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Correspondence

ESFA Update further education: 20 May 2020

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-20-may-2020/esfa-update-further-education-20-may-2020>

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 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>) on GOV.UK.

There is also guidance on the apprenticeship service about COVID-19 (<https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/sections/360003793119-Coronavirus>).

Please check GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>) regularly for updates.

2. Reminder: all new learners should be on apprenticeship standards from 1 August 2020

We would like to remind providers that all remaining apprenticeship frameworks will be withdrawn to new starts on 31 July 2020.

This follows the government's announcement in October 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/removal-of-apprenticeship-frameworks/statement-on-frameworks-withdrawal-may-2019>), which confirmed that from 1 August 2020, all new apprenticeship starts must be on new, employer-designed standards. Existing apprentices on frameworks will still be able to complete on the framework, providing they started on or before 31 July 2020.

A full list of available standards can be viewed on the Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education's website (<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>). Working with the Institute, employers are continuing to develop new standards. We strongly encourage providers to continue their preparations to deliver standards from 1 August, including working with employers to understand which apprenticeship standards are most suited to the occupational roles they need to fill at this time.

A variety of resources are available including:

- resources and guidance (<https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf2326>) to support providers to prepare to deliver standards are available via the Future Apprenticeships offer on the Education and Training Foundation's website
- a blog which contains case studies from employers (<https://sfadigital.blog.gov.uk/2020/03/16/less-than-six-months-to-go-until-all-apprenticeship-starts-must-be-on-standards/>) about standards they are using to meet their needs, including where there is not a direct standard replacement for a previous framework
- an ESFA webinar that provides support and guidance on how to prepare to deliver standards, including a case study from a provider that has already made the transition



3. Information: provider relief scheme

All applicants to the provider relief scheme should now have received a letter, by email, notifying them of the outcome of their application.

Providers that were unsuccessful are entitled to appeal the outcome where they believe that the ESFA has failed to follow its own policy and / or processes, and / or that the ESFA failed to understand or recognise the evidence submitted in the application.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to ESFA.PPN220QUERIES@education.gov.uk by the date stated in the outcome letter.

4. Information: July financial collection from colleges

On Monday 15 June, we will be releasing templates for a simplified, COVID-19 specific financial return from colleges. These will be made available via GOV.UK. We will be asking colleges to complete and return the following documents by the 31 July 2020:

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

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

As with the IFMC return we will run webinars, provide guidance along with the same mailbox and response process. We don't anticipate colleges needing as much support as with the February IFMC return but we will monitor requests to ensure it's adequate. Thorough testing will be carried out on the templates before release, however if issues are identified following publication, we will quickly issue any updated templates on GOV.UK.

We discussed this proposal with colleges to ensure it captures the minimum information required to assess the financial impact of COVID-19 on the sector and individual colleges, whilst respecting finance teams are busy managing those impacts in their organisations.

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

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

5. Information: college accounts direction

We have updated the college accounts direction for 2019 to 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-accounts-direction>).

The accounts direction sets out the financial reporting requirements for sixth-form and further education colleges.

It outlines the requirements for each college to prepare audited accounts to 31 July 2020, and to submit those accounts and associated documents to ESFA by 31 December 2020.

6. Information: subcontracting declarations

In accordance with the funding rules, providers are required to make a revised declaration through MYESF as and when any of their subcontracting relationships or values change, where these revisions relate to the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 for the delivery of any apprenticeship non-levy and levy funded provision, and for 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020 for all other adult, or 16 to 19 programme (noting schools and academies are exempt) funded delivery.

We know that the coronavirus pandemic has impacted on some providers' ability to do this but would like to encourage those that have not made a return since 23 October to do so where they can.

Please note that if you do not subcontract you are still required to make a nil return. This can be done on the Manage your education skills funding (MYESF) (<https://skillsfunding.service.gov.uk/>) service.

The current declarations relate to the following periods:

- 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 for the delivery of any apprenticeship non-levy and levy funded provision and for;
- 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020 for all other adult education,

- 16 to 19 programme for the year from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020 (noting schools and academies are exempt) funded delivery

We will use ESFA Update (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/esfa-update>) to communicate the next declaration window in due course, and this will include a final deadline for submitting this round of declarations.

7. Information: apprenticeship service - completed status

At the start of May 2020, we introduced an additional “Completed” status to help you to manage your apprentice records on the apprenticeship service. You can view and filter the status of all your apprentice records within the ‘Manage your apprentices’ section of your account.

Each apprentice record will have one of the following statuses:

- **‘Waiting to start’**: apprentices who are waiting to start their apprenticeship training
- **‘Live’**: apprentices who are currently undertaking their apprenticeship
- **‘Paused’**: the employer has applied a temporary pause to an apprentice record
- **‘Stopped’**: the employer has applied a permanent stop to an apprentice record
- **‘Completed’**: the training provider has returned the individualised learner record (ILR) as completed confirming that the apprentice finished their apprenticeship training and assessment.

Once an apprentice record updates to ‘Completed’, a completion payment month is displayed on the record. This shows the month that the 20% completion payment to the provider was processed.

The completion payment month may differ from date the apprentice finished their apprenticeship.

Historical apprentice records, where the training and assessment had previously been completed, have also been updated.

Do not stop an apprentice record that has completed.