

Correspondence

ESFA Update further education: 16 December 2020

Updated 17 December 2020

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1. Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)

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

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

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

2. Information: staggered rollout of coronavirus testing for secondary schools and colleges

The government has today (17 December) confirmed that all secondary schools and colleges in England will be able to test more of their staff and students in a round of free coronavirus testing from the first week of January.

This will help to deliver the national priority to keep education open for all and help fight the spread of the virus, while keeping schools and colleges safe. Building on the incredible work schools and colleges have done to be Covid-secure, the round of testing will help to reassure students, parents and teachers about returning to school and college.

[Read more on GOV.UK](#).

3. Action: how to claim exceptional learning support (ELS) for 2020 to 2021

We have published the [guidance and cost form for exceptional learning support for the 2020 to 2021 funding year](#).

Providers and employers must complete the estimated cost of exceptional learning support at the beginning of a learner's programme and submit the completed cost form for ESFA learners only, via the [ESFA online enquiry form](#).

We are responsible for paying exceptional learning support for:

- learners aged 19 and over with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) without an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- all age apprentices that have an identified LDD and are with or without an EHC plan
- advanced loans-funded learners with an identified LDD without an EHC plan as part of the Advanced Learner Loans bursary fund

Further information on ELS can be found in the [adult education budget funding rules 2020 to 2021](#) and [advanced learner loans funding rules 2020 to 2021](#).

If you have any questions after reading our guidance please contact us via the [ESFA online enquiry form](#) ensuring that you add "20-21 Exceptional Learning Support" in the subject title. You will need to select Contract (19+) as the "Query Type" to enable your query to be transferred to the correct team.

Please contact your mayoral combined authority (MCA's) or the Greater London Authority (GLA) for support funding for learners funded through devolved AEB arrangements.

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4. Information: review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below in England - process for removing funding approval from qualifications with low and no enrolments

In the [first stage consultation of the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below](#), the Department for Education set out its intent to remove funding approval from qualifications with low and no ESFA-funded enrolments. This will help to streamline and stabilise the publicly funded offer before further reform, and is now an annual process for us.

We have published [the process](#) to confirm which qualifications with low and no enrolments will have public funding approval removed from 1 August 2022. We have also published [the list of qualifications in scope](#) for this process.

Awarding organisations must tell us if they believe a qualification should retain funding approval by Friday 5 March 2021. They can do this for reasons set out in the guidance, including that removing funding would have a significant adverse impact on particular student groups, occupations, or geographical areas.

If you are concerned about a qualification on the list, please contact your awarding organisation.

5. Information: extending Exam Support Service provision for apprenticeship FSQs

The inclusion of FSQs in apprenticeships in the DfE Exam Support Service has been extended to 31 March 2021.

We recognise that ongoing COVID challenges are making it difficult for some apprentices to access an FSQ test at their place of work. Apprenticeship training providers will be able to access the service to book alternative sites and invigilators for FSQ assessments and claim eligible costs.

The COVID guidance confirms that travel for education, training and assessment is allowable under current restrictions. Therefore where Functional Skills assessments have been disrupted we ask that providers, employers and awarding organisations work together in the best interests of apprentices.

The [Exam Support Service guidance](#) has includes full eligibility details and the process for making a claim.

6. Information: procurement opportunity launching for adult education budget (AEB) contracts for services

Existing ESFA funded AEB contracts for services will come to an end on 31 July 2021 and will not be extended.

As a result, a competitive procurement exercise under the [Public Contract Regulations 2015](#) for these contracts will open in early 2021. The contracts will start on 1 August 2021 and run for the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Please view the [prior information notice](#) for more information.

7. Information: Further Education Capital Allocation

Thank you for returning your first grant monitoring return for the Further Education Capital Allocation (FECA). We are pleased so many colleges and designated institutions have been able to put plans in place to make real improvements to their college estates in what is a short timeframe. This will be of real benefit to learners.

A number of colleges have raised with us circumstances which mean they are unable to complete their works by the end of March 2021. In exceptional circumstances, where an extension to the timeframes will enable delivery of projects that meet the terms of the FECA grant, we are able to extend the timeframes for these colleges until 30 September 2021.

For those colleges, which have so far not requested an extension, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances, which arise, and are outside of the control of the college. In such circumstances, we would advise setting out those circumstances to the DfE FE Capital Team. This should include proposals for how much of the FECA spend will fall into the 2021 to 2022 financial year. Contact should be made as soon as possible, if you think an extension will be necessary. The FE Capital team will only accept such requests where the reasons for the extension could not have been foreseen and the above details are included. The FE Capital Team's email address is: enquiries.fecapital@education.gov.uk.

8. Information: update to the Integrated Financial Model for Colleges guidance

This is of interest to colleges that have received Emergency Financial Support or Restructuring Facility, who are completing an IFMCv1.0.6 return for a 31 January 2021 deadline. The updated guidance has been published on the [GOV.UK college financial planning page](#).

Changes to the document reflect feedback we have received from colleges and aims to make the guidance more comprehensive. The changes include:

- a recommended route of completion (page 7).
- instructions on how to handle mergers within the IFMC (page 8).
- a model component table addressing comment queries on where to input data in the model (page 12).
- additional details on how profiles are applied to annual forecasts to generate monthly forecast (pages 3 and 23).
- a worked example of the treatment of bursaries in the model (page 11).

9. Information: update on the level of funding for the Level 3 adult offer

Following the announcement of the Level 3 adult offer last week, we can now confirm the funding rates available to support providers to scale-up the level 3 adult offer ahead of April 2021.

These uplift rates will apply to 19-23 and 24+ learners studying for qualifications on the level 3 entitlement extension list:

- a £600 per-qualification uplift for substantial level 3 qualifications above 360 guided learning hours
- a £150 per-qualification uplift for less substantial qualifications below 360 guided learning hours

9.1 Level 3 adult offer

From April 2021, any adult aged 24 and over who wants to achieve their first full level 3 qualification, which is equivalent to a technical certificate or diploma, or 2 full A levels, will be able to access almost 400 fully funded courses. You can find more information on the offer and the courses available on the [National Skills Fund GOV.UK page](#).

10. Information: update to the Charity Governance Code

The Charity Commission has updated [the Charity Governance Code](#) to set out clear recommendations on equality, diversion and inclusion and integrity. You can find [further information](#) on the Charity Governance Code website.

11. Information: new traineeships resources published

We have published a number of new materials to promote traineeships to young people, parents, teachers and careers advisors.

Amongst the new resources is a traineeships factsheet and a Q&A interview with Steve Latus (Head of Traineeships) who provides insight on how traineeships support young people into apprenticeships and jobs.

The new materials can be viewed and downloaded from the [traineeships IAG website](#) that has been created on Amazing Apprenticeships.

12. Your feedback: traineeships insight survey for training providers and employers

We are carrying out a short survey for training providers that deliver traineeships, and for employers that have or plan to offer traineeships work placements over the next few months. We would really value your input to the surveys:

- [Training Provider Survey](#)
- [Employer Survey](#)

13. Information: WorldSkills UK transfers winning formula with launch of Skills Development Hub

The [WorldSkills UK Skills Development Hub](#), which is free to access, contains tools and resources that utilise WorldSkills UK's unique insight into global best practice in skills development. FE colleges and independent training providers can access the Hub and use the content alongside their existing training programmes to support apprentices and learners develop the high-quality standard of skills that employers need.

For more information please visit the [WorldSkills website](#).

Is this page useful?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Brexit transition

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support](#) [Check the new rules for January 2021](#)

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