

FE Public Information – Learner Satisfaction survey

Guidance for providers and colleges

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Introduction

The Learner Satisfaction survey for 2011/12 runs from 14 November 2011 to 25 May 2012. Information and guidance will be published on the [FE Public Information web pages](#) throughout the survey period and notices will also be posted in the Skills Funding Agency's [Update](#).

Providers that are taking part in the survey will need to visit the [Provider Extranet](#) on a regular basis. The Provider Extranet will give regular updates on all aspects of the surveys, including near-live feedback to individual providers on their response rates. To access this site you will need your UKPRN provider code and your unique password, which has been sent to your Principal or Chief Executive.

AS A COLLEGE OR PROVIDER WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO? Check whether you are in scope

[FE Public Information - Providers in scope](#)

How to support the survey

To participate fully in the survey and ensure they gain a valid score providers will need to visit the [Provider Extranet](#) on a regular basis.

We have sent to your Principal or Chief Executive a web-link, password and log-on that will allow your organisation to check response rates to the online survey at any time during the survey period. These figures will be updated on a daily basis and will tell you your achieved responses and the extent to which your response pattern appears to be representative. It is recommended that providers use this

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information to monitor responses to ensure that they achieve the minimum number of completed questionnaires that will need to be returned to give a reliable measure of Learner Satisfaction.

The Provider Extranet also gives you the opportunity to let us have contact details for staff that are involved in the survey as well as giving us the dates that you plan to run the survey so we do not send you unnecessary reminders. For more information, please see the relevant pages on the Provider Extranet.

Consider the best way to give as many in-scope Skills Funding Agency and YPLA funded learners as possible the opportunity to take part in the survey

You will only be able to get a score in the survey if the number of learners responding is a sufficiently large and representative sample of all the in-scope learners in your organisation during the entire survey period.

To check what your minimum sample size is likely to be, please estimate the number of in-scope learners you will have between 14 November 2011 and 25 May 2012 and use the online calculator which is available on the [Provider Extranet](#)

We recommend that you aim for a census approach to the survey rather than a sampling approach and start the survey early to allow enough time. By doing a census you will make sure that:

- you get enough valid responses to obtain a score
- your responses are representative of your learner population with regard to age, gender and level of study.

Providers whose responses are not representative of their learner population cannot be awarded a score.

We will correct statistically for minor imbalances but samples will be rejected if they are badly skewed, ie if some learner groupings are over or under represented. The figure obtained should be used as a guide only and we strongly encourage colleges and providers to exceed this figure to ensure the minimum number of completed surveys is achieved. Your learners (and those of your sub-contracted providers) can log-in to the survey by entering your UKPRN and their personal Learner Reference Number, as entered on the ILR. Please ensure that your learners have access to this information. If you do not know what your UKPRN number is please visit the UK Register of Learning Providers ([UKRLP](#)) website, where you can access details. In the survey we refer to this number as the “code number for your college or learning provider”. It is important learners enter this number because it ensures that your learners’ responses are correctly attributed to your organisation. Learners cannot access the survey without the UKPRN. Please note that you should also distribute this number to any sub-contractors who deliver in-scope learning on your behalf and ask them in turn to

communicate this to those of your learners who are with them. If this learning is part of your in-scope provision it will be included when we calculate your learners.

In some providers, Learner Reference Numbers are used routinely as intranet log-ins and appear on learner ID cards, meaning learners will have the number easily available to them. If this is not the case in your organisation, please give consideration to the best way to get this information to learners in readiness for the survey. (Some learners may not be familiar with the terminology and know their personal learner reference number as the “learner id”.) Please note that learners will still be able to complete the survey if they have lost or forgotten their Learner Reference Number but if this happens for a high proportion of survey respondents it will delay our ability to turn the survey results around quickly. Accurate Learner Reference Numbers will also increase the value of response breakdowns we will be able to give you at the end of the survey. The Learner Reference Number is used to confirm that the learner is in scope for the survey and also serves as a protection for you as the provider by ensuring that learners cannot enter duplicate submissions.

Please note that the personal reference number is allocated to learners at the time of enrolment (It is not the Unique Learner Reference Number (ULN) which is being introduced across the country. We cannot use the ULN for the survey yet because not all learners have a ULN and there can also be delay between learners beginning their learning and receiving a number.). Learners will complete the survey by following a link to the dedicated survey webpage. Colleges and providers could distribute the link in emails, messages on their intranet, and letters or posters, depending on the approach that will get the best response.

Decide if it would be beneficial for some of your learners to complete the survey on hand-held communication devices such as BlackBerrys

The survey can be accessed and completed from any internet enabled communication device such as BlackBerrys. The survey will be available 24 hours a day during the survey period and can be completed from any internet-linked computer, palm top, BlackBerry or other smart phone. More guidance on this will be published in November 2011.

Consider how you want to integrate the Learner Satisfaction survey with your own survey processes

If you want learners to complete one of you own surveys after the Learner Satisfaction survey, you may want to use the “hyperlink-embedded method” to achieve this. For guidance on how to link the surveys, please read “Guidance on hyperlink-embedded method for linking the Learner Satisfaction survey with your college or provider survey” which is available [here](#). To comply with the Data Protection Act, it is important that you follow this guidance.

The advantage of the “hyperlink-embedded method” is that it works from any starting point where you may want to embed the hyperlink – such as a Word document, an email or your intranet home page. This method is therefore versatile and also gives a consistent user experience.

**Decide when to administer the survey during the survey window:
14 November 2011 until 25 May 2012**

Providers can decide how they manage the administration of the survey throughout this period. It will be possible for learners to log on at any time of the day, and from any location and any machine, provided that they have their provider's UKPRN and personal Learner Reference Number to hand. All learners on programmes during this period are entitled to take part including learners whose learning programmes end in or before December 2011.

Providers can let us know what their planned survey start and end dates are on the Provider Extranet.

Decide if you need to apply for permission to use some paper surveys

The Learner Satisfaction survey is an online survey with an extensive survey window. In exceptional circumstances providers can apply to use paper surveys if it is impossible for some learners to complete the survey online during the survey period.

Providers who wish to use paper based surveys have until 18 November 2011 to apply.

Providers who do not make an application by this date will be expected to use the survey online.

To apply for paper surveys, please follow the link on the [Learner Satisfaction](#) web page.

Providers have the option of receiving course level feedback from online survey responses but we cannot offer this facility for paper surveys.

Paper survey responses are subject to a small downward statistical adjustment during the calculation of the score to reflect the different pattern of responses for learners completing paper and online surveys.

All paper surveys **must** be completed by a learner or by someone with a learner support role if the learner has learning difficulties or disabilities. It is not acceptable for staff to interview learners or summarise views obtained in other ways. For more information, click [here](#).

The paper based survey window ends earlier than the online survey and the final day is **30 April 2012**.

All responses will be collected by courier from providers on **1 May 2012** and only those responses that are collected at that time can be included in the response calculation.

Course level feedback

Following a pilot in 2010/11, learners will have the option to answer a small number of questions towards the end of the survey at course level. It is our intention that, subject to data reliability, these responses will contribute towards the final score. Please refer to the course level guidance which will be published in November 2011 for more information on how to prepare your learners for the course level questions of the survey.

Sell the benefits of the survey

Some colleges and providers approach surveys of this kind as a purely administrative exercise. However, there is evidence that learners will respond better to the survey if they understand its importance and see it as part of their entitlement as a learner. It would be useful if providers considered the best way to publicise the survey at an early stage, so that learners view participation as a right, rather than an obligation.

Convey the ease with which the survey can be completed

The survey is very short, taking only a few minutes for most learners to complete.

Plan to include all Skills Funding Agency or YPLA funded learners including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those undertaking programmes in ESOL.

For more information click [here](#).

Delivering your results

At the end of the survey we will use your learners' responses to calculate your Learner Satisfaction score. We will also give you further information on your learners' responses to each question and the pattern of responses by broad learner group as well as the responses to the course level questions, if your organisation has participated in this element of the survey.

If you have any questions, please:

- See the FAQs on the [Provider Extranet](#)
- Go to the [Learner Satisfaction survey pages](#)
- Contact the Data Service Helpdesk: servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk

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