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Education & Skills
Funding Agency

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1. Action: November School Workforce Census 2017

The deadline for submission was Friday, 1 December. If you have not done so you should make your return now. If you expect any significant delay in submitting please contact the [helpdesk](#).

Academies: if you are awaiting approval and authorisation please do not contact the help desk. Authorisation will take place in due course. Please check that:

- you have submitted your return after loading it? If you are unsure how to do this please use the [COLLECT guide](#)

- if you have made any amendments to your data and the current status is 'loaded and validated' or 'Amended by Source' please do not forget to press submit

Local authorities: have you approved your returns after they have been loaded and submitted by you or your schools? If you are unsure how to do this please use the [COLLECT guide](#).

1.1 Please remember

- The school workforce census is a statutory return; you have a legal obligation to submit data.
- If you don't have a management information system, or you can't provide data in the correct format required by COLLECT, please request the XML generator tools from the [helpdesk](#).
- If you have any query or concern regarding the school workforce census collection please contact the helpdesk using the [service request form](#).

2. Reminder: deadline to submit academy trust audited financial statements

This is a final reminder that the deadline to submit your audited financial statements is only 2 weeks away. This applies to academy trusts, including free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges incorporated on or before 1 August 2017.

If you have not yet submitted your financial statements, please ensure that you have processes in place to meet the deadline.

Please refer to the [published guidance](#) on submitting your financial statements and completing the accounts submission cover sheet online form.

3. Information: CIF Portal

Following issues earlier this week with the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) Portal, we have now extended the closing date for submissions to 4pm on Wednesday 20 December. We are sorry for any inconvenience caused.

4. Information: letter to academy trusts about financial returns

Eileen Milner, chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), has written a letter to Chairs of Trustees, Chief Executives/Accounting Officers and Chief Financial Officers at all academy trusts to announce that ESFA is changing its approach to academy trust non-compliance with financial returns.

In her [letter](#) (sent on 13 December), Eileen states that in September 2018, ESFA will publish a list of trusts who are late or do not submit, two or more of the annual financial returns during the 2017 to 2018 academic year.

We will publish future lists every September based on the preceding years' returns.

5. Information: issue with questionnaire in accounts return online

form

We have become aware of an issue with the accounts return questionnaire, which relates to the land and buildings sections of the form and relates to the following question:

- Does the Central Trust own any Land and Building assets rather than the individual academies?

Some trusts have rightly answered “no” to this as they don’t. However, answering “no” hides all of the land and buildings sections of the online form. To get around this users will simply need to:

- login to the AR form
- review the questionnaire and check to see the answer for this question
- if no is selected – amend this to yes

In the meantime, we are preparing a fix for this issue will confirm when it’s corrected using this e-bulletin. If academy trust internal preparers or external audit preparers have already sent their return for approval, please untick approve and amend the form accordingly. This then can be re-sent for approval once the land and buildings data has been amended.

6. Information: academy trust financial returns update

6.1 Information: accounts return weekly Skype conferencing Q&A sessions

We’re hosting weekly Skype conferencing Q&A sessions from 4pm to 5pm every Thursday to answer your questions about the accounts return and any residual questions about the land and buildings collection tool return.

Please use this [Join Skype Meeting](#) link to access the conference and download the web app if necessary. If you don’t use Skype, you can join by phone. Call 02033 215238 and, when instructed, enter the conference ID (2081 9375).

If you have any questions about the LBCT or the accounts return, please contact us using our [enquiry form](#). Please put either “LBCT question” or “AR question” at the top of the form.

6.2 Information: accounts return webinar – final chance to sign-up!

You can [register now for additional accounts return webinar](#) we’re hosting on Monday 18 December. The webinar will discuss the most challenging aspects of the accounts return include a live question and answer session. You can submit questions in advance when you register.

6.3 Reminder: grant accounts return access to your external auditors

A crucial step in your preparations to complete the accounts return online form is to grant access to your external auditors. You can read how to do this our [financial returns online form registration guide](#).

External auditors must review and complete your trusts accounts return form in order to submit to ESFA. This needs to be done by the deadline of the 19 January 2018.

Any new auditors need to be set up against the external auditors preparer/approver 000001 UPIN when registering and not the trust UPIN.

Any auditors already set up will already be set up using this new auditor UPIN. To grant access to auditors, the academy trust internal approver must type the auditor's details into the accounts return form in the external auditors details screen. In this screen, the internal approver will be able to allocate roles to auditors.

We would like to thank all the trusts who have already done this and we want to encourage the remaining trusts to do this soon to ensure that there is enough time make the return on time.

7. Information: risk protection arrangement (RPA)

The [Risk Protection Arrangement \(RPA\)](#) team is currently exploring the feasibility of a RPA-type arrangement to provide a solution for teacher absence cover for the academy sector.

In order to obtain the best value for academies, we need to understand the nature of arrangements currently in place as well as further details of absence losses.

We have produced a [teacher absence survey](#) to help us obtain the most relevant and accurate information. To complete the survey, you will need:

- details of insurance policies that cover staff absences.
- the number of absences and size of losses over the academic years 2014 to 2017

We would encourage your business managers or insurance lead representatives to complete the online survey by 12 January 2018.

If you have any questions, please email the [RPA team](#).

8. Information: risk management workshops

As part of our ongoing risk management support, RPA members are invited to our latest workshop covering cyber risk management including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which comes into effect on 25 May 2018.

The 3-hour sessions will be presented by RPA risk-management advisors, Willis Towers Watson. An expert speaker will give the presentation in an interactive style and there will be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of each session.

These workshops are aimed at all those with responsibility for, or involvement in, risk for their academy. This includes head teachers, business managers, facilities managers and risk management professionals.

8.1 Venues and dates

- 16 January 2018 (9:30am) DfE, 2 St Pauls Place, 125 Norfolk Street, Sheffield S1 2JF
- 19 January 2018 (9:30am) DfE, Bishopsgate House, Feethams, Darlington DL1 5QE
- 23 January 2018 (9:30am) Willis Towers Watson, 3 Temple Back East, Bristol BS1 6DZ

25 January 2018 (9:30am) Crowne Plaza, Armada Way, Plymouth PL1 2HJ

- 29 January 2018 (9:00am) DfE, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT
- 29 January 2018 (1:30pm) DfE, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT
- 31 January 2018 (9:30am) DfE, Earlsdon Park, 55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH

8.2 How to register

Places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis and will be limited to 2 places per member academy. To book your place(s) please email the [RPA team](#) providing:

1. your academy name and URN
2. the name(s) of attendee(s)

9. Information: T level consultation events

A series of free to attend events have been organised for institutions to learn more about T levels. The Department for Education would like your feedback on the development of T level programmes and how they should be designed to implement the Sainsbury Panel's recommendations.

The events will take place in the following locations and dates:

- Monday 15 January – Church House, London
- Tuesday 16 January – Mercure Darlington Kings Hotel, Darlington
- Friday 19 January – etc venue, Manchester
- Monday 22 January – Bridgwater & Taunton College, Cannington Campus, Nr Bridgwater
- Thursday 25 January – Maids Head Hotel, Norwich
- Friday 26 January – The Studio, Birmingham

You can register to attend a session by visiting the [AoC registration page](#).

10. Information: schools revenue funding settlement 2018 to 2019

We will publish 2018 to 2019 local authority allocations for the dedicated schools grant (DSG), and the pupil premium by 21 December 2017.

We will also confirm the arrangements for ESG protection for academies for 2018 to 2019 by this date.

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