether your organisation already has a username and password, please contact help@bravosolution.co.uk rather than attempting to re-register.

The name of the organisation you enter on your Bravo account for e-tendering portal must be your organisation's full legal name, as registered with Companies House (if applicable) and which also matches your entry on UKRLP. This will ensure there is consistency with the legal name and UKPRN listed across Bravo, Companies House and UKRLP. This is critical as your organisation will appear on the Register under the name the application is made in, which is determined by the name against the Bravo account.

If we cannot match your organisation's name on the portal to its legal name, you may fail the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your e-tendering portal registration details are current and accurate. It is important you ensure the email address you register on the e-tendering portal is monitored as this is how we will communicate to you. You need to maintain and monitor your email address on the e-tendering portal.

We will only communicate with organisations about the Gateway via the e-tendering portal built in messaging service. This directs alerts and messages to the email address you specify. Once you have registered on the e-tendering portal, you may wish to add more than one email address to your registration details so that more than one person can access any alerts and messages we send.

NOTE: All the email addresses added to the e-tendering portal will receive the alerts and messages we send.

NOTE: Registering your details on the e-tendering portal does not mean you have made a submission to the Gateway.

Locating the Online Questionnaire (Step 2)

The Gateway's online questionnaire is available at our e-tendering portal <https://skillsfundingagency.bravosolution.co.uk>.

Completing and Submitting the Online Questionnaire (Step 3)

Organisations that applied to the Register Refresh in October 2013 will have the majority of their responses to the online questionnaire pre populated. **However** we have made some changes to the questions for February 2014 and these **will not** be pre populated.

Organisations that did not apply in October 2013 will **not** have their responses for the online questionnaire pre-populated.

You need to refer to the Definitions Appendix at the end of this document before completing the online questionnaire.

The majority of the questions are prefixed with a **red asterisk (*)** because they are mandatory. If you do not answer all of them, the e-tendering portal will not allow you to publish your response and we will not be able to evaluate your questionnaire and you will fail the Gateway.

REMEMBER:

- You should leave plenty of time between submitting your online questionnaire and the closing date in case you experience difficulties that you subsequently need time to resolve.
- Where we ask a closed question and then subsequently ask for additional text based information in support of your response to that closed question, you will need to provide this additional information as appropriate to the response you have selected.

- We reserve the right to modify, amend or provide further clarification on the online questionnaire at any time prior to the deadline for completion, by notification either direct to each organisation or as a broadcast message to all organisations.
 - Where such modifications constitute a significant change, we may, at our discretion, extend the deadline for completion of the online questionnaire.
 - If there are any changes, a document will be published alongside the opening of the Gateway, to highlight these changes to organisations.
 - Should we make any changes to any part of the online questionnaire **whilst it is live**, any submitted responses are “unsubmitted” by this action. An email alert advising that we have made changes will be sent to organisations’ registered email address. Organisations will then have to read the details of the change(s) and if necessary amend their submissions. Whether the change(s) affect an organisation’s submission or not they will still have to resubmit their response in order for us to evaluate it.

IMPORTANT:

- You need to ensure your answers are correct before you submit your application as we cannot accept any information or changes after the closing date or outside of the process.
- Please be aware that the Register team will verify information submitted within the questionnaire to ensure it is a true reflection of your organisation’s situation. If we subsequently find your organisation has given incorrect answers or information or has intentionally misled us with your responses, your organisation will be removed from the Register.
- Organisations need to be aware your responses will be shared across the Agency and with the National Apprenticeship Service as part of our efforts to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and as part of our risk management strategy.
- If required, we will share your responses with other government agencies, in particular the Education Funding Agency, Department of Work and Pensions and others as appropriate, to ensure public funds are safeguarded.
- We may use the information provided in your submission with the prevention and detection of fraud, working with other government agencies or departments.

10. Evaluating the Online Questionnaire (Step 4)

All online questionnaires submitted and received by 5.00pm on the closing date will be downloaded and evaluated.

The Agency **is unable to accept** any information after the closing date.

We have allocated a score to each of the possible responses to the questions contained within the online questionnaire, with the exception of the financial health assessment, for which there is a separate evaluation process.

The online questionnaire falls into three categories:

1. Scored questions
2. Organisation's capability to deliver the services we fund
3. Self declaration

For each response an organisation is evaluated as:

- **satisfactory** where that organisation is able to provide the required assurance in the areas which have been tested, receiving a score of **0**, or,
- **unsatisfactory** receiving the maximum score allocated for that question, **up to -100, in multiples of 25**. The precise score each response is allocated depends on the significance of that response to the overall due diligence process.

*All organisations begin with a score of 0 (zero) with unacceptable answers generating a negative score. It is important to remember that marks for the online questionnaire are not awarded but rather deducted. **Therefore, a total score of 0 is the highest score possible for the online questionnaire.***

After evaluating the response to each question, the individual scores are aggregated into a total score for the Online Questionnaire. If your total score for the online questionnaire is greater than -100, you will pass the Online Questionnaire. If your organisation's total score for the Online Questionnaire is -100 or less, you will fail the Online Questionnaire and therefore the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway. You must pass both the Financial Health Assessment and the Online Questionnaire in order to pass the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway and be deemed as 'Approved' to enter the Register of Training Organisations.

11. Structure of the Online Questionnaire

The questionnaire is organised into two envelopes – a qualification envelope and a technical envelope. The qualification envelope contains three sections; the first two contain important information about the questionnaire and the third is a declaration to confirm these notes have been read. **You need to read the contents of the qualification envelope and accept the declaration before starting to complete the technical envelope.**

Please note that any references to **eVM** (e-Vendor Management) in the section titles on the e-tendering portal refer to an underpinning technical aspect of the portal and can be ignored for the purposes of completing the online questionnaire.

You need to be aware that most of our funding agreements are for academic years (AY) i.e. 1 August to July. The online questionnaire will ask you questions about both academic year and financial years.

The technical envelope contains the following sections:

Organisational details

This section focuses on fundamental information about your organisation, including your [UK Provider Reference Number \(UKPRN\)](#), legal form, structure, size and directors.

These questions enable us to confirm that each organisation submitting the online questionnaire is a legal entity and we have a record of their essential details.

We may use some of the information we gather in this section for reporting and monitoring purposes.

You must enter a valid UKPRN or you will incur an automatic fail of the Online Questionnaire. It's critical you check this before finalising your submission. Organisations must state their **full** legal name and any applicable trading names in separate questions – these should be as per Companies House and also match UKRLP. Please **do not** use abbreviations.

If your organisation is incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 in the UK, you will be asked for your Company Registration Number; it is important this information relates to your organisation and is accurate.

We ask you for a detailed organisational structure chart, which details the companies in your group (if applicable).

NOTE:

- We want to see all companies within the group, and where your organisation fits within that.
- List your ultimate parent company, and any subsidiaries.
- You must also include any subsidiaries of your organisation.
- If you are a local authority, we need to see where the 'Educations Services' branch fits within the rest of the local authority.
- If you are not part of a group of companies, please upload a document against the question explaining that it is not applicable.

Details of your organisation structure

We expect you to upload an organisation chart which shows your organisation's management personnel.

NOTE:

- We want to see who has overall executive management of your company, as well as the management of each division.
- Members of the department responsible for delivering education and training services including management.

- If you are a local authority, we want to see who has overall executive management of the local authority and the management of the 'Education Services' branch for the local authority.
- You must also include the individual who is signing the agreement with the Agency, as well as the individual completing the Online Questionnaire.

Training organisation type

This section asks for further information about your organisation as it relates to the delivery of education and vocational training.

Delivery model

In this section we will look at how you intend to deliver a contract for us. We will seek an assurance on how you intend to manage your subcontractors.

Financial Management

In this section we will ask you about your organisation's annual income and your financial statements. We need to ask these questions to ensure that all organisations that pass the Gateway have an appropriate level of financial health. In addition, we need to assess the risk to the Agency of contracting with organisations which are reliant on public funding. We are seeking assurance on your internal controls which support your financial management. As administrators of public funding only those organisations that are able to demonstrate they are financially robust and present a low risk to the Agency will be entered on the Register. You should consider this before submitting your application.

Please note the detailed information below regarding the required financial statements.

Exemptions

The following organisations are exempt from being required to submit financial statements:

- Central government departments, executive agencies or non-departmental public bodies.
- Local authorities including Local Education Authority (LEA) schools.
- An Academy School or Free School
- NHS trusts, fire authorities, universities.
- Major national charities and voluntary organisations, for example OXFAM, Red Cross, RNIB, RNLI.
- Established Public Listed Companies and other registered companies for whom Agency funding is incidental to their business, if they are training their own staff only. For these purposes Agency funding will be "incidental" if Agency contract values are no more than 5% of annual turnover. They should still supply a copy of their most recent accounts to demonstrate this.
- The Agency also exempts large publicly listed employers funded by a National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) Grant, for whom Agency funding is incidental to their business i.e. Agency contract values are no more than 5% of annual turnover, and which are seeking to deliver Education & Vocational Training services to only their own employees, employees of their subcontractors and/or employees of organisations which are 100% in their supply chain. The Agency may, however, download the accounts from Companies House in order to confirm exempt status. The Agency will only fund organisations that can demonstrate they are financially robust.

Organisations that are exempt from submitting financial statements must attach a document to question [ROTO-FM- 08A] outlining the reasons for the exemption – without an attachment, the e-tendering portal will not allow you to submit a response. A template can be found on our website <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/>

Compliance

In this section we are seeking an assurance to determine your compliance with legislative requirements associated with public sector procurement. Such as fraud, [tax](#), outstanding court action and any investigations you have been subject to.

These are in line with the [Public Contracts Regulations 2006](#) which set out the criteria for the rejection of organisations. We need to ensure that only organisations suitable for us to fund and/or invite to tender will pass the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway.

IMPORTANT:

Responses to certain questions in this section can incur an automatic failure of the online questionnaire and therefore result in an overall application status of 'Not Approved'.

NOTE: If you or your organisation has an outstanding debt with us, your organisation will not enter the Register until the debt has been cleared and a resolution has been reached.

Quality

In this section we are looking to test the quality of service you are able to deliver for us including questions around [Ofsted](#).

NOTE: From September 2012 Ofsted developed a new common inspection framework, in which there were changes to the Categories. If you have been inspected from September 2012 then select the options available for Questions ROTO-QU-03, ROTO-QU-04, ROTO-QU-05. If you were inspected prior to the Ofsted common inspection framework “category changes” and you were assessed as Satisfactory at that time, select option C.

The **matrix** standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. More information on the matrix Standard can be found here <http://matrixstandard.com/the-standard/the-standard/>

Awarding Organisation Status

In this section we ask questions about your awarding organisation status. In order to receive funding from us organisations must have the necessary awarding organisation status to deliver the qualifications we fund. More information can be found here: [Regulatory actions and interventions - Ofqual](#).

Information Commissioner's Officer (<http://www.ico.org.uk/>)

We require you to be registered for the processing of personal data for educational purposes.

Insurance

In order to receive funding from us you must have adequate insurance.

Learner health, safety and welfare

In order to receive funding from us you must have appropriate and adequate processes in place to ensure learner health, safety and welfare. More information can be found here: [Students and young people](#)

Equality

In order to receive funding from us you must have appropriate and adequate internal systems to comply with the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Social Value – the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

When evaluating your application we will take account of the above Act. The Act requires procurers of public services to consider how what is to be procured may improve social, environmental and economic well being of the relevant area in order to obtain best value. More information on the Act can be found here: [Procurement policy note 10/12: The Public Services \(Social Value\) Act 2012 - Publications - GOV.UK](#).

We also expect organisations to take account of the government's [Greening Government Commitments](#) in the delivery of our contracts.

Procurement

The 2014-20 European Social Fund (ESF) places greater responsibility on Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to develop and lead on local skills strategies.

The Agency will provide a number of services to assist LEPs deliver ESF provision, and more information about the ESF and LEPS can be found here:

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/esf/>

In the future the Agency may procure on behalf of LEPs, if you would like to be considered for this we ask you to indicate this in your response. You are also required to select the Core City and or Wider LEP areas that you wish to deliver funding in. More information about these areas can be found here: <http://www.lepnetwork.org.uk/leps.html>

Declarations

We ask you to confirm that you are giving us true and accurate information. This is the point at which you are validating that all your information is correct.

Certain declarations will relate to and reinforce the themes identified throughout the online questionnaire.

You are asked to confirm you will re-submit your application if a change is made to either the settings or questionnaire area of the live PQQ.

The Chief Executive reserves the right to remove any organisation from the Register; organisations will be told the reason for their removal.

Authorisation of submission

We ask you to state the name of the individual who is authorised to sign your submission on behalf of your organisation. An electronic signature (typed) here will be acceptable.

Submitting attachments

If you would like to upload more than one file, for example in response to [ROTO-FM-08a], you can do this by submitting a zip file. A zip file is an archiving system that allows you to pack together one, or more, files into a single file or folder. If you choose to upload a zip file please ensure that this is **not password protected** when it is uploaded.

You must also consider the format of the files you submit. For example PDF and Word documents are widely recognisable formats however we are unable to open Mac equivalent files or extensions.

12. Financial Health Assessment

- **Organisations with a current direct funding agreement with the Chief Executive of Skills Funding for the delivery of education and training**

There is **no** requirement to submit financial statements for the purposes of the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway process if you have already submitted, or are in the process of submitting these, as part of your funding agreement with us. You must upload a note in the space reserved for uploading financial statements in the online questionnaire to confirm that you have a current funding agreement. **We have provided a template on our website**

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/> . However, if you have newer financial statements filed with Companies House that we have not yet seen, you **must** upload them now or you will fail the Financial Health assessment.

- **Organisations already on the Register but without a current direct funding agreement with the Chief Executive of Skills Funding for the delivery of education and vocational training**

If we have already seen your most recent statutory financial statements you do not need to resubmit them. However, you will be required to submit a financial health exemption form informing us of this. The form is available on our website

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/> . If you have newer ones which have been filed at Companies House which we have not yet reviewed, you must upload them to the reserved space in the online questionnaire.

- **Organisations not currently on the Register of Training Organisations**

You must upload your latest full statutory financial statements in the reserved space in the online questionnaire.

Required Documentation

For **all** organisations applying to the Register: If you are not submitting any financial statements, you must include a note to explain why (e.g. because we have already assessed your most recent accounts or you consider yourself to be exempt). For all other organisations, the documentation we require is as follows:

- **You are required to supply your latest full statutory financial statements** (not abbreviated accounts). Please supply the full accounts, not just an extract or selected pages.

- Statutory financial statements are those prepared using generally accepted accounting principles in accordance with the legislative requirements of the organisation type. For example, a limited company's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts. A registered charity's accounts are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission.
- **If you are not required to publish statutory financial statements**, you should supply a 12 month profit and loss account, balance sheet and related notes or narrative and breakdowns of balances such as creditors and borrowings.
- **If you are part of a wider company group** you must provide the latest financial statements of the UK Ultimate Parent company as well as your own full financial statements. In assessing the financial health of an organisation that is part of a group of companies the Agency will consider the financial standing of the group as a whole.
- **If your organisation is a subsidiary company** you should also consider whether submitting a parental guarantee together with your organisation's and parent company accounts would enhance your application. The guarantee form is on our website at: [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Parental Guarantee form Jan 2013.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Parental%20Guarantee%20form%20Jan%202013.pdf)
- **If you are a parent company that does not produce consolidated accounts**, please also supply the financial statements of your non-dormant subsidiaries for review.
- **If you are unable to supply statutory financial statements because you have not traded for a sufficient period**, you should supply your first 12 months forecast figures including management accounts to date. As a minimum this should consist of a profit and loss account, balance sheet, cashflow forecast and narrative of key assumptions made.
- **If you are a new business not yet trading**, you must supply a fully costed business plan which as a minimum should consist of a 12 month budgeted profit and loss account, balance sheet, cashflow forecast and narrative of key assumptions made, indicating clearly the specific period the plan relates to.
- **If you believe that you may be exempt** because Agency funding would be incidental to your business, i.e. Agency contract values no more than 5% of annual turnover, please still submit accounts to demonstrate this.
- **If you have previously applied to the Register with non-statutory documents**, such as a business plan or management accounts, then you must now provide full financial statements if available or updated management accounts and forecasts.
- **If you are a sole trader or partnership** we require the full accounts. These should consist of, as a minimum, profit and loss account, balance sheet and notes to the accounts.

If insufficient or incomplete financial statements are uploaded to the online questionnaire, or **if you do not submit the financial statements most recently submitted to Companies House**, you will **FAIL** the Financial Health Assessment and therefore the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway.

Organisations must ensure the Agency can evaluate the information you submit to us as you will not be able to resubmit information after the Register closes. Therefore, please ensure that it is in the form of a Word, Excel or pdf document and do not "password protect" your information – if we cannot access the information it will lead to a fail.

Assessment of Financial Statements

Your financial statements will be assessed according to the criteria specified in the financial health assessment guidance available on our website at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/finance/financialassurance/financialhealthassessment>.

Financial health is a measure of financial status in terms of your financial performance and ability to meet ongoing financial commitments.

In common with other organisations, we assess your financial health to help determine the extent to which funding may be awarded. We do this to help manage risk and also to provide an assessment of your ability to service and grow provision of a suitable standard. The aim is to safeguard public funds together with our interests and those of you and your learners.

Where you pass the financial health assessment we will give your organisation a recommended funding limit. The Chief Executive will normally only award your organisation funding up to this limit.

You will be given an initial grade assessment of Outstanding, Good, Satisfactory or Inadequate; only organisations assessed as Outstanding, Good or Satisfactory will be deemed to have passed the financial health assessment.

The outcome of your financial health assessment is final. Additional information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date. You must ensure the information you submit is current, correct and demonstrates financial performance and your ability to meet ongoing financial requirements.

If your organisation has been assessed as a FAIL on the Financial Health Assessment, this is because:

- insufficient financial information was provided;
- the financial statements submitted were not the latest ones available;
- the financial health assessment produced an Inadequate grade.

A grade assessment of Inadequate for an existing provider, funded via Financial Memorandum or Conditions of Funding, will trigger the Provider Risk Assessment and Management process; we will issue a Notice of Concern and they will enter stage 1 of the intervention escalation process.

Organisations that applied to the October 2013 opening

If you PASSED the Financial Health Assessment:

Please do not resubmit the same accounts or financial information that we have already assessed. Instead, upload a note to say that you have already sent us your latest figures. However, if you have newer financial statements which were not available when the Register was open in October 2013, these must now be submitted. For registered companies we will check submission dates against Companies House records.

If you FAILED the Financial Health Assessment:

Inadequate Financial Health – If you failed because your figures scored Inadequate on our financial health calculation, please consider submitting newer information in the form of newer accounts, management accounts, forecasts etc. You should also consider including a parental guarantee.

13. Feedback (Step 5)

We will provide written feedback to all organisations following evaluation of the Online Questionnaire and the Financial Health Assessment, which will be compliant with EU procurement regulations. This feedback will be provided via a message sent from the Bravo message board to the email address(es) you have registered against your Bravo account. You will receive an email notification that you have a message on Bravo, and you will then need to log in to access the message.

Your feedback will set out:

- Overall Status of Application - APPROVED or NOT APPROVED to enter the Register
- Outcome of the online questionnaire – PASS or FAIL
- Your score for each section of the online questionnaire, in particular the areas which resulted in a negative assessment if applicable, and also the total score.
- Outcome of the financial health assessment – PASS or FAIL
- Financial Health Assessment grade

If you fail the online questionnaire, we regret that we are unable to provide you with further information about the specific questions you failed on. If we did this, it could assist you with any subsequent attempt to complete the Gateway as it is likely the successful response would become self-evident. This would compromise the open, competitive and transparent nature of the due diligence process.

If you fail the financial health assessment organisations are advised that the Agency will not accept supplementary financial information in support of your application after the closing date. The Agency will not enter into a dialogue about your submission and we will not provide feedback outside of this process.

THERE IS NO RIGHT OF APPEAL. THE OUTCOME OF THE EVALUATION IS FINAL

14. Help and support

All questions or queries in relation to the Register or the Gateway, in the first instance should be submitted via the 'Messages' function within the on the e-tendering portal.

If you are not registered on the e-tendering portal, or have a query outside of the Gateway opening, please direct it to Registerhelp@sfa.bis.gov.uk quoting your UKPRN in the subject field. This email address is solely for generic questions relating to the Register.

Please do not contact us about the process using any other method. If you do, the probity of the Gateway process may be put at risk. We will not respond to queries raised via other methods, such as telephone, and we will advise you to re-route your question via the e-tendering portal.

We aim to respond to your query within two working days of receipt however, during busy periods in the Register process there may be a delay in our response. We may also cease to respond to queries two working days before the closing date for the completion of the Online Questionnaire

When answering questions, we may choose to anonymise your query and publish the response to it as part of our regular updates to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

The Agency will make every reasonable effort to address applicant's queries and provide clarification on feedback, responding fully within the context of the contents of this document within the rules that govern procurement.

We will not respond to queries regarding a past Due Diligence iteration when the new Due Diligence Assurance Gateway reopens, this includes responding to previous message boards relating to earlier Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQ) .

15. Resubmissions

If you decide to re-apply, we advise you to review your previous responses and consider your commercial and financial status, especially if your situation/information has not changed since the previous submission.

If you were unsuccessful with your previous submission and you are a direct contract holder, or a subcontractor with an aggregate contract value of £100,000 or more, then you are expected to take action at this opening. This opening is considered as your final opportunity to apply and failure to enter the Register will result in us terminating our agreement with you, and in the case of subcontractors we will contact your lead provider(s) to do the same. In the meantime organisations will be suspended from growth and excluded from future procurements.

Deemed 'Not Approved' due to failing the Online Questionnaire

If you were deemed as 'Not Approved' due to unsatisfactory responses to the online questionnaire, the responses you provide at this opening must be based on the actual circumstances of your organisation.

Deemed 'Not Approved' due to failing the Financial Health Assessment

If you were deemed as 'Not Approved' because you failed the financial health assessment, you cannot pass until a subsequent set of financial statements is available and is subject to a successful financial health assessment. However, where new financial statements are unavailable, there are documents that can be submitted for consideration but organisations should remember that the Agency does not compromise on the financial health assessment.

Where the financial statements of a provider have resulted in the failure of the financial health assessment and new financial statements are unavailable, it is recommended that your organisation reviews the [Due Diligence Assurance Gateway Additional Financial Information](#) document.

Please find below additional supporting financial information which may be submitted.

Prior to their next accounting year end:

- Business plan forecast for the current year including:
 - Income and expenditure forecast for the year (monthly not required)
 - Balance sheet forecast for the year (monthly not required)
 - Cash flow forecast for the year (monthly where available)
 - Detailed narrative to substantiate each of the above financial forecasts.
- Management accounts showing the actual performance to date including Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet.

If their next accounting year end has passed:

- Where the submission is after the provider's year end but prior to the formal financial statements being available:
 - Draft financial statements for that year
- Or where draft financial statements are unavailable:
 - Final management accounts for that year incorporating income and expenditure, balance sheet and commentary

Director or Parental Guarantee

The provider may also wish to consider providing a Director or Parental guarantee which will be considered alongside the other financial information supplied.

16. Removal of organisations from the Register

The Chief Executive reserves the right to remove any provider from the Register. The grounds for removal of organisations reflect the circumstances described in the Skills Funding Agency's Funding Higher Risk Providers and Subcontractors Policy and Provider Risk Assessment and Management Policy:

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Funding_Higher-risk_Providers_and_Subcontractors.pdf

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/sfa/Provider_Risk_Assessment_and_Management_-_July_2012.pdf

If we find you have made false declarations in your Gateway responses you will be removed from the Register.

17. Company Name and Name Changes

The name listed on your Bravo account should be the full legal name (not acronym's or abbreviations) of your organisation as registered with Companies House (if applicable). This in turn should be the name listed on UKRLP against your UKPRN.

If you are a **sole trader/partnership**, you need to register as 'Your name trading as Your Business Name' e.g. John Smith trading as John Smith Training.

Any applications where the (full) legal name and UKPRN do not match as per UKRLP, will incur an automatic fail.

If there is a change to your company name only, with no other legal or organisational change, your details on the e-tendering portal must be amended accordingly.

If your organisation's name on the e-tendering portal is not correct and/or does not match the name against your UKPRN, it is important that you update this information depending on your relationship with the Agency.

If you already have a funding agreement with us

You need to inform your Relationship Manager, and the Register Team will review and action the name change on the e-tendering portal. You need to notify the name change by emailing Registerhelp@sfa.bis.gov.uk or sending a message via the e-tendering portal with the subject 'organisation name change' in the subject box.

You will then be requested to complete a name change declaration form and provide evidence in the form of Companies House and UKRLP certificates showing your correct organisation name and UKPRN.

Once the evidence has been received and validated, the Register Team will authorise Bravo Solutions to make the name change. Subcontractors should contact the Relationship Manager of their lead provider.

If you are entered on the Register and do not hold a current funding agreement with us

If you are not a current contract holder and your organisation's name changes with no other legal or organisational change, you must notify the Register Team by emailing Registerhelp@sfa.bis.gov.uk with 'organisation name change' in the subject box.

You will then be requested to complete a name change declaration form and provide evidence in the form of Companies House and UKRLP certificates showing your correct organisation name and UKPRN.

Once the evidence has been received and validated, the Register Team will authorise Bravo Solutions to make the name change.

Organisations should ensure that any name changes are also updated against their UKPRN so that it continues to match the name on the Register.

Please be aware that organisations are listed on the published Register according to the name they have registered on the e-tendering portal, which should be their full legal name. If you are already listed on the Register at the point that your name changes, it will be amended when the latest version of the Register is next published.

18. Accompanying Guidance Documents

Guidance documents listed below are aimed at supporting organisations and can be found on our website: <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/>

Quick Reference Support Guide for the e-tendering portal

For technical and operational hints and tips on how to navigate the Bravo e-tendering portal to access and complete the Online Questionnaire.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Examples of Frequently Asked Questions that we receive in relation to the Register and the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway which we hope will assist organisations with their application to the Register.

19. Freedom of Information

We are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Under the provision of the FOIA, we are required to provide information we hold in response to a request made in accordance with the FOIA. This includes information about third parties. Organisations are referred to the Freedom of Information Policy available on our website at <http://www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk>

If you believe that some of your submission is classed as Commercial in Confidence, you should advise us of this fact via a message on the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway message board. We will then check the submission and if appropriate (under FOI legislation) we will seek a redaction to not publish that particular information if requested.

20. Appeals and Complaints

There is **no right of appeal** to the decision reached on each organisation's Due Diligence Assurance Gateway submission.

If you are unhappy with the outcome, the Agency's complaints procedure is available at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus/complaints/>.

21. Links to helpful information

To assist your application the following links may be useful:

Bravo e-tendering portal – <https://skillsfundingagency.bravosolution.co.uk>

Copy of the Chief Executive's terms and conditions
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingdocuments/>

European Social Funding [Skills Funding Agency - Providers - Our programmes - European Social Fund - European Social Fund](#)

Funding Higher Risk Providers and Subcontractors
http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Funding_Higher-risk_Providers_and_Subcontractors.pdf

Funding Rules - <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingrules/>. Note:
Updated annually.

Health and Safety Executive - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Provider Risk Assessment and Management
http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/sfa/Provider_Risk_Assessment_and_Management_-_July_2012.pdf

Skills Funding Agency Register of Training Organisations:
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register>

Skills Investment Statement - <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/11-1374-skills-investment-statement-2011-2014.pdf>

List of declared subcontractors –
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/Subcontracting/>

Matrix standard <http://matrixstandard.com/the-standard/the-standard/>

National Apprenticeship Division - <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/About-Us/National-Apprenticeship-Service.aspx>

Ofsted - <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>

Ofqual - <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/>

UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills - <http://www.bis.gov.uk/>

UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) - <http://www.ukrlp.co.uk/>

24 + Advanced Learning Loans - [24+ Advanced Learning Loans](#)

Read me First – February 2014

The Register Team

22. Definitions Appendix

Academy – is a School directly funded by Central Government (specifically the Department for Education) and independent of direct control by Local Government

Business continuity – the regular activities performed by an organisation to ensure that critical business functions remain available to customers, suppliers, regulators, and other entities that must have access to those functions.

Batch – Provider Batch is a web based system which enables providers to enter learner data on their own MI system and then upload the learner data themselves to the Data Collections web portal.

Business Continuity Process – an organisation's response planning that sets out how the business will operate following an incident and how it expects to return to 'business as usual' in the quickest possible time afterwards.

Consortium – a consortium is an association of two or more organisations engaged in a business enterprise bound by a legally binding, written and signed agreement, which explicitly requires that each organisation that is a member of the consortium is jointly and severally liable with the consortium for the obligations of the consortium and the wrongful acts or omissions of a co-member of the consortium.

Continuous Improvement Process – the process to demonstrate how regular small changes and improvements to the service delivered are implemented controlled and recorded.

European Social Fund (ESF) – the European Social Fund was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union (EU) and so help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects. As one of the EU's structural funds, ESF seeks to reduce differences in prosperity across the EU and enhance economic and social cohesion.

Financial Statements

- Where available, audited financial statements which are submitted to Companies House. The financial statements as a whole are required; an extract is insufficient.
- Where an organisation produces abbreviated financial statements, we require the full accounts from which the abbreviated accounts are extracted. These should consist of, as a minimum, profit and loss account with turnover figure, balance sheet and notes to the accounts.
- Where the company has taken advantage of audit exemption, we require the financial statements as a whole; an extract is insufficient.

General Further Education College – an institution conducted by a corporation established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

Joint venture – a joint venture is a legal entity that is owned or governed (for example in the case of a company limited by guarantee) by two or more organisations for the purpose of submitting a common bid for funding.

Notice of Concern – issued to a college that has fallen below standards in relation to financial health, financial control, Ofsted judgement or Minimum Levels of Performance.

POL – Provider On Line is a web based system which enables providers to enter learner data directly in the Data Collections web portal.

Skills Investment Strategy – owned by BIS, this sets out how we will reduce bureaucracy; remove unnecessary interference from intermediary agencies whether local, regional or national; streamline the organisational skills landscape; remove unnecessary regulation and introduce new freedoms and flexibilities. Collectively, these measures will ensure the sector is better able to meet the needs of individuals, businesses and local communities.

Small or medium sized enterprise (SME) - Please see EU definition here: [What is an SME? - Small and medium sized enterprises \(SME\) - Enterprise and Industry](#)

For statistical purposes, the **Department of Trade and Industry** uses the following definitions:

- micro firm: 0 - 9 employees
- small firm: 0 - 49 employees (includes micro)
- medium firm: 50 - 249 employees

Statutory Financial Statements – are those prepared using generally accepted accounting principles in accordance with the legislative requirements of the organisation type. For example, a limited company's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts. A registered charity's accounts are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission.

Third Sector – the Third Sector has been defined by HM Treasury as organisations which:

- Are non-governmental.
- Are “value driven” in that they are primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental and cultural objectives rather than make a profit per se.
- Reinvest surpluses, principally to further their social, environmental or cultural objectives.

Training Provider – for the purposes of this document, colleges, local authorities, private training organisations and employers are all identified as training organisations.

UKRLP – the UK Register of Learning Providers. This is a database that is a register of the legal entity details of learning providers in the United Kingdom. It is designed to link together existing data sources on providers and give access to the information to learners, employers, providers and Government agencies.

UKPRN – UK Provider Reference Number. This is a unique eight-digit number assigned to all providers on verification. The number does not provide endorsement by UKRLP.

UPIN – a UPIN is the Unique Provider Identification Number. This is the unique number allocated by the Skills Funding Agency to each individual training organisation it holds a contract with.

Contents

1. [About the Skills Funding Agency](#)
2. [The Services We Fund](#)
3. [The Register of Training Organisations](#)
4. [Register Refresh](#)
5. [Organisational Changes](#)
6. [Publication of the Register](#)
7. [Subcontractors](#)
8. [Due Diligence Assurance Gateway \(Gateway\)](#)
9. [The Application Process](#)
10. [Evaluating the online Questionnaire](#)
11. [Structure of the online Questionnaire](#)
12. [Financial Health Assessment](#)
13. [Feedback](#)
14. [Help and support](#)
15. [Resubmissions](#)
16. [Removal of organisations from the Register](#)
17. [Company name change](#)
18. [Accompanying Guidance Documents](#)
19. [Freedom of Information](#)
20. [Appeals and Complaints](#)
21. [Links to helpful information](#)
22. [Definitions Appendix](#)

1. About the Skills Funding Agency

The Skills Funding Agency (the Agency) is a partner organisation of the [Department for Business, Innovation and Skills](#) (BIS). Our job is to fund and promote adult further education (FE) and skills training in England, including [Traineeships](#) and [Apprenticeships](#), in a way that supports economic growth.

What we do

We deliver £3.357 billion in 2014-15 of skills training through contracts with over 1,000 colleges, private training organisations and employers. Our highly effective supply chain means FE meets local need in the most cost-effective way, reaching into every sector of the economy. We are also a co-financing body for European Social Fund.

What are our priorities for purchasing?

Each year BIS sets out its policy priorities for the skills sector in a Skills Funding Statement (SFS), detailing the overall level of funding available to the sector to deliver the policy intentions of government. The Agency's task is to implement BIS's policy, as set out in the SFS, consistent with the Chief Executive's statutory duty to promote and secure reasonable adult FE in England. To achieve this, we influence and support the capacity and quality of the FE system so we can fund the expected demand for high-quality skills training.

A link to the [Skills Funding Statement \(SFS\)](#) can be found at:
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills>

A link to the Priorities and Funding letter for 2013-14 can be found at:
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/SkillsFundingAgency-P-130089.pdf>

2. The Services We Fund

We fund delivery of adult education and training services including:

- Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- ESOL
- Skills for life
- Workplace learning
- Pre-employment training
- Offender Learning and Skills Service
- Community Learning
- Employer Ownership Funding

The Chief Executive enters into funding agreements with colleges, employers and training organisations that can deliver one or more of these services. We commission education and training services based on government priorities and the associated funding made available to us.

Some of the delivery we commission will include education and training funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). We do not use a separate process for procuring this ESF funded provision, therefore organisations interested in delivering this provision will need to be listed on the Register of Training Organisations. This may include procurement on behalf of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs).

Occasionally, funding becomes available for initiatives outside of the planned procurement cycle. Entry on the Register means you will be invited into our procurements. The Agency will only invite organisations to compete for funding who have:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Stage 1 | Successfully entered the Register of Training Organisations and have, |
| Stage 2 | Successfully demonstrated they have the ability to deliver the education and vocational skills training service we wish to tender for. |

If, funding becomes available for new provision which we have not tested, to ensure we are equitable to all organisations we will invite all those organisations listed on the Register of Training Organisations to tender for this service.

Please note that at the time of publication, the policies and programmes referred to in this document are correct. However, this information may be subject to change and updating as appropriate. We recommend you check our website for the latest information <http://www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk>.

You should also look at the qualifications we fund currently fund <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/qcf/>.

Information on apprenticeships can be found here <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/types-of-apprenticeships.aspx>

3. The Register of Training Organisations (the Register)

Introduction

The Register is a single register of organisations that have passed our Due Diligence Assurance Gateway (Gateway), so are eligible to enter into our procurements and have demonstrated they are financially robust. The Register is our only market entry point for those organisations wishing to be considered to deliver education and vocational skills training services for the Chief Executive of Skills Funding (Chief Executive).

Entry on the Register means you will become **eligible** to receive funding. Entry on the Register does **not guarantee** you will receive funding or a contract. If you decide to continue in our procurement process you will be tested to determine if your organisation has the capability to tender in the future. You will be evaluated against the provision type you selected in your Gateway online questionnaire submission.

Organisations that do not want to progress to procurement and compete for direct funding but want to appear on the Register must select this in their Gateway on-line questionnaire.

Terminology

For the purposes of this document:

- Organisations are identified as Colleges, local authorities, private training organisations, employers, public sector bodies and all those organisations who deliver education and training funded by the Chief Executive.
- The Register means the Register of Training Organisations;
- Gateway means the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway;
- We, us, the Agency, the Chief Executive, refers to the Chief Executive of Skills Funding;
- Lead Provider means an organisation that has the direct funding agreement with the Chief Executive;
- Learners mean persons for whom education and training is provided and includes employees.
- Subcontractors mean organisations which have a subcontract with a Lead Provider to deliver education and training funded by the Chief Executive.

Background

The procedure we use when procuring education and vocational skills training services is consistent with EU procurement principles. The first stage is the Gateway to ensure that only suitable organisations are invited into our procurements.

The Gateway includes both financial and technical assessments which are designed to test that organisations are commercially sound in these areas and their ability to deliver to the required standard has been established before they are invited into our procurements.

Purpose

The Register has three distinct purposes:

1. To enable us to confirm that organisations with which we have an existing funding agreement for the delivery of education and vocational training, are suitable for us to continue to fund.
2. To provide us with a list of organisations that are eligible to progress in our procurement process and if successful, be invited to tender in the future for the provision of education and vocational training services.
3. To enable us to support the sector in subcontracting provision, by requiring subcontractors intending to enter subcontracts of £100K or more in aggregate, to pass the Gateway prior to entering into any subcontracting arrangements.

Appearing on the Register of Training Organisations

Please note organisations that pass the Gateway and enter the Register will **not** receive a registration number and are **not** entitled to use our logo.¹

Appearing on the Register also does not imply that we endorse you as an organisation and it is not a 'kite mark' nor 'award'.

As a Government department, we do not provide references for organisations.

4. Register Refresh

Your appearance on the Register is subject to you continuing to pass the Gateway at set refresh points. It is a **funding requirement** that you refresh your Register information when required.

All organisations listed on the Register must refresh their application when requested to do so.

Organisations will need to refresh both their Online Questionnaire and resubmit their latest full Financial Statements.

As per paragraph 395 of the Funding Rules 2013/14 you must successfully complete the Gateway when required as part of our refresh process. If you fail, or do not apply at the refresh, you must apply at the next opening of the Gateway. During this period your organisation:

- will not be listed on the Register
- will not be eligible to take part in tenders
- will not be considered for growth cases

NOTE: The above also applies to subcontractors with an aggregate contract value of £100,000 or more. We will suspend any growth cases submitted by the lead provider in relation to the subcontractor. This is because the delivery model may not be working effectively and funds could be at risk. If the subcontractor fails the Gateway after their second opportunity to apply, the lead provider will be required to end their subcontract.

We will contact organisations to advise them when they are required to next refresh their information.

The last refresh was in October 2013, those organisations that have failed to enter the Register, have one further opportunity to comply with this funding requirement to refresh their information at the February 2014 opening.

¹ Guidance on logos and design can be found at:

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/logoanddesignguidance/>

5. Organisational Changes

If your organisation changes its legal structure you must inform us immediately via the relevant message board on the e-tendering portal. You will then be required to apply to the Register at the next opportunity in line with your new legal structure and/or status.

6. Publication of the Register

We will publish information about the Register, including the Register itself, on our website at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/>

Timetable

The timetable for this opening of the Gateway is set out in the table below.

Launch date and Register opens	21 February 2014
Deadline for completion and submission of online questionnaire	28 March 2014
Feedback provided from Skills Funding Agency to provider	May 2014
Register published	May 2014

IMPORTANT: Dates for feedback and the publication of the Register are a guide only. Exact dates depend on the volume of applications we receive.

7. Subcontractors

Funding Rule 2013/14

It is a funding requirement that all subcontractors in our supply chain with an aggregate contract value of £100,000 and above enter the Register. In line with Para 403 of the Funding Rules 2013/14, from 1 August 2013 subcontractors must enter the Register **prior** to agreeing contracts with lead providers that would take them beyond the £100,000 threshold. The Agency understands subcontractors change during the contract year but lead providers must not contract with an organisation until they successfully entered the Register. Failure to comply may result in us contacting the lead provider(s) to request they terminate the agreement.

8. Due Diligence Assurance Gateway (Gateway)

Introduction

The Gateway process consists of two distinct parts:

1. Online questionnaire
2. Financial Health Assessment.

Organisations must check they have completed and submitted their online questionnaire to us accurately and they are happy with the content.

There is no right of appeal. The outcome of the Gateway evaluation is final.

Applications should reflect the whole of an organisation, and not just a particular department or individual. Subcontractors must apply in their own right and not using the information or Bravo account of their lead provider(s). Similarly, lead providers should not apply on behalf of their subcontractor(s). Submission of applications should be agreed at the appropriate level in your organisation before they are submitted to us.

Organisations that applied to the Register Refresh in October 2013 will have most of their responses to the online questionnaire pre populated. However, we have made some changes to the questions, and these will not be pre populated.

NOTE: Changes for February 2014 listed below:

	Question	Comment
2.5.2	ROTO-CO-01	New question - will not be pre-populated if you applied at the Refresh
2.2.13	ROTO-OS-11a	
2.2.14	ROTO-OS-11b	
2.2.15	ROTO-OS-11c	
2.5.8	ROTO-CO-05a.	
2.9.3	ROTO-QQ-02-SUPP	
2.9.5	ROTO-QQ-04a	
2.9.6	ROTO-QQ-04b	
2.1.12	ROTO-OD-07	Wording has been amended for clarity - the response to this question will be pre-populated if you applied at the Refresh. Please ensure your response is current.
2.1.13	ROTO-OD-08	
2.1.14	ROTO-OD-09a	
2.1.15	ROTO-OD-09b	
2.10.6	ROTO-DE-06	
2.2.17	ROTO-OS-13	
2.3.2	ROTO-DM-02	
2.4.1	ROTO-FM-01	
2.4.2	ROTO-FM-02a	
2.4.3	ROTO-FM-02b	

2.4.5	ROTO-FM-03b
2.4.6	ROTO-FM-04
2.4.7	ROTO-FM-05
2.4.8	ROTO-FM-06
2.4.9	ROTO-FM-07
2.4.11	ROTO-FM-08b
2.5.4	ROTO-CO-03
2.5.6	ROTO-CO-04a
2.5.12	ROTO-CO-07b
2.5.14	ROTO-CO-08b
2.6.1	ROTO-QU-01a
2.6.5	ROTO-QU-03
2.6.6	ROTO-QU-04
2.6.7	ROTO-QU-05
2.6.9	ROTO-QU-07
2.7.2	ROTO-AO-01b
2.7.3	ROTO-AO-02a
2.7.4	ROTO-AO-02b
2.7.5	ROTO-AO-03a
2.7.6	ROTO-AO-03b
2.7.7	ROTO-AO-04
2.9.1	ROTO-QQ-01

Organisations that did not apply in October will **not** have their responses for the online questionnaire pre-populated.

The Financial Health Assessment is based on the financial statements uploaded as part of completing the questionnaire.

Your responses to the online questionnaire will be evaluated and your financial statements assessed in order to determine whether you pass or fail the Gateway. You must pass both parts in order to be approved to enter the Register.

Only those organisations that are able to demonstrate they are financially robust will enter the Register.

Before you start the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway process

Before making an application you should ensure that:

- Your organisation is a legal entity.
- Your organisation is included on the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) and has a valid UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN).

NOTE: The name listed on UKRLP should be the full legal name as registered with Companies House (if applicable).

You also need to check:

- Important Documents which can be found on our webpage,
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register>.
- Funding Rules for 2013/14
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingrules/>
- Funding agreements for 2013/14
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingdocuments/>

Who should complete the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway?

It is a funding requirement that all organisations in our supply chain, either direct contract holders who receive funding from the Chief Executive or subcontractors with an aggregate contract value of £100,000² or above must be listed on the Register. We only fund organisations listed on the Register.

Your organisation should complete the Gateway if it is not already listed on the Register and one or more of the following apply:

- You have an existing funding agreement with us for the delivery of education and vocational training.
- You are an organisation that wants to be selected to compete in future tenders for education and vocational skills training provision and wish to hold a direct contract with us.
- You wish to enter into a subcontract with an existing lead provider for the delivery of education and vocational skills training, where the aggregate value of the contract would be £100,000 or more.

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) Direct Grant Large Employers

It is a funding requirement that large employers who are in receipt of, or are in the process of applying for grant funding from NAS, apply to the Gateway and enter the Register. Please contact your National Apprenticeship Service Account Manager for advice before completing the Gateway.

How many times can I apply to the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway?

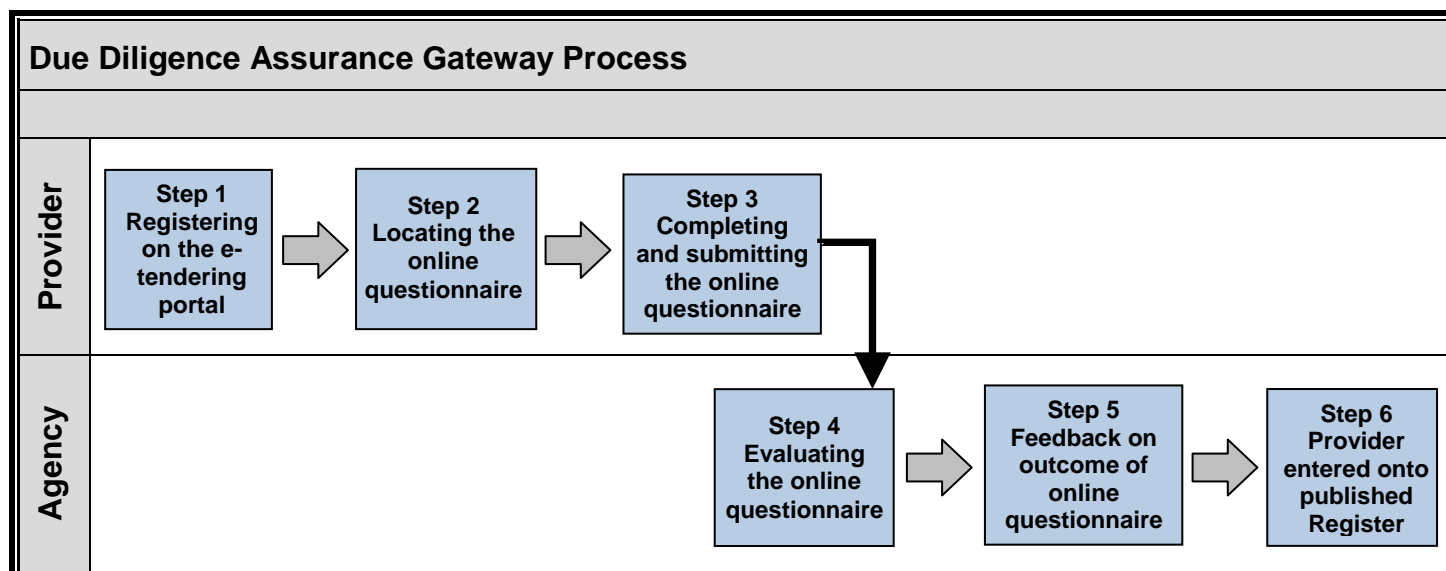
Organisations who do not have a contract and are not in our supply chain, but wish to be considered for a direct contract and be invited into procurement, are not restricted on the number of opportunities to apply. However, an organisation that repeatedly fails the Gateway needs to consider if continuing to apply would be appropriate for them. If your organisation keeps failing the Gateway we would advise applicants to reflect on their

² According to the latest and therefore current version of the Agency's Subcontracting Register
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/Subcontracting>

commercial and financial status before they apply again; especially if their circumstances have not changed since their previous submission.

9. The Application Process

The process for the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway is as follows:



Please see the accompanying *Quick Reference Support Guide for the e-tendering portal* for technical information for Steps 1-3, which can be found at:

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/>

Registering on the Bravo e-Tendering Portal (Step 1)

Organisations which have yet to register with Bravo on the e-tendering portal will need to do this in order to access the questionnaire. Registration can be done at any time, even if the Gateway is not open. More information can be found here: [Guidance note BRAVO email account](#)

If your organisation has already registered on the e-tendering portal, then you do not need to do it again. You can use your current username and password.

If you are not sure whether your organisation already has a username and password, please contact help@bravosolution.co.uk rather than attempting to re-register.

The name of the organisation you enter on your Bravo account for e-tendering portal must be your organisation's full legal name, as registered with Companies House (if applicable) and which also matches your entry on UKRLP. This will ensure there is consistency with the legal name and UKPRN listed across Bravo, Companies House and UKRLP. This is critical as your organisation will appear on the Register under the name the application is made in, which is determined by the name against the Bravo account.

If we cannot match your organisation's name on the portal to its legal name, you may fail the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your e-tendering portal registration details are current and accurate. It is important you ensure the email address you register on the e-tendering portal is monitored as this is how we will communicate to you. You need to maintain and monitor your email address on the e-tendering portal.

We will only communicate with organisations about the Gateway via the e-tendering portal built in messaging service. This directs alerts and messages to the email address you specify. Once you have registered on the e-tendering portal, you may wish to add more than one email address to your registration details so that more than one person can access any alerts and messages we send.

NOTE: All the email addresses added to the e-tendering portal will receive the alerts and messages we send.

NOTE: Registering your details on the e-tendering portal does not mean you have made a submission to the Gateway.

Locating the Online Questionnaire (Step 2)

The Gateway's online questionnaire is available at our e-tendering portal <https://skillsfundingagency.bravosolution.co.uk>.

Completing and Submitting the Online Questionnaire (Step 3)

Organisations that applied to the Register Refresh in October 2013 will have the majority of their responses to the online questionnaire pre populated. **However** we have made some changes to the questions for February 2014 and these **will not** be pre populated.

Organisations that did not apply in October 2013 will **not** have their responses for the online questionnaire pre-populated.

You need to refer to the Definitions Appendix at the end of this document before completing the online questionnaire.

The majority of the questions are prefixed with a **red asterisk (*)** because they are mandatory. If you do not answer all of them, the e-tendering portal will not allow you to publish your response and we will not be able to evaluate your questionnaire and you will fail the Gateway.

REMEMBER:

- You should leave plenty of time between submitting your online questionnaire and the closing date in case you experience difficulties that you subsequently need time to resolve.
- Where we ask a closed question and then subsequently ask for additional text based information in support of your response to that closed question, you will need to provide this additional information as appropriate to the response you have selected.

- We reserve the right to modify, amend or provide further clarification on the online questionnaire at any time prior to the deadline for completion, by notification either direct to each organisation or as a broadcast message to all organisations.
 - Where such modifications constitute a significant change, we may, at our discretion, extend the deadline for completion of the online questionnaire.
 - If there are any changes, a document will be published alongside the opening of the Gateway, to highlight these changes to organisations.
 - Should we make any changes to any part of the online questionnaire **whilst it is live**, any submitted responses are “unsubmitted” by this action. An email alert advising that we have made changes will be sent to organisations’ registered email address. Organisations will then have to read the details of the change(s) and if necessary amend their submissions. Whether the change(s) affect an organisation’s submission or not they will still have to resubmit their response in order for us to evaluate it.

IMPORTANT:

- You need to ensure your answers are correct before you submit your application as we cannot accept any information or changes after the closing date or outside of the process.
- Please be aware that the Register team will verify information submitted within the questionnaire to ensure it is a true reflection of your organisation’s situation. If we subsequently find your organisation has given incorrect answers or information or has intentionally misled us with your responses, your organisation will be removed from the Register.
- Organisations need to be aware your responses will be shared across the Agency and with the National Apprenticeship Service as part of our efforts to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and as part of our risk management strategy.
- If required, we will share your responses with other government agencies, in particular the Education Funding Agency, Department of Work and Pensions and others as appropriate, to ensure public funds are safeguarded.
- We may use the information provided in your submission with the prevention and detection of fraud, working with other government agencies or departments.

10. Evaluating the Online Questionnaire (Step 4)

All online questionnaires submitted and received by 5.00pm on the closing date will be downloaded and evaluated.

The Agency **is unable to accept** any information after the closing date.

We have allocated a score to each of the possible responses to the questions contained within the online questionnaire, with the exception of the financial health assessment, for which there is a separate evaluation process.

The online questionnaire falls into three categories:

1. Scored questions
2. Organisation's capability to deliver the services we fund
3. Self declaration

For each response an organisation is evaluated as:

- **satisfactory** where that organisation is able to provide the required assurance in the areas which have been tested, receiving a score of **0**, or,
- **unsatisfactory** receiving the maximum score allocated for that question, **up to -100, in multiples of 25**. The precise score each response is allocated depends on the significance of that response to the overall due diligence process.

*All organisations begin with a score of 0 (zero) with unacceptable answers generating a negative score. It is important to remember that marks for the online questionnaire are not awarded but rather deducted. **Therefore, a total score of 0 is the highest score possible for the online questionnaire.***

After evaluating the response to each question, the individual scores are aggregated into a total score for the Online Questionnaire. If your total score for the online questionnaire is greater than -100, you will pass the Online Questionnaire. If your organisation's total score for the Online Questionnaire is -100 or less, you will fail the Online Questionnaire and therefore the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway. You must pass both the Financial Health Assessment and the Online Questionnaire in order to pass the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway and be deemed as 'Approved' to enter the Register of Training Organisations.

11. Structure of the Online Questionnaire

The questionnaire is organised into two envelopes – a qualification envelope and a technical envelope. The qualification envelope contains three sections; the first two contain important information about the questionnaire and the third is a declaration to confirm these notes have been read. **You need to read the contents of the qualification envelope and accept the declaration before starting to complete the technical envelope.**

Please note that any references to **eVM** (e-Vendor Management) in the section titles on the e-tendering portal refer to an underpinning technical aspect of the portal and can be ignored for the purposes of completing the online questionnaire.

You need to be aware that most of our funding agreements are for academic years (AY) i.e. 1 August to July. The online questionnaire will ask you questions about both academic year and financial years.

The technical envelope contains the following sections:

Organisational details

This section focuses on fundamental information about your organisation, including your [UK Provider Reference Number \(UKPRN\)](#), legal form, structure, size and directors.

These questions enable us to confirm that each organisation submitting the online questionnaire is a legal entity and we have a record of their essential details.

We may use some of the information we gather in this section for reporting and monitoring purposes.

You must enter a valid UKPRN or you will incur an automatic fail of the Online Questionnaire. It's critical you check this before finalising your submission. Organisations must state their **full** legal name and any applicable trading names in separate questions – these should be as per Companies House and also match UKRLP. Please **do not** use abbreviations.

If your organisation is incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 in the UK, you will be asked for your Company Registration Number; it is important this information relates to your organisation and is accurate.

We ask you for a detailed organisational structure chart, which details the companies in your group (if applicable).

NOTE:

- We want to see all companies within the group, and where your organisation fits within that.
- List your ultimate parent company, and any subsidiaries.
- You must also include any subsidiaries of your organisation.
- If you are a local authority, we need to see where the 'Educations Services' branch fits within the rest of the local authority.
- If you are not part of a group of companies, please upload a document against the question explaining that it is not applicable.

Details of your organisation structure

We expect you to upload an organisation chart which shows your organisation's management personnel.

NOTE:

- We want to see who has overall executive management of your company, as well as the management of each division.
- Members of the department responsible for delivering education and training services including management.

- If you are a local authority, we want to see who has overall executive management of the local authority and the management of the 'Education Services' branch for the local authority.
- You must also include the individual who is signing the agreement with the Agency, as well as the individual completing the Online Questionnaire.

Training organisation type

This section asks for further information about your organisation as it relates to the delivery of education and vocational training.

Delivery model

In this section we will look at how you intend to deliver a contract for us. We will seek an assurance on how you intend to manage your subcontractors.

Financial Management

In this section we will ask you about your organisation's annual income and your financial statements. We need to ask these questions to ensure that all organisations that pass the Gateway have an appropriate level of financial health. In addition, we need to assess the risk to the Agency of contracting with organisations which are reliant on public funding. We are seeking assurance on your internal controls which support your financial management. As administrators of public funding only those organisations that are able to demonstrate they are financially robust and present a low risk to the Agency will be entered on the Register. You should consider this before submitting your application.

Please note the detailed information below regarding the required financial statements.

Exemptions

The following organisations are exempt from being required to submit financial statements:

- Central government departments, executive agencies or non-departmental public bodies.
- Local authorities including Local Education Authority (LEA) schools.
- An Academy School or Free School
- NHS trusts, fire authorities, universities.
- Major national charities and voluntary organisations, for example OXFAM, Red Cross, RNIB, RNLI.
- Established Public Listed Companies and other registered companies for whom Agency funding is incidental to their business, if they are training their own staff only. For these purposes Agency funding will be "incidental" if Agency contract values are no more than 5% of annual turnover. They should still supply a copy of their most recent accounts to demonstrate this.
- The Agency also exempts large publicly listed employers funded by a National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) Grant, for whom Agency funding is incidental to their business i.e. Agency contract values are no more than 5% of annual turnover, and which are seeking to deliver Education & Vocational Training services to only their own employees, employees of their subcontractors and/or employees of organisations which are 100% in their supply chain. The Agency may, however, download the accounts from Companies House in order to confirm exempt status. The Agency will only fund organisations that can demonstrate they are financially robust.

Organisations that are exempt from submitting financial statements must attach a document to question [ROTO-FM- 08A] outlining the reasons for the exemption – without an attachment, the e-tendering portal will not allow you to submit a response. A template can be found on our website <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/>

Compliance

In this section we are seeking an assurance to determine your compliance with legislative requirements associated with public sector procurement. Such as fraud, [tax](#), outstanding court action and any investigations you have been subject to.

These are in line with the [Public Contracts Regulations 2006](#) which set out the criteria for the rejection of organisations. We need to ensure that only organisations suitable for us to fund and/or invite to tender will pass the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway.

IMPORTANT:

Responses to certain questions in this section can incur an automatic failure of the online questionnaire and therefore result in an overall application status of 'Not Approved'.

NOTE: If you or your organisation has an outstanding debt with us, your organisation will not enter the Register until the debt has been cleared and a resolution has been reached.

Quality

In this section we are looking to test the quality of service you are able to deliver for us including questions around [Ofsted](#).

NOTE: From September 2012 Ofsted developed a new common inspection framework, in which there were changes to the Categories. If you have been inspected from September 2012 then select the options available for Questions ROTO-QU-03, ROTO-QU-04, ROTO-QU-05. If you were inspected prior to the Ofsted common inspection framework “category changes” and you were assessed as Satisfactory at that time, select option C.

The **matrix** standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. More information on the matrix Standard can be found here <http://matrixstandard.com/the-standard/the-standard/>

Awarding Organisation Status

In this section we ask questions about your awarding organisation status. In order to receive funding from us organisations must have the necessary awarding organisation status to deliver the qualifications we fund. More information can be found here: [Regulatory actions and interventions - Ofqual](#).

Information Commissioner's Officer (<http://www.ico.org.uk/>)

We require you to be registered for the processing of personal data for educational purposes.

Insurance

In order to receive funding from us you must have adequate insurance.

Learner health, safety and welfare

In order to receive funding from us you must have appropriate and adequate processes in place to ensure learner health, safety and welfare. More information can be found here: [Students and young people](#)

Equality

In order to receive funding from us you must have appropriate and adequate internal systems to comply with the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Social Value – the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

When evaluating your application we will take account of the above Act. The Act requires procurers of public services to consider how what is to be procured may improve social, environmental and economic well being of the relevant area in order to obtain best value. More information on the Act can be found here: [Procurement policy note 10/12: The Public Services \(Social Value\) Act 2012 - Publications - GOV.UK](#).

We also expect organisations to take account of the government's [Greening Government Commitments](#) in the delivery of our contracts.

Procurement

The 2014-20 European Social Fund (ESF) places greater responsibility on Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to develop and lead on local skills strategies.

The Agency will provide a number of services to assist LEPs deliver ESF provision, and more information about the ESF and LEPS can be found here:

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/esf/>

In the future the Agency may procure on behalf of LEPs, if you would like to be considered for this we ask you to indicate this in your response. You are also required to select the Core City and or Wider LEP areas that you wish to deliver funding in. More information about these areas can be found here: <http://www.lepnetwork.org.uk/leps.html>

Declarations

We ask you to confirm that you are giving us true and accurate information. This is the point at which you are validating that all your information is correct.

Certain declarations will relate to and reinforce the themes identified throughout the online questionnaire.

You are asked to confirm you will re-submit your application if a change is made to either the settings or questionnaire area of the live PQQ.

The Chief Executive reserves the right to remove any organisation from the Register; organisations will be told the reason for their removal.

Authorisation of submission

We ask you to state the name of the individual who is authorised to sign your submission on behalf of your organisation. An electronic signature (typed) here will be acceptable.

Submitting attachments

If you would like to upload more than one file, for example in response to [ROTO-FM-08a], you can do this by submitting a zip file. A zip file is an archiving system that allows you to pack together one, or more, files into a single file or folder. If you choose to upload a zip file please ensure that this is **not password protected** when it is uploaded.

You must also consider the format of the files you submit. For example PDF and Word documents are widely recognisable formats however we are unable to open Mac equivalent files or extensions.

12. Financial Health Assessment

- **Organisations with a current direct funding agreement with the Chief Executive of Skills Funding for the delivery of education and training**

There is **no** requirement to submit financial statements for the purposes of the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway process if you have already submitted, or are in the process of submitting these, as part of your funding agreement with us. You must upload a note in the space reserved for uploading financial statements in the online questionnaire to confirm that you have a current funding agreement. **We have provided a template on our website**

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/> . However, if you have newer financial statements filed with Companies House that we have not yet seen, you **must** upload them now or you will fail the Financial Health assessment.

- **Organisations already on the Register but without a current direct funding agreement with the Chief Executive of Skills Funding for the delivery of education and vocational training**

If we have already seen your most recent statutory financial statements you do not need to resubmit them. However, you will be required to submit a financial health exemption form informing us of this. The form is available on our website

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/> . If you have newer ones which have been filed at Companies House which we have not yet reviewed, you must upload them to the reserved space in the online questionnaire.

- **Organisations not currently on the Register of Training Organisations**

You must upload your latest full statutory financial statements in the reserved space in the online questionnaire.

Required Documentation

For **all** organisations applying to the Register: If you are not submitting any financial statements, you must include a note to explain why (e.g. because we have already assessed your most recent accounts or you consider yourself to be exempt). For all other organisations, the documentation we require is as follows:

- **You are required to supply your latest full statutory financial statements** (not abbreviated accounts). Please supply the full accounts, not just an extract or selected pages.

- Statutory financial statements are those prepared using generally accepted accounting principles in accordance with the legislative requirements of the organisation type. For example, a limited company's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts. A registered charity's accounts are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission.
- **If you are not required to publish statutory financial statements**, you should supply a 12 month profit and loss account, balance sheet and related notes or narrative and breakdowns of balances such as creditors and borrowings.
- **If you are part of a wider company group** you must provide the latest financial statements of the UK Ultimate Parent company as well as your own full financial statements. In assessing the financial health of an organisation that is part of a group of companies the Agency will consider the financial standing of the group as a whole.
- **If your organisation is a subsidiary company** you should also consider whether submitting a parental guarantee together with your organisation's and parent company accounts would enhance your application. The guarantee form is on our website at: [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Parental Guarantee form Jan 2013.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Parental%20Guarantee%20form%20Jan%202013.pdf)
- **If you are a parent company that does not produce consolidated accounts**, please also supply the financial statements of your non-dormant subsidiaries for review.
- **If you are unable to supply statutory financial statements because you have not traded for a sufficient period**, you should supply your first 12 months forecast figures including management accounts to date. As a minimum this should consist of a profit and loss account, balance sheet, cashflow forecast and narrative of key assumptions made.
- **If you are a new business not yet trading**, you must supply a fully costed business plan which as a minimum should consist of a 12 month budgeted profit and loss account, balance sheet, cashflow forecast and narrative of key assumptions made, indicating clearly the specific period the plan relates to.
- **If you believe that you may be exempt** because Agency funding would be incidental to your business, i.e. Agency contract values no more than 5% of annual turnover, please still submit accounts to demonstrate this.
- **If you have previously applied to the Register with non-statutory documents**, such as a business plan or management accounts, then you must now provide full financial statements if available or updated management accounts and forecasts.
- **If you are a sole trader or partnership** we require the full accounts. These should consist of, as a minimum, profit and loss account, balance sheet and notes to the accounts.

If insufficient or incomplete financial statements are uploaded to the online questionnaire, or **if you do not submit the financial statements most recently submitted to Companies House**, you will **FAIL** the Financial Health Assessment and therefore the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway.

Organisations must ensure the Agency can evaluate the information you submit to us as you will not be able to resubmit information after the Register closes. Therefore, please ensure that it is in the form of a Word, Excel or pdf document and do not "password protect" your information – if we cannot access the information it will lead to a fail.

Assessment of Financial Statements

Your financial statements will be assessed according to the criteria specified in the financial health assessment guidance available on our website at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/finance/financialassurance/financialhealthassessment>.

Financial health is a measure of financial status in terms of your financial performance and ability to meet ongoing financial commitments.

In common with other organisations, we assess your financial health to help determine the extent to which funding may be awarded. We do this to help manage risk and also to provide an assessment of your ability to service and grow provision of a suitable standard. The aim is to safeguard public funds together with our interests and those of you and your learners.

Where you pass the financial health assessment we will give your organisation a recommended funding limit. The Chief Executive will normally only award your organisation funding up to this limit.

You will be given an initial grade assessment of Outstanding, Good, Satisfactory or Inadequate; only organisations assessed as Outstanding, Good or Satisfactory will be deemed to have passed the financial health assessment.

The outcome of your financial health assessment is final. Additional information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date. You must ensure the information you submit is current, correct and demonstrates financial performance and your ability to meet ongoing financial requirements.

If your organisation has been assessed as a FAIL on the Financial Health Assessment, this is because:

- insufficient financial information was provided;
- the financial statements submitted were not the latest ones available;
- the financial health assessment produced an Inadequate grade.

A grade assessment of Inadequate for an existing provider, funded via Financial Memorandum or Conditions of Funding, will trigger the Provider Risk Assessment and Management process; we will issue a Notice of Concern and they will enter stage 1 of the intervention escalation process.

Organisations that applied to the October 2013 opening

If you PASSED the Financial Health Assessment:

Please do not resubmit the same accounts or financial information that we have already assessed. Instead, upload a note to say that you have already sent us your latest figures. However, if you have newer financial statements which were not available when the Register was open in October 2013, these must now be submitted. For registered companies we will check submission dates against Companies House records.

If you FAILED the Financial Health Assessment:

Inadequate Financial Health – If you failed because your figures scored Inadequate on our financial health calculation, please consider submitting newer information in the form of newer accounts, management accounts, forecasts etc. You should also consider including a parental guarantee.

13. Feedback (Step 5)

We will provide written feedback to all organisations following evaluation of the Online Questionnaire and the Financial Health Assessment, which will be compliant with EU procurement regulations. This feedback will be provided via a message sent from the Bravo message board to the email address(es) you have registered against your Bravo account. You will receive an email notification that you have a message on Bravo, and you will then need to log in to access the message.

Your feedback will set out:

- Overall Status of Application - APPROVED or NOT APPROVED to enter the Register
- Outcome of the online questionnaire – PASS or FAIL
- Your score for each section of the online questionnaire, in particular the areas which resulted in a negative assessment if applicable, and also the total score.
- Outcome of the financial health assessment – PASS or FAIL
- Financial Health Assessment grade

If you fail the online questionnaire, we regret that we are unable to provide you with further information about the specific questions you failed on. If we did this, it could assist you with any subsequent attempt to complete the Gateway as it is likely the successful response would become self-evident. This would compromise the open, competitive and transparent nature of the due diligence process.

If you fail the financial health assessment organisations are advised that the Agency will not accept supplementary financial information in support of your application after the closing date. The Agency will not enter into a dialogue about your submission and we will not provide feedback outside of this process.

THERE IS NO RIGHT OF APPEAL. THE OUTCOME OF THE EVALUATION IS FINAL

14. Help and support

All questions or queries in relation to the Register or the Gateway, in the first instance should be submitted via the 'Messages' function within the on the e-tendering portal.

If you are not registered on the e-tendering portal, or have a query outside of the Gateway opening, please direct it to Registerhelp@sfa.bis.gov.uk quoting your UKPRN in the subject field. This email address is solely for generic questions relating to the Register.

Please do not contact us about the process using any other method. If you do, the probity of the Gateway process may be put at risk. We will not respond to queries raised via other methods, such as telephone, and we will advise you to re-route your question via the e-tendering portal.

We aim to respond to your query within two working days of receipt however, during busy periods in the Register process there may be a delay in our response. We may also cease to respond to queries two working days before the closing date for the completion of the Online Questionnaire

When answering questions, we may choose to anonymise your query and publish the response to it as part of our regular updates to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

The Agency will make every reasonable effort to address applicant's queries and provide clarification on feedback, responding fully within the context of the contents of this document within the rules that govern procurement.

We will not respond to queries regarding a past Due Diligence iteration when the new Due Diligence Assurance Gateway reopens, this includes responding to previous message boards relating to earlier Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQ) .

15. Resubmissions

If you decide to re-apply, we advise you to review your previous responses and consider your commercial and financial status, especially if your situation/information has not changed since the previous submission.

If you were unsuccessful with your previous submission and you are a direct contract holder, or a subcontractor with an aggregate contract value of £100,000 or more, then you are expected to take action at this opening. This opening is considered as your final opportunity to apply and failure to enter the Register will result in us terminating our agreement with you, and in the case of subcontractors we will contact your lead provider(s) to do the same. In the meantime organisations will be suspended from growth and excluded from future procurements.

Deemed 'Not Approved' due to failing the Online Questionnaire

If you were deemed as 'Not Approved' due to unsatisfactory responses to the online questionnaire, the responses you provide at this opening must be based on the actual circumstances of your organisation.

Deemed 'Not Approved' due to failing the Financial Health Assessment

If you were deemed as 'Not Approved' because you failed the financial health assessment, you cannot pass until a subsequent set of financial statements is available and is subject to a successful financial health assessment. However, where new financial statements are unavailable, there are documents that can be submitted for consideration but organisations should remember that the Agency does not compromise on the financial health assessment.

Where the financial statements of a provider have resulted in the failure of the financial health assessment and new financial statements are unavailable, it is recommended that your organisation reviews the [Due Diligence Assurance Gateway Additional Financial Information](#) document.

Please find below additional supporting financial information which may be submitted.

Prior to their next accounting year end:

- Business plan forecast for the current year including:
 - Income and expenditure forecast for the year (monthly not required)
 - Balance sheet forecast for the year (monthly not required)
 - Cash flow forecast for the year (monthly where available)
 - Detailed narrative to substantiate each of the above financial forecasts.
- Management accounts showing the actual performance to date including Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet.

If their next accounting year end has passed:

- Where the submission is after the provider's year end but prior to the formal financial statements being available:
 - Draft financial statements for that year
- Or where draft financial statements are unavailable:
 - Final management accounts for that year incorporating income and expenditure, balance sheet and commentary

Director or Parental Guarantee

The provider may also wish to consider providing a Director or Parental guarantee which will be considered alongside the other financial information supplied.

16. Removal of organisations from the Register

The Chief Executive reserves the right to remove any provider from the Register. The grounds for removal of organisations reflect the circumstances described in the Skills Funding Agency's Funding Higher Risk Providers and Subcontractors Policy and Provider Risk Assessment and Management Policy:

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Funding_Higher-risk_Providers_and_Subcontractors.pdf

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/sfa/Provider_Risk_Assessment_and_Management_-_July_2012.pdf

If we find you have made false declarations in your Gateway responses you will be removed from the Register.

17. Company Name and Name Changes

The name listed on your Bravo account should be the full legal name (not acronym's or abbreviations) of your organisation as registered with Companies House (if applicable). This in turn should be the name listed on UKRLP against your UKPRN.

If you are a **sole trader/partnership**, you need to register as 'Your name trading as Your Business Name' e.g. John Smith trading as John Smith Training.

Any applications where the (full) legal name and UKPRN do not match as per UKRLP, will incur an automatic fail.

If there is a change to your company name only, with no other legal or organisational change, your details on the e-tendering portal must be amended accordingly.

If your organisation's name on the e-tendering portal is not correct and/or does not match the name against your UKPRN, it is important that you update this information depending on your relationship with the Agency.

If you already have a funding agreement with us

You need to inform your Relationship Manager, and the Register Team will review and action the name change on the e-tendering portal. You need to notify the name change by emailing Registerhelp@sfa.bis.gov.uk or sending a message via the e-tendering portal with the subject 'organisation name change' in the subject box.

You will then be requested to complete a name change declaration form and provide evidence in the form of Companies House and UKRLP certificates showing your correct organisation name and UKPRN.

Once the evidence has been received and validated, the Register Team will authorise Bravo Solutions to make the name change. Subcontractors should contact the Relationship Manager of their lead provider.

If you are entered on the Register and do not hold a current funding agreement with us

If you are not a current contract holder and your organisation's name changes with no other legal or organisational change, you must notify the Register Team by emailing Registerhelp@sfa.bis.gov.uk with 'organisation name change' in the subject box.

You will then be requested to complete a name change declaration form and provide evidence in the form of Companies House and UKRLP certificates showing your correct organisation name and UKPRN.

Once the evidence has been received and validated, the Register Team will authorise Bravo Solutions to make the name change.

Organisations should ensure that any name changes are also updated against their UKPRN so that it continues to match the name on the Register.

Please be aware that organisations are listed on the published Register according to the name they have registered on the e-tendering portal, which should be their full legal name. If you are already listed on the Register at the point that your name changes, it will be amended when the latest version of the Register is next published.

18. Accompanying Guidance Documents

Guidance documents listed below are aimed at supporting organisations and can be found on our website: <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register/>

Quick Reference Support Guide for the e-tendering portal

For technical and operational hints and tips on how to navigate the Bravo e-tendering portal to access and complete the Online Questionnaire.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Examples of Frequently Asked Questions that we receive in relation to the Register and the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway which we hope will assist organisations with their application to the Register.

19. Freedom of Information

We are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Under the provision of the FOIA, we are required to provide information we hold in response to a request made in accordance with the FOIA. This includes information about third parties. Organisations are referred to the Freedom of Information Policy available on our website at <http://www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk>

If you believe that some of your submission is classed as Commercial in Confidence, you should advise us of this fact via a message on the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway message board. We will then check the submission and if appropriate (under FOI legislation) we will seek a redaction to not publish that particular information if requested.

20. Appeals and Complaints

There is **no right of appeal** to the decision reached on each organisation's Due Diligence Assurance Gateway submission.

If you are unhappy with the outcome, the Agency's complaints procedure is available at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus/complaints/>.

21. Links to helpful information

To assist your application the following links may be useful:

Bravo e-tendering portal – <https://skillsfundingagency.bravosolution.co.uk>

Copy of the Chief Executive's terms and conditions
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingdocuments/>

European Social Funding [Skills Funding Agency - Providers - Our programmes - European Social Fund - European Social Fund](#)

Funding Higher Risk Providers and Subcontractors
http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Funding_Higher-risk_Providers_and_Subcontractors.pdf

Funding Rules - <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingrules/>. Note: Updated annually.

Health and Safety Executive - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Provider Risk Assessment and Management
http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/sfa/Provider_Risk_Assessment_and_Management_-_July_2012.pdf

Skills Funding Agency Register of Training Organisations:
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/register>

Skills Investment Statement - <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/11-1374-skills-investment-statement-2011-2014.pdf>

List of declared subcontractors –
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/Subcontracting/>

Matrix standard <http://matrixstandard.com/the-standard/the-standard/>

National Apprenticeship Division - <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/About-Us/National-Apprenticeship-Service.aspx>

Ofsted - <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>

Ofqual - <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/>

UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills - <http://www.bis.gov.uk/>

UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) - <http://www.ukrlp.co.uk/>

24 + Advanced Learning Loans - [24+ Advanced Learning Loans](#)

Read me First – February 2014

The Register Team

22. Definitions Appendix

Academy – is a School directly funded by Central Government (specifically the Department for Education) and independent of direct control by Local Government

Business continuity – the regular activities performed by an organisation to ensure that critical business functions remain available to customers, suppliers, regulators, and other entities that must have access to those functions.

Batch – Provider Batch is a web based system which enables providers to enter learner data on their own MI system and then upload the learner data themselves to the Data Collections web portal.

Business Continuity Process – an organisation's response planning that sets out how the business will operate following an incident and how it expects to return to 'business as usual' in the quickest possible time afterwards.

Consortium – a consortium is an association of two or more organisations engaged in a business enterprise bound by a legally binding, written and signed agreement, which explicitly requires that each organisation that is a member of the consortium is jointly and severally liable with the consortium for the obligations of the consortium and the wrongful acts or omissions of a co-member of the consortium.

Continuous Improvement Process – the process to demonstrate how regular small changes and improvements to the service delivered are implemented controlled and recorded.

European Social Fund (ESF) – the European Social Fund was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union (EU) and so help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects. As one of the EU's structural funds, ESF seeks to reduce differences in prosperity across the EU and enhance economic and social cohesion.

Financial Statements

- Where available, audited financial statements which are submitted to Companies House. The financial statements as a whole are required; an extract is insufficient.
- Where an organisation produces abbreviated financial statements, we require the full accounts from which the abbreviated accounts are extracted. These should consist of, as a minimum, profit and loss account with turnover figure, balance sheet and notes to the accounts.
- Where the company has taken advantage of audit exemption, we require the financial statements as a whole; an extract is insufficient.

General Further Education College – an institution conducted by a corporation established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

Joint venture – a joint venture is a legal entity that is owned or governed (for example in the case of a company limited by guarantee) by two or more organisations for the purpose of submitting a common bid for funding.

Notice of Concern – issued to a college that has fallen below standards in relation to financial health, financial control, Ofsted judgement or Minimum Levels of Performance.

POL – Provider On Line is a web based system which enables providers to enter learner data directly in the Data Collections web portal.

Skills Investment Strategy – owned by BIS, this sets out how we will reduce bureaucracy; remove unnecessary interference from intermediary agencies whether local, regional or national; streamline the organisational skills landscape; remove unnecessary regulation and introduce new freedoms and flexibilities. Collectively, these measures will ensure the sector is better able to meet the needs of individuals, businesses and local communities.

Small or medium sized enterprise (SME) - Please see EU definition here: [What is an SME? - Small and medium sized enterprises \(SME\) - Enterprise and Industry](#)

For statistical purposes, the **Department of Trade and Industry** uses the following definitions:

- micro firm: 0 - 9 employees
- small firm: 0 - 49 employees (includes micro)
- medium firm: 50 - 249 employees

Statutory Financial Statements – are those prepared using generally accepted accounting principles in accordance with the legislative requirements of the organisation type. For example, a limited company's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts. A registered charity's accounts are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission.

Third Sector – the Third Sector has been defined by HM Treasury as organisations which:

- Are non-governmental.
- Are “value driven” in that they are primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental and cultural objectives rather than make a profit per se.
- Reinvest surpluses, principally to further their social, environmental or cultural objectives.

Training Provider – for the purposes of this document, colleges, local authorities, private training organisations and employers are all identified as training organisations.

UKRLP – the UK Register of Learning Providers. This is a database that is a register of the legal entity details of learning providers in the United Kingdom. It is designed to link together existing data sources on providers and give access to the information to learners, employers, providers and Government agencies.

UKPRN – UK Provider Reference Number. This is a unique eight-digit number assigned to all providers on verification. The number does not provide endorsement by UKRLP.

UPIN – a UPIN is the Unique Provider Identification Number. This is the unique number allocated by the Skills Funding Agency to each individual training organisation it holds a contract with.



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