



Skills Funding
Agency

Learner satisfaction survey 2014 to 2015: Information

October 2014

Of interest to colleges and training organisations

The learner satisfaction performance indicator gives a score at college and training organisation-level on how learners rated a particular organisation and is based on answers to the learner satisfaction survey.

Learner satisfaction survey 2014 to 2015

The implementation timetable and key milestones for the learner satisfaction survey for 2014 to 2015 are detailed below.

The learner satisfaction survey for 2014 to 2015 will run from 3 November 2014 to 29 March 2015.

We will publish information and guidance on these webpages throughout the survey period and notices posted in our [Update](#) newsletter.

The learner satisfaction survey will be an online survey and can be completed 24 hours a day at any time during the survey window from any internet-linked device including laptops, BlackBerrys and iPhones.

In exceptional circumstances you can make an application to use paper surveys for those learners for whom you feel it would be impossible to complete the survey online.

Which colleges and training organisations are in scope?

The following colleges and training organisations are in scope for the learner satisfaction survey 2014 to 2015:

Colleges and training organisation grouping	Learner satisfaction
General FE Colleges	Yes
Independent Specialist Colleges and training organisations	No
Specialist Colleges (including Art and Design, and Land-based)	Yes
Dance and Drama Academies	No
Specialist Designated Institutions	Yes
Higher Education Institutions	Yes
Other Publicly-Funded Institutions	Yes
Private Sector Publicly-Funded Institutions	Yes

Link to survey

Learners will be able to access the survey from 3 November 2014 to 29 March 2015 by visiting:

<http://www.ipsos-mori.com/learnersatisfaction>

Type of questions on the learner satisfaction survey

- How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course?
- How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks?
- How good or bad is the teaching on your course?
- How good or bad is the respect staff show you?
- How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course?
- How good or bad is the support you get on this course?
- How good or bad is the college is at listening to the views of learners?

- How good or bad is the college is at acting on the views of learners?
- Overall, how good or bad you think the college is?
- Would you recommend the college to family or friends?

Course-level questions

As per last year, learners will not be asked to complete additional course-level questions.

This is because we have devised a more robust methodology for obtaining course level information using data recorded on the ILR and LARA database. This means that we will be able to identify a subject area for the large majority of respondents. Therefore, we would urge colleges and training organisations to maximise the number of learners completing the survey as this will greatly increase their ability to analyse the survey findings at course level.

Key dates

The key dates for the 2014 to 2015 survey are as follows:

Date	Activity
3 Nov 2014 to 29 March 2015	Online survey available for testing for compatibility with your firewall
3 Nov 2014	Online survey starts.
1 December 2014	Deadline for applications for paper based completions
29 March 2015	Online survey closes

Guidance for colleges and training organisations

A. Provider Extranet

The [Provider Extranet](#) will provide regular updates on all aspects of the survey which are specific to each eligible college and training organisation, including near-live feedback on your response rates. Therefore we ask all eligible colleges and training organisations to log in to the [Provider Extranet](#) on a regular basis.

To access the site, you will need to use your UK provider reference number (UKPRN) and unique password; this will be sent to the principal or chief executive before the start of the survey.

B. Planning your survey

We recommend appointing a survey coordinator to act as the main contact for information about the survey.

All 16-18-funded learners (Skills Funding Agency/Education Funding Agency) and all 19+ learners that are following at least one learning aim funded through the Adult Skills Budget within in-scope organisations, are entitled to complete the survey. We ask that you give as many of them as possible the opportunity to do so.

It is important to remember that this also includes any learners on Agency funded subcontracted provision. To exclude them is likely to result in a skewed and possibly invalid sample which we will be unable to score. To prevent this, early communication and planning with your subcontracted colleges and training organisations regarding your approach to the surveys is essential.

If possible, learners should complete the survey towards the end of their programme of study or towards the end of the survey window if they are continuing beyond 29 March 2015.

However, all learners, including those on short programmes at any point between 3 November to 29 March 2015, are entitled to take part.

C. Sample sizes

To check what your sample size is likely to be we ask you to estimate the number of in-scope learners between 18 November 2013 and 29 March 2015 using the online calculator which is available on the [Provider Extranet](#). Guidance on the use of the sample size calculator can be found in the [learner satisfaction guidance](#).

To achieve a valid score, you need to get a minimum number of valid survey responses (the [sample size calculator](#) will help you to do this). You can find guidance on the use of the sample size calculator in the [learner satisfaction guidance page](#). Please ensure that the balance of responses is representative of your learner proportions in terms of age, gender and level of study (using the daily response rate tool on the [Provider Extranet](#)).

We encourage you to attempt to survey as many learners as possible rather than relying on a sample; as although we will correct statistically for minor imbalances, samples may be rejected if they are badly skewed.

Remember that some responses may be ruled invalid if they are duplicates or if the learner is not on provision funded by us. We also apply corrective weightings to samples to ensure any bias in the sample is removed. All these factors can lead to your final sample being smaller than the original number of responses submitted. Therefore we strongly recommend that you aim for a response rate above the minimum to avoid an invalid score.

D. Preparing learners for the survey

To complete the survey, learners will need to know your UKPRN (if you do not know this you can look it up on the [UKRLP website](#)) and their unique learner number (ULN). If for any reason, a learner does not have a ULN they can use their individualised learner number (ILR).

E. Paper surveys

In exceptional circumstances colleges and training organisations can apply to use paper surveys if it is impossible for some learners to complete the survey online during the survey period. If this is the case for some of your learners and you wish to apply for paper surveys, please follow the link on the [Provider Extranet](#).

All responses will be collected by courier from colleges and training organisations on **11 March 2015** and only those responses that are collected at that time can be included in the response calculation.

Please ask as many of your learners as possible to complete the survey on line. From a college and training organisations perspective it will allow you to monitor the number of responses you have received and encourage more learners to complete the survey if necessary, increasing the likelihood of receiving a valid learner satisfaction score and valuable learner feedback. This year your organisation's online survey results will also include a detailed analysis on subject-level responses.

We will only accept paper-based responses if they are completed on a print off of the college and training organisation specific PDF produced by the survey contractor after the paper-based application was agreed. Any other paper-based responses will not be valid. As FE choices data are official statistics it is imperative that data is collected in a robust, consistent and transparent way.

In addition, it is generally understood, and backed up by our own research, that paper-based surveys reveal more positive responses to questions. They therefore carry a slight downward statistical adjustment to allow comparison with online responses. For this reason direct input from paper-based to online will not accurately show your learner satisfaction score. Also it is imperative that responses reach the survey contractor directly from the learner, particularly as in the survey the learner is told that 'none of your lecturers, trainers or supervisors will see your answers.'

Our survey contractor monitors response patterns and any which appear to be inconsistent will be investigated and may invalidate scores.

F. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

College and training organisations have the option of leaving learners out of the learner satisfaction survey if their inclusion would be inappropriate or distressing.

For further information, please see the [learner satisfaction guidance](#) – help for learners section.

G. Other Guidance & Resources

The following guidance is available:

- [learner satisfaction guidance](#)
- [guidance on hyper-linking surveys](#)
- [guidance on completing survey by BlackBerry and other internet linked devices](#)
- FAQs are available on the [Provider Extranet](#)

Minimum Sample Size Calculator

- Minimum sample size calculator ([online calculator](#))



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