

Guidance Inform September 2020

Updated 4 September 2020

1. Reminder: Preparing final ILR returns for 2019 to 2020

There are two more opportunities to submit Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data for 2019 to 2020 academic year.

It is important that your data is submitted error free, accurate and complete because errors or incomplete returns can impact on the payments your organisation receives.

The data cannot be updated or amended after R14 has closed.

We recommend you submit your data as early as possible and that you check your validation and funding reports, available on [Submit learner data](#).

Submitting a return at R13 will allow you to identify and rectify any errors prior to R14. We have published some guidance to help you [correct the most common data problems in the 2019 to 2020 ILR](#).

Some issues may take some time to resolve and it may not be possible to clear those raised very close to the deadline, so we strongly recommend that you submit as early as possible to ensure your return is correct and complete.

You can contact our Customer Service team for assistance on specific issues and support not covered by the guidance.

For the team to deal with your questions efficiently please can you ensure your ILR file has been submitted on Submit Learner Data.

It will also help to include how many learners the error is affecting and if possible, a sample of ULNs and the ILR rule violation name. Please remember not to include any personal learner data when contacting us.

You can contact us by using our [enquiry form](#).

2. Reminder: Final funding claims for 2019 to 2020 – October 2020

This is to remind you that you must prepare to submit a final funding claim by 5pm on Tuesday 3rd November 2020 on the [Submit learner data](#) if you have an allocation for any of the following:

- Grant Funded - Adult Education Budget (AEB) (Adult Skills, 19-24 Traineeships and Community Learning)
- Learner Support for AEB Procured (Adult Skills and 19-24 Traineeships) – paid-on-profile
- Grant Funded - Advanced Learner Loans Bursary (ALLB)
- 16-19 Education

The digital claim form will be available in [Submit learner data](#) following the R14 data collection from Monday 26 October 2020.

On submission of your claim in you will also be able to view it on the [Manage your education and skills funding service](#). You will not be able to complete the form after the deadline on Tuesday 3rd November 2020.

The claim must be signed digitally on Manage your education and skills funding by your principal or a delegated authority, the deadline for signing off the claim form is 5pm on Wednesday 4th November 2020.

Details of the reconciliation approach for AEB and ALLB are being finalised and guidance will be published when it is complete.

3. Information: ESFA/HMRC debt and fraud data sharing pilot

The ESFA has entered a data sharing pilot with HMRC supported by Cabinet Office using the powers provided by the Digital Economy Act.

The aim of the pilot is to use data held by HMRC to verify data submitted by Learning Providers in their 2018 to 2019 ILR submissions.

Our analysis of the data received from HMRC identified a small number of common inconsistencies between the data submitted in the ILR and apprentice employment details held by HMRC. These included:

- Apprentices were paid by a different organisation to that submitted in the ILR as their employer
- HMRC employment records suggests the apprentice was not employed by the company identified in the ILR as their employer at the start of their apprenticeship.
- HMRC employment records suggests the apprentice was not employed for the full duration of the apprenticeship by their employer at the start of their programme and that the corresponding change to an apprentices employment status may not have been reported in the ILR
- The wages paid to the apprentice, according to HMRC employment records, was not consistent with the expected hours worked (a minimum of 30 hours per week at the legal wage for an apprentice)

We will write to the small number of providers we have identified with apprentices meeting those criteria during the next 6 weeks.

All providers should check their current data to ensure the employer and employment status are reported correctly throughout the programme and, if necessary, update their ILR ahead of R14.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

4. Information: National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 open for entries

The National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 are now open for entries.

Back for their 17th year, the National Apprenticeship Awards are a fantastic opportunity to highlight business and individual success in apprenticeships and are particularly poignant this year, given the challenges many employers and apprentices have faced during the pandemic.

Entries to the awards are open until 25 September 2020, and this year winners will be recognised at online broadcast ceremonies. These ceremonies will also showcase good news stories from COVID-19, with examples of where apprentices have gone above and beyond to make a difference.

Regional ceremonies will take place between 2 and 6 November, with the national ceremony taking place on Wednesday 25 November.

Apprentice employers, apprentices and apprenticeship champions from all sectors are invited to enter the awards - from engineering, digital, healthcare and science, to beauty, manufacturing and education.

To find out more about the awards, or to sign up to the mailing list, please visit: [appawards.co.uk](#)

5. Information: Incentive payment for hiring new apprentices: applications go live

From 1 September, employers large and small can [apply for large cash incentives](#) designed to create more high-quality apprenticeship opportunities.

As part of the [Government's Plan for Jobs](#), employers are being offered £2,000 for each new apprentice aged under 25 they hire, and £1,500 for each new apprentice they hire aged 25 and over, up to the 31st January 2021. This includes taking on an apprentice who has been made redundant.

The new cash incentives for employers are in addition to the existing £1,000 payment for new 16-18 year-old apprentices, and those aged under 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The incentive payment for hiring a new apprentice is different to the apprenticeship levy and can be used on anything to support organisational costs, for example facilities, uniforms, apprentice's travel or their salary.

Any organisation can apply for the payment, no matter the size or the sector. Applications must be made through the Apprenticeship Service, employers not currently registered will be able to set up an account.

We would be grateful if you would please cascade this news to employers that you work with.

6. Information: published GCSE results on the Learning Records Service 2020

This August, FE providers have seen a spectacular turnaround for the availability of published GCSE results on the Learning Records Service.

The process of uploading learner's results has previously taken approximately two weeks to become readily available on the Personal Learning Record, yet this year, after working closely with Awarding Bodies, more than 4.6 million qualifications were published within just 24 hours of being released.

User research and close communication with providers working in Further Education has shown the positive impact upon enrolment has been "hugely beneficial", saving significant manual data entry to enable a streamlined enrolment process.

2020 in particular, has shed light on the importance of electronically processing results due to the impact of handling paper copies in the midst of COVID-19, and progressing forward, it is clear that this 24 hour turnover is a timescale that is certainly possible, and a target that could be attainable for future years to come.

Continuous research with Awarding Bodies and Further Education providers will be prioritised to understand the impact and benefit of maintaining a rapid delivery of results on the Learning Records Service.

If this is an area of interest to you, and you would like to contribute your thoughts and feedback, please get in touch with heather.aiken@education.gov.uk

7. Information: New Apprenticeship Service webinars from September 2020

We are pleased to announce the Apprenticeship Service is holding several webinars from September aimed at employers, training providers, employer-providers, end-point assessment organisations and any organisations/individuals with an interest in the apprenticeship service.

All webinars are hosted by subject matter experts to help service users to understand more about the apprenticeship service and the apprenticeships programme.

Topics include:

- The value of assessment in apprenticeships
- How to apply for an incentive payment for hiring a new apprentice
- How to support employers to apply for an incentive payment for hiring a new apprentice
- Funding rules update (coming soon)
- Off the job training update (coming soon)

You can [sign up now](#)

You can watch all apprenticeship service webinar recordings on [esfagovuk](#).

[Follow @ESFAdigital on Twitter](#)

8. Information: Gathering customer feedback to improve our services

The customer experience team recently invited feedback from providers on what it's like to return ILR data, view your reports and reconcile your payments. We have already had around 130 responses.

Thank you very much to those of you who took the time to give us your feedback.

If you'd like to add your views, please [complete our R12 ILR to payments survey](#).

The customer experience team are still analysing the responses and will go through it with the data collection and payment teams.

There are great suggestions and constructive criticism on ways that various aspects of the journey can be improved.

We will share all of the feedback with the data collection and payment teams.

We will provide a more detailed summary of the feedback and our proposed actions in next month's Inform.

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Coronavirus (COVID-19) The UK has left the EU

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

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