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Guidance

Inspection information for further education and skills providers: for use from September 2026

Updated 12 June 2026

Applies to England

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For use on inspections from 1 September 2026.

About this page

This page contains information about our inspections of further education (FE) and skills providers for a general audience.

It does not explain how inspectors carry out full inspections, which is in our separate [operating guide for FE and skills inspections](#). The operating guide sets out what inspectors do on inspection, who we engage with and how, and how we feed back to leaders and report our findings. This page also does not contain the standards inspectors use to evaluate provision. Those standards, with guidance on applying them across different provider types, are in our [toolkit for FE and skills providers](#). These documents should be read together.

We have also published guidance for inspectors on how to carry out FE and skills monitoring inspections.

Types of inspection

FE and skills inspections are carried out under [Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#). In full inspections, we grade the provider for each of the FE and skills evaluation areas. For further information about how we carry out full inspections, please see our [operating guide for FE and skills inspections](#). Monitoring inspections are carried out where we have identified a need for improvement and in the other circumstances set out in the [monitoring inspections](#) section.

We inspect residential accommodation in colleges, taking into account the [national minimum standards for the accommodation of students aged under 18](#). These standards apply to institutions within the FE sector that have residential accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds, as defined by [section 91 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992](#). These inspections are carried out by our social care inspectors, and are separate from the inspection of a college's education and training provision, which this document describes. The approach to inspecting residential provision is set out in the [social care common inspection framework \(SCCIF\): residential provision of FE colleges](#). If a college is registered as a care home, its accommodation is inspected by the Care Quality Commission.

Types of providers we inspect

We inspect the following types of providers:

- independent training providers (including those providing apprenticeship training up to and including level 7)^{[\[footnote 1\]](#)}
- FE colleges, including specialist colleges and land-based colleges
- sixth-form colleges
- independent specialist colleges
- dance and drama colleges^{[\[footnote 2\]](#)}
- local authority providers
- designated institutions^{[\[footnote 3\]](#)}
- employer providers

- 16 to 19 academies
- higher education institutions

We also have arrangements with the Ministry of Defence for inspecting Armed Forces initial training for officers and other ranks at phase 1, phase 2 and in University Service Units, and with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service for inspecting offender learning. Those inspections operate under different arrangements. Details of these are set out on Ofsted's pages about [inspecting initial training for the Armed Forces](#) and [inspecting education, skills and work activities in prisons and young offender institutions](#) respectively.

Scope of inspection

We normally inspect providers that are directly responsible for one or more of the following:

- post-16 education and training funded directly by the Department for Education (DfE) (if they are one of the types of provider we inspect)
- apprenticeship and foundation apprenticeship training funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- adult education funding from the DWP and/or a strategic authority
- Skills Bootcamps funded by the DWP, a strategic authority, or other local grant area(s)
- an advanced learner loans facility from the DfE

Subcontracted provision that is part of the directly funded provider's responsibility is also within the scope of inspection. As part of the inspection, inspectors may look at any provision that subcontractors or partners carry out on behalf of the provider. Typically, visits to, or communications with, subcontractors are likely to include inspection of the direct contract holder's arrangements to quality assure and improve the subcontracted provision.

Outside of scope

Any provision that is part of a pilot scheme is normally outside the scope of inspection. Apprenticeship units remain out of scope of inspection until April 2027 at the earliest. Inspections will not include provision that the provider operates on behalf of other providers under subcontracted arrangements.

Types of provision

The different funding streams and programmes that make up the types of provision we inspect are as follows:

Education programmes for young people

These include:

- provision funded through the DfE's 16 to 18 funding for study programmes
- DfE-funded full-time provision for [14- to 16-year-olds enrolled in colleges](#)
- T-level technical education programmes (and T-level foundation year programmes)
- provision for learners funded under the Dance and Drama Awards scheme

Adult learning programmes

These learning programmes include provision funded through:

- the DWP's adult skills fund
- the devolved adult skills fund/adult education budget
- advanced learner loans

This includes:

- Skills Bootcamps, whether they are funded directly by the DWP, or through a strategic authority, local authority or local enterprise partnership, or employer representative body

- free courses for jobs provision
- tailored learning programmes

It does not cover the Diploma in Education and Training.

Apprenticeships (at all levels)

This covers apprenticeship training at levels 2 to 7, including foundation apprenticeships, funded by DWP, in any type of provider.

This includes apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7 (whether degree or non-degree). Irrespective of the level(s) of the provision, we inspect, grade and report collectively on the whole of a provider's apprenticeship provision.

We inspect level 5 learning and skills teacher apprenticeships and level 6 teacher apprenticeships as initial teacher education (ITE) and not as FE and skills, using the [framework and materials for ITE inspections](#).

Provision for learners and apprentices with high needs

This covers provision for learners and apprentices for whom providers receive the DfE's high-needs funding in addition to the DfE's 16 to 18 funding for study programmes and/or 16 to 18 apprenticeships (learners and apprentices up to the age of 25 may be eligible for this funding).

When we inspect providers

Providers are normally inspected every 4 years. The exception to this is if the provider is currently in one of our [monitoring programmes](#), or if the provider is a [new provider](#) or [newly merged college](#).

Monitoring inspections

We will usually monitor a provider if:

- we have graded any evaluation areas 'urgent improvement' or where safeguarding has been graded 'not met'
- we have graded any evaluation area 'needs attention'
- it received a grade of 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' for its overall effectiveness at its last inspection before November 2025

We may also monitor a provider in the circumstances set out in [new providers](#) and [newly merged colleges](#).

We can also carry out a focused monitoring inspection to a provider at any time if we have significant concerns, such as safeguarding.

For providers who receive grades of 'expected standard' or higher in a full inspection, the next full inspection will normally be scheduled within 4 years of publication of the full inspection report card.

For providers who receive one or more 'needs attention' grade in any evaluation area (but no 'urgent improvement' grades), a monitoring inspection will normally be scheduled within 13 months.

At this monitoring inspection, it is possible for 'needs attention' grades to improve. If, following monitoring, the provider has all grades of 'expected standard' or above, the next full inspection will normally be scheduled within 4 years of publication of the previous full inspection report card.

If any of the evaluation areas are still graded 'needs attention' following the monitoring inspection, the next full inspection will be scheduled within 30 months of publication of the previous full inspection report card.

If inspectors have concerns that any evaluation areas may have declined below 'needs attention', or that safeguarding may be graded 'not met', we may schedule a full inspection of the provider.

For providers who receive one or more 'urgent improvement' grade in any evaluation area, a first monitoring inspection will normally be scheduled within 6 months.

At the first monitoring inspection, it is possible for grades to improve. If all evaluation areas are graded at or above 'expected standard' following the first monitoring inspection, the next full inspection will normally be scheduled within 4 years of publication of the previous full inspection report card.

If any of the evaluation areas are graded 'needs attention' and there are no remaining 'urgent improvement' grades following the first monitoring inspection, a second monitoring inspection will be scheduled within 13 months of the publication of the previous full inspection report card. The next full inspection will normally be scheduled within 30 months of publication of the previous full inspection report card where any evaluation areas are still graded 'needs attention' following the second monitoring inspection.

If any evaluation areas are still graded 'urgent improvement' following the first monitoring inspection, a second monitoring inspection will normally be scheduled within 12 months of the publication of the previous full inspection report card. If any evaluation areas are still graded 'urgent improvement' following the second monitoring inspection, a full inspection will normally be scheduled within 18 months of publication of the previous full inspection report card.

If any evaluation area is graded 'needs attention' following the second monitoring inspection, a full inspection will normally be scheduled within 30 months of publication of the previous full inspection report card.

If all evaluation areas are graded 'expected standard' or higher following the second monitoring inspection, the next full inspection will normally be scheduled within 4 years of publication of the previous full inspection report card.

More information about monitoring inspections is set out in the [monitoring operating guide for inspectors](#).

New providers

Providers that are new to receiving direct funding through one of the funding streams referred to earlier will normally receive a 'new provider monitoring inspection' within 18 months. We will carry out the first full inspection within 3 years of their starting to deliver funded provision.

Newly merged colleges

A newly merged college will normally receive a full inspection within 3 years of the merger. We regard all merged colleges as new colleges for inspection purposes, regardless of the type of merger. A newly merged college will not carry forward any of the inspection grades from the predecessor colleges.

If one or more of the predecessor colleges had any areas that were graded 'needs attention' or 'urgent improvement' following a full inspection under the renewed framework, or was graded 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' at its most recent inspection under the previous education inspection framework (EIF) we will normally carry out a monitoring inspection before the first full inspection of the newly merged college. We may also carry out a monitoring inspection of any newly merged college at any reasonable time following the merger.

Sixth-form colleges that convert to become 16 to 19 academies

Sixth-form colleges that convert to 16 to 19 academies are treated in the same way as all other providers.

We treat sixth-form colleges that convert to become 16 to 19 academies according to their most recent inspection outcome, in line with what we set out earlier.

In these cases, the newly converted 16 to 19 academy will no longer receive an enhanced inspection. For the purposes of inspection, a 16 to 19 academy or free school that is re-brokered (that is, transferred to a new sponsor) because of its performance is treated as a new provider, so we follow the monitoring timescales.

Colleges or higher education institutions that become designated institutions

We normally treat a college or higher education institution that was dissolved and then became a designated institution (in accordance with [section 28 of the Further](#)

[and Higher Education Act 1992](#)) according to its most recent inspection outcome, in a similar way to sixth-form colleges that convert.

Length of inspection

Full inspections normally last 3 or 4 days on site. Monitoring inspections normally last 1 or 2 days on site.

The inspection team

Inspections of FE and skills providers are carried out by:

- His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), who we employ directly
- Ofsted Inspectors (OI), who are contracted to work for us part-time; they are either serving practitioners in a provider, non-serving practitioners or former HMI

The size of the inspection team depends on:

- the size and nature of the provider
- the number of programmes it runs and subjects it covers
- the number of sites it operates from
- the geographical spread of the provision

A lead inspector oversees the inspection. They are responsible for managing the inspection and the inspection team, making the notification and planning calls to the provider, and writing the [report card](#).

Team inspectors support the lead inspector. They may be present for the whole of the inspection or only some days. Individual team inspectors may lead on one or more evaluation areas and/or on a specific type of provision.

Sometimes, new inspectors, members of Ofsted's non-inspection staff or other professionals may be present on site to observe an inspection. An HMI or senior HMI may also visit a provider, or monitor an inspection remotely, to make sure the inspection meets our quality assurance and consistency standards. We will notify

leaders during the notification call if there will be additional people with the inspection team.

Conduct

Throughout the inspection, we expect providers and inspectors to act in line with our [code of conduct](#) and show professionalism, courtesy, empathy and respect at all times.

Information about the inspection process

Overall inspection focus

Our renewed inspections reflect a significant shift in inspection culture. There is a stronger emphasis on leadership as a driver of sustained improvement, and on inclusion. These are reflected both in the themes guiding our evidence-gathering and in the standards within the toolkit.

Inspections are grounded in respectful professional dialogue, focused on impact and designed to support self-improvement and inclusive practice. They are structured but also flexible, adapting to context, responding to evidence and concentrating on what matters most for learners and apprentices. Learning walks are important and allow leaders to share their context as they are showing inspectors around their provider.

Inspectors work with the provider's staff to build an accurate view of the quality of the provision. This includes knowing and understanding how well learners and apprentices:

- achieve – academically and personally
- belong – feel that they belong to, and are valued as part of, the provider's community, so that they attend, behave and contribute positively to what the provider offers

- thrive – benefit from the right systems, processes and levels of oversight, so that they are kept safe and are able to flourish and/or fulfil their potential, whatever their background or individual needs

Inspectors will consider what leaders and managers are aiming to achieve, how well they are doing it and how they know it is working. Their starting point is the ‘expected’ standard in each of the evaluation areas in the toolkit. These considerations underpin planning, shape evidence-gathering and guide our evaluation from preparation through to final reporting.

The foundations of our renewed inspections are:

- learners and apprentices first – high expectations with a focus on outcomes and experiences
- the care and wellbeing of those we inspect – through collaborative working with providers and building positive relationships with leaders and staff
- a provider’s unique context – evidence is evaluated in the light of each provider’s strengths, challenges and priorities for improvement, and how well it identifies and meets the needs of significant groups of learners and apprentices
- the lens of the toolkit – the toolkit sets out the grading standards, supporting shared professional dialogue
- quality and impact – evidence-based decisions focus on the quality and the impact of leaders’ choices and actions on learners and apprentices, reflected in the grading standards

Throughout the inspection, we give particular attention to the experiences and outcomes of disadvantaged learners and apprentices, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those with high needs, those known or previously known to social care and those who may face any other barriers to their learning or wellbeing, including those without level 2 English and/or mathematics. These groups are central to planning, inspection activity and evaluation. Inspectors will engage with leaders who have responsibility for SEND and, where relevant, the responsible person for looked-after children. Inspectors will also consider engaging with other relevant leaders who have an inclusion role supporting these learners and apprentices, as appropriate.

What happens when a provider is notified of an

inspection

When we notify a provider of an inspection, leaders should ensure that their managers, staff, learners and apprentices, subcontractors, employers and other stakeholders are aware of it.

The inspector will also give the provider an opportunity to let us know whether anyone who will be joining the planning call requires any reasonable adjustments due to a disability. They may also consider making other adaptations to the inspection process where those with other protected characteristics may be put at a disadvantage.

We do not want providers to do any additional work or to ask learners, apprentices or employers to do work specifically for the inspection. We do not want inspections to create unnecessary workload for managers, teachers, trainers or other staff. Importantly, leaders do not need to provide:

- any information beyond what we ask for
- information in any specific format (as long as it is easily accessible for inspectors)

Which leaders can attend the notification and planning calls

During the notification call, the lead inspector and the provider agree who will attend the planning call. We encourage providers to have more than one senior leader in all calls to provide mutual assistance and support. This may be [the nominee](#), where applicable.

Inspectors will ask the provider not to record these calls or any further calls.

Information the lead inspector may ask for during the notification call

As soon as the provider has been notified of the inspection, staff should draw together the information/documents listed below. These should be working documents and not prepared specifically for the inspection.

The information will ensure that the lead inspector clearly understands the scope and range of the provision, and has what they need to plan for the logistics of the inspection.

The nominee should upload the following information, as applicable, to the Ofsted portal as soon as possible:

- details of the provider's courses/programmes and their mode of delivery, including remotely and/or online
- timetables for lessons, sessions, lectures, seminars, workshops, workplace visits and/or other learning activities that take place during the inspection
- a list of the provider's staff and/or a diagram of the organisational structure
- the geographical spread of teaching and training premises
- the names and locations of employers of apprentices, and the workplaces for study programme learners
- the names and locations of subcontractors
- contact information for key staff
- the current number of learners and apprentices in the following age groups: 14 to 16 full-time and part-time; 16 to 18; 19+ (if the provider has 14- and 15-year-olds, we may ask for specific information about these learners)
- the current overall number of learners (excluding apprentices) at level 1 or below, level 2, level 3 and level 4/5, by subject area
- the current number of apprentices and foundation apprentices at each level, according to age groups: 16 to 18, 19 to 24, and 25+, by subject area and by apprenticeship
- the current number of learners and apprentices following employability programmes/Skills Bootcamps and those who have attended these programmes in the previous 12 months
- details of learners who are on a study programme but who are not working towards a substantial qualification
- the current number of learners on community tailored learning programmes and those who have attended these programmes in the previous 12 months
- the current number of learners and apprentices with SEND, and the number and details of learners and apprentices for whom the provider receives high-needs funding
- relevant information about learners and apprentices, including disadvantaged

learners and apprentices; those with SEND; those with high needs; those known (or previously known) to social care and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, including those without level 2 English and/or mathematics

- operational documents, including: Wi-Fi details, if the provider has it, so that inspectors can connect to the internet; a map of the provider's buildings; and other practical information such as timetables, staffing, absence and times for the provider's day, including any planned interruptions to normal routines during the inspection, and whether any lessons or teachers/trainers should not be visited for any reason (for example, if a teacher is subject to capability procedures)

Where possible, providers should make the following information available to inspectors by 8.30am on the first day of the inspection:

- safeguarding information (with secure access), including:
 - the single central record, where applicable
 - a list of any referrals made to the designated safeguarding lead at the provider and any that were subsequently referred to the local authority, along with brief details of the resolution (a very short summary of how the provider dealt with the matter and assurance that learners and apprentices have received the appropriate help) any referrals made to the local authority designated officer regarding staff or other adults
 - a list of all learners and/or apprentices who have open cases with children's services or social care and all learners and/or apprentices who have a multi-agency plan (to ensure that the provider knows who these learners and apprentices are, and can meet requirements); inspectors may speak with some of these learners and apprentices as part of their inspection activity to make sure the provider is doing what is required by the [Keeping children safe in education](#) guidance

Role of the nominee

Each provider is invited to nominate a senior member of staff to support planning, communication and engagement throughout the inspection. Their involvement helps the inspection to run smoothly.

In particular, the role of the nominee is to:

- be the named contact for inspection correspondence
- attend the planning call alongside the leader
- make sure that learners and apprentices, employers and other key stakeholders are informed about the inspection
- make sure that learners and apprentices, employers, staff and parents and carers (who we will refer to as 'parents' throughout, for ease of reading) are informed about how they can give their views through the online questionnaires
- brief the provider's staff about inspection arrangements
- provide information for the lead inspector to support inspection planning
- provide insight into the provider's context
- liaise with the lead inspector and make sure that documents and other information are available, and that staff can attend meetings
- attend regularly planned meetings with inspectors to review evidence and discuss emerging findings and grades
- make sure that appropriate facilities are provided to enable inspectors to have face-to-face meetings and to carry out inspection activities
- act as the link between the lead inspector and provider if the provider wants to raise any issues and concerns or to clarify anything about the inspection
- keep other leaders and managers up to date on the progress of the inspection
- join the lead inspector for inspection activities, where appropriate
- suggest to the inspection team where they could gather additional evidence
- coordinate feedback arrangements, in particular at the end of the inspection

The nominee may also submit the [factual accuracy response](#).

Further information about the nominee

The nominee should have a thorough knowledge of the provider's programmes and operations, including, where appropriate, those of subcontractors.

The nominee should be sufficiently senior to ensure the cooperation of staff at all levels. They should have authority to carry out the role with autonomy.

The leader of the provider may take on this role if they wish to and feel able to.

A member of staff who is also an OI can be a nominee.

Training for nominees is available but not compulsory.

The nominee will not have access to confidential inspection notes, safeguarding complaints, or any whistle-blowing information.

Nominees will not be present during confidential discussions with learners, apprentices, staff or parents, or where their presence could limit open dialogue.

Shadow nominee

Providers, if they wish, may have a shadow nominee (an employee of the provider) for staff development purposes, as well as their nominee. The shadow nominee will act as an observer. They will not contribute to discussions with inspectors but may take notes and assist with other arrangements. This does not affect the role of the nominee.

Requesting a deferral or to pause an inspection

If the provider needs to ask for a deferral, it should do so as soon as possible after it is notified of the inspection, or, in unannounced inspections, after the inspector(s) arrive. The decision whether to grant a deferral will be made in accordance with our [deferral policy](#).

If a provider thinks an inspection should pause once it has started, we will consider the request under our [pausing policy](#).

Next steps following our inspection findings

The timing of the next inspection is set out in the section [When we inspect providers](#) and reflects the inspection grades.

Ofsted is not involved in any decisions about funding or contracting; that is a matter for the relevant funding body. The DfE or other body that funds a provider may make an intervention, take contractual action or vary a provider's contractual conditions based wholly or in part on the grades or findings of an inspection or monitoring inspection.

Meetings

To ensure that all meetings are practical and constructive, the lead inspector will manage the number of attendees and the conduct of all attending.

Inspectors will ask providers to confirm who will attend the end-of-day reflection and grading meetings and will set out the expectations for these. Inspectors will explain that it is flexible who attends, as long as providers agree with them who is attending before the meeting takes place.

Who can attend the final feedback meeting

Those who may attend the final feedback meeting with inspectors include:

- the senior leader (principal, chief executive officer (CEO), head of service or equivalent)
- those with responsibility for governance and/or oversight
- the nominee
- the shadow nominee, if one is appointed
- any appropriate person the principal/CEO wants to be present to assist and support them
- any others agreed between the nominee and the lead inspector to ensure the necessary support for the provider's leaders

Representatives of the DfE, DWP, strategic authorities or other funding bodies may also attend the final feedback meeting. Inspectors will permit their attendance only for the purpose of listening to the feedback.

Attendance at the meeting is voluntary. You can find further information about what the lead inspector will discuss during the feedback meeting in the [operating guide for FE and skills inspections](#).

The lead inspector seeks to ensure that the meeting is practical and constructive by

managing the number of attendees and the conduct of all attending. They will make sure that leaders know that their input in this meeting is valued.

The lead inspector will make sure that the inspection team has connected the evidence gathered and reflected on it proportionately, which will help leaders to understand the final feedback.

Gathering additional evidence

In some circumstances, we may carry out another visit to the provider to gather additional evidence. Please see our [gathering additional evidence protocol](#) for further information.

Potential misconceptions about inspection

Toolkit

We do not expect leaders to produce written evidence to support each standard in each evaluation area of the toolkit.

The toolkit focuses on the quality and impact of leaders' choices and decisions on learners and apprentices, rather than compliance alone. It is used to guide conversations, reflect on evidence, and make sure grades reflect the evidence gathered. It supports a shared understanding and discussion of the strengths of the provider's work, its context, and areas for further exploration.

We do not expect providers to have completed any formal self-evaluation using the toolkit. Leaders will not be at a disadvantage if they do not have a written self-evaluation. In the planning call, we will ask leaders about their perceived strengths and areas for development, using the toolkit as a common focal point. This is to help inspectors plan what inspection activities need to be carried out to gather the necessary evidence to:

- celebrate what leaders have identified as strengths
- validate the priorities leaders have identified for improvement, and whether they have an effective plan to bring about the desired impact
- highlight where there is more to do to ensure that all learners and apprentices achieve, belong and thrive

Curriculum

We do not have a view about how providers should approach their curriculums.

We evaluate any providers that take radically different approaches to the curriculum fairly. Inspectors evaluate a provider's curriculums according to the appropriateness of their coverage, content, structure and sequencing, and how effectively they are implemented.

Planning, teaching and assessment

We do not prefer any particular method of planning (including lesson/session/workshop planning), teaching or assessment. We do not expect a specific format for curriculum planning.

We do not require providers to show us individual lesson plans or previous lesson plans.

We do not grade individual teachers, trainers or lessons.

We do not evaluate individual learners' and apprentices' work or products, or expect work to be created to provide evidence for inspection.

We do not use work scrutiny to evaluate teachers' or trainers' marking.

We do not require providers to carry out a specific amount or type of lesson observation.

Safeguarding

Our safeguarding expectations are those set out in [Keeping children safe in education](#), [Working together to safeguard children](#) and in government guidance in relation to adult safety.

We do not expect or require providers to apply retrospectively for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other pre-employment checks for staff who were appointed before DBS requirements were introduced, and who have been employed continuously since then.

Evidence/recordings

We do not require photographic evidence of learners' or apprentices' work (although inspectors may take photographs of their work – they will take all reasonable steps to anonymise these).

We do not require providers to share recordings of live lessons that are delivered remotely, unless they are normally stored for future use by staff, learners and apprentices.

We do not expect providers to prepare a presentation or any additional documents about their setting or context for inspection. Inspectors prioritise gathering first-hand evidence during the inspection.

Complaints about a provider

We will not investigate the circumstances of a complaint or come to any conclusions about the complaint itself.

Artificial intelligence

Providers' use of artificial intelligence (AI) is not an explicit part of our inspection and regulation frameworks.

There is no specific expectation that a provider will use AI in a certain way or will use AI at all.

Inspectors do not directly evaluate the use of AI or any AI tool. Our focus is, instead, on the quality of decision-making about AI.

Concerns or complaints about an inspection

We take any concerns seriously. Leaders are free to raise concerns and doing so does not negatively affect inspection findings or how we grade a provider.

If leaders have any concerns about an inspection, including about inspectors' conduct or any potential or perceived conflicts of interest, they should raise these with the lead inspector at the earliest opportunity to try to resolve issues before the on-site inspection activity is completed.

If leaders cannot resolve their concerns with the lead inspector during the inspection, they can contact a senior Ofsted leader using the number provided as part of the notification process.

If it is not possible to resolve concerns through either of these routes, the provider or responsible body should follow the steps set out in our [complaints process](#).

We respond to any complaints before we finalise and send the report card to the provider. If the provider has highlighted some minor points about clarity or factual accuracy in the draft report card, it will not normally be able to submit a formal complaint or challenge about these once the report card has been finalised.

When and how report cards are published

We send report cards to the provider following moderation, quality assurance and a consistency check. In most circumstances, this will be within 18 working days of the end of the inspection.

Providers have 5 working days to comment on the draft report card. They can highlight minor points relating to clarity and/or factual accuracy. If they submit only minor points of clarity or factual accuracy, we consider these and respond to them

when we share the final report card. This is normally within 30 working days of the end of the inspection. We may also send the draft report card to the DfE and other funding bodies. This takes place only after moderation, quality assurance and consistency checking.

Providers can also submit a [formal complaint](#) seeking a review of the inspection process, including the grades given, or expressing concerns about inspectors' conduct.

Leaders should share the inspection findings with those responsible for oversight of the provider and with whoever they consider appropriate, which may include colleagues, family members, and/or their wider support group; however, the information should not be made public or shared with parents until the provider receives the final report card.

We normally publish the final report card on our [reports website](#) 5 working days after sending it to the provider.

How to provide feedback about the inspection

We invite all providers to take part in a voluntary post-inspection survey. We send a link to the survey with the final copy of the provider's inspection report card. The survey responses help us improve our inspection work.

How we handle evidence and personal information

Individuals and organisations are legally required to give us access to information. [Section 131 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) gives our inspectors powers of entry to any premises on which a provider offers education or training that is publicly funded, and to any of the provider's premises that it uses in connection with its education or training.

[Section 132 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) gives our inspectors a

power to take copies of, or take away, any records and documents relating to the education and training being inspected. This power enables inspectors to look at computers and other devices that may hold information.

Our [privacy policy](#) sets out what personal information we collect in order to inspect a provider, what we do with it, how long we keep it for, and individuals' rights under data protection legislation.

Inspectors record their notes using our systems. They may see information that contains personal information about staff and young people, such as registers and lesson plans. They may take notes from, or copies of, this type of supporting information before returning it to an appropriate staff member at the end of the inspection. They may take photographs of learners' and apprentices' work. Any notes, copies or photographs will be stored securely. Inspectors do not retain any inspection notes or supporting information personally. Information gathered electronically, including on laptops, mobile phones and tablets, is transferred securely in line with our security policies.

Inspectors are instructed to use digital methods for recording notes wherever possible. Where handwritten notes are unavoidable due to practical constraints, inspectors are required to transcribe relevant information into the secure system as soon as possible. Once transcribed, all handwritten notes must be securely disposed of in accordance with our retention policy.

Use of Ofsted logos

Providers that we judged to be outstanding or good for overall effectiveness before November 2025 can continue to use the specific Ofsted outstanding or good logos until their next full inspection. Once they receive their next full inspection, they must remove those logos, as they relate only to an overall effectiveness judgement, which they will not get as this is no longer part of our grading. For more information, see [our logo terms of use](#).

Research activities on inspection

We may [carry out research](#), based on national priorities, during our inspections. This

has no impact on the inspection.

We may use the evidence that inspectors gather during inspections to inform other work, such as national reporting. No personal data obtained as part of the inspection evidence will be used to inform other work.

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1. From 1 April 2021, Ofsted has been responsible for inspecting apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7 (degree and non-degree) as well as at levels 2 to 5. [↵](#)
 2. Dance and drama colleges are inspected against the principles of the renewed EIF at the request of the Department for Education (DfE). Ofsted inspects only those institutions who are approved by the DfE to administer the [Dance and Drama Awards scheme](#). [↵](#)
 3. Designated institutions have specially designated educational status under [section 28 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992](#). [↵](#)

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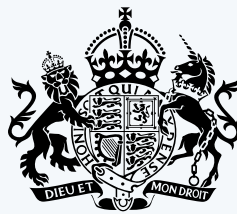
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