

Update

Issue 36
15 December 2010

**Skills
Funding
Agency**

Welcome

Update is our weekly round up of business critical and useful information to Skills Funding Agency providers. If you have any feedback please get in touch by emailing the [Update mailbox](#).

Please forward and share Update with the relevant colleagues within your organisation. Colleagues might also like to register for [web alerts](#), which will alert you via email when new issues of Update and important announcements are added onto the [Skills Funding Agency website](#).

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Guidance Note 6*

Action Information

Guidance Note 6 reflects the publication of [Skills for Sustainable Growth](#) (the Skills Strategy) and [Further Education – New Horizon, Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth](#) (the Skills Investment Strategy) by the Government.

Together, the strategies set out the Government's plans for the reform of the further education system. This reform is founded on the principles of fairness, shared responsibility and greater freedom. This Guidance Note complements the two Skills documents by setting out the technical and operational details of how these strategies will be implemented through the Skills Funding Agency.

Guidance Note 6 is available on the [Skills Funding Agency website](#).

*Please note the date in paragraph 46 of Guidance Note 6 should read the 15 December 2010.

Minimum Levels of Performance

Action

Information

Minimum levels of performance (MLP) will continue to be calculated and applied at an aggregate level across all ages, for each provider. The methodology is unchanged from previous years. The minimum thresholds have been agreed by Ministers in Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department of Education (DfE). There is a modest increase to some thresholds which reflects Ministers' desire to drive out poor provision and reflect increases in success rates (minimum levels of performance thresholds have not increased for the last 2 years). A [Guidance Document](#) and [Technical Annexe](#) are available for further information.

Quarter 1 review - Letter to colleges and training organisations

Action

Information

David Hughes, National Director of College and Provider Services, has written a letter for colleges and training organisations regarding the review of 2010/11 Quarter 1 performance, and the action that has been taken as a result of the review.

The letter is available for colleges and training organisations to download from the [Skills Funding Agency website](#).

URGENT: First freeze of Approved College and Training Organisation Register (ACTOR) and an important message for existing providers

Action

The first freeze of Approved College and Training Organisation Register will take place at 17:00 on 31 December 2010.

For information on the action that you need to take to be considered for funding in 2011/12, and an **important message for existing providers**, please visit the [Skills Funding Agency website](#).

Skills Conditionality Public Consultation Consultation

The Government is committed to ensuring that individuals who are able to look for work or prepare for work, should be required to do so as a condition of receiving benefit, and those who fail to meet their responsibilities, without good cause, should face a sanction in the form of loss of benefit. Skills conditionality involves Jobcentre Plus referring claimants aged 16 and over to skills support with potential benefit sanctions for non-participation. For those aged 19 and over this will be through the Next Step Service (or the new all-age service that will replace it), training providers or colleges.

On the 9 December the Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills launched a consultation, regarding implementation of skills conditionality which will last for 8 weeks.

The Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills are seeking responses from providers and all partners (including Next Step). To read the consultation document and find out how to respond, please visit the [Department for Work and Pensions website](#).

Family Learning Impact Funding Returns Action

Family Learning Impact Funding providers are reminded that the Interim Report for Year 3 is required by the end of December 2010. This return asks for information on the number of Family Learning Impact Funding courses completed in the period April – December 2010 and provides information on the progress of the 2010/11 programme for the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

More detailed information on learner numbers will be required for the Final Report on Family Learning Impact Funding Year 3 to be submitted in April 2011. A summary of data returns required and copies of the returns can be found in the Family Programmes Guidance Part 2 2010/11 which is available to download from the [Skills Funding Agency website](#).

For further information contact your Skills Funding Agency Account Manager.

Functional Skills within Apprenticeships Information

Currently there is a choice of offering either Key Skills or Functional Skills within an Apprenticeship, this choice was due to end on the 31 March 2011.

However, to support the move towards full implementation of Functional Skills, the temporary transition period has been extended. To read more about the extension please visit the [National Apprenticeship Service website](#).

Good data management guide for Further Education agreed by cross-sector group

Information

The information authority board has endorsed the Data Management principles for the Further Education Sector and the Four Good Practice Principles for Funding Bodies and agencies. These principles for good data management were developed so that users of Further Education data can be assured of its quality and reliability. Further information on these principles can be found on [the information authority website](#).

2009/10 Employer Responsive Minimum Level of Performance reports released

Information

The Data Service published the 2009/10 Employer Responsive Minimum Level of Performance reports onto the Provider Gateway on 8 December 2010. Further details on are available on the [Data Service website](#).

Qualifications and Credit Framework Transition Update

Information

From 1 April 2010 the Skills Funding Agency began new arrangements for confirming Adult Learner Responsive and Train to Gain publicly funded qualifications delivered to learners aged 19 and above in England.

As of 3 December 2010:

- 6,604 qualifications are available in the Qualifications and Credit Framework and
- 52% have been confirmed for funding for Adult Learner Responsive and/or Train to Gain.

Qualifications that have been confirmed for funding are published on fortnightly basis and are available on the Qualifications and Credit Framework section of the [Skills Funding Agency website](#).

The Data Service releases 2009/10 Learner Responsive Qualification Success Rate reports and Minimum Levels of Performance reports

Information

The Data Service published the 2009/10 Learner Responsive (F05) Qualification Success Rate reports and the Minimum Level of Performance reports on 14 December 2010. These reports are now available to download from the [Provider Gateway](#).

The Data Service launches new Management Information Library service

Information

The Data Service has launched a new [MI Library](#) service, which will give the further education sector and its partners access to a wide range of essential information at their fingertips.

The Data Service's new MI Library will contain more information about learners, learning programmes and learner achievement than is currently available in an easily accessible and transparent way, providing information on the Further Education sector for providers, partners and the public.

The new [MI Library](#) will offer user friendly information on other areas including key facts about learners, such as numbers of enrolments, Apprenticeship starts, achievements and success rates and learner numbers by location, equality and diversity and learning difficulty and/or disability.

Further details and access to the [MI Library](#) is available from [the Data Service website](#).

The Skills Funding Agency funds and regulates adult further education and skills in England.

An agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The Skills Funding Agency complies with The Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 and information on our Privacy Policy can be found on our [website](#).