



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Funding Information System (FIS) User Guide 2023 to 2024

August 2023



What this guide covers:

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- How to download and configure for the first time
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- Help and support



What is FIS?

FIS is a desktop application designed to help you prepare your ILR file for submission to the ESFA through the 'Submit Learner Data' service. FIS includes an application program interface (API) which will indicate and allow updates via a simple downloadable link when:

- new reference data is available (usually twice per month)
- a new full version of FIS is available (these will now only be necessary if a change has taken place)
- there is also an improved facility to check for connection issues

You do not have to use FIS to prepare your file for submission, but some providers find it useful. It gives you a good idea of the quality of the data you have collected, and this generates provisional reports.

To do this, it uses most of the current year's validation rules to give you an idea of the errors and warnings your file may generate.

As reference data changes all the time, you may still find your file has some errors or warnings when you submit it, even if it does not have any in FIS.

Data security

By using FIS, you take responsibility for the security of the data.



Where to find FIS for download

Things you need to have to download FIS:

- ✓ .Net Framework 4.6.1 (download this from <https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/download/details.aspx?id=49981>)

Download the latest version of FIS

Select the link to 'FIS (Funding Information Service)' from the tools and services menu on the [Submit Learner Data](#) sign in page. Or you can go direct to the FIS download page using: [FIS Tool](#)

Figure 1: link for FIS

GOV.UK Submit learner data

Submit learner data

This service is for training providers that receive funding directly from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Use this service to validate and submit:

- Individualised learner records (ILR)
- Earnings adjustment statements (EAS)
- ESF (European Social Fund) supplementary data
- Funding Claims
- Further Education (FE) staff and vacancy data
- Further Education (FE) governor data

You can also use this service to

- View and download reports for data you've submitted
- Search for Employer identifiers using the new Employer Data Service

Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) can download reports and upload reference data.

Sign in

Before you start

You will need:

- Login details for IDAMS (Information Management Services System)
- an XML or Zip file to upload for ILR data
- a CSV file to upload for EAS and ESF data
- an XML file to upload for recording Further education (FE) staff data or FE staff records for online form submissions
- Governing board details (FE only)

Help and support

[ESFA training provider self-help and communities](#)
[Discussion forums](#)

ESFA support desk

Log a query using our [ESFA Service Desk enquiry form](#)

Get help with [Education and Skills Funding Agency Services](#)

Telephone: 0370 267 0001
Monday to Thursday, 9:00am to 5:00pm
Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm

Related content

[How to become an approved training provider](#)
[Individualised Learner Record \(ILR\) technical documents, guidance and requirements \(all years\)](#)

Tools and services

[FIS \(Funding Information Service\)](#)
[Find a Learning Aim](#)
[ILR Learner entry tool](#)
[ILR FileMerge](#)
[FE staff data desktop application](#)




Where to find FIS for download

Please ensure you select the latest version for the academic year to download.

When downloading previous academic year versions of FIS please note all versions prior to V1.2 in academic year 2020 to 2021 will contain static reference data relevant to the version at the time, the introduction of the API was at V1.2.

If downloading for the first time, please choose the latest version of FIS available and select the downloadable link.

Figure 1a: link for FIS downloads

 [Submit learner data](#)

[< Back](#)

FIS (Funding Information Service) tool

FIS is a desktop application for the Education and Skills Funding Agency's data collections system. Providers can use it to validate Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data.

Filter by year

The page will refresh after you select each filter.

2023 to 2024 2022 to 2023 2021 to 2022 2020 to 2021 2019 to 2020

Academic year 2023 to 2024

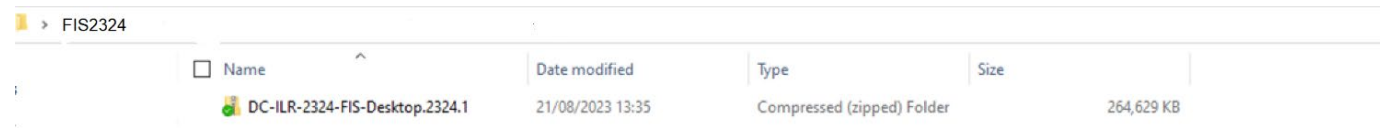
Version	Date and time uploaded	Download Link
2324.1	10 August 2023 at 6:35pm	Download 2324.1



How to download and configure FIS for the first time

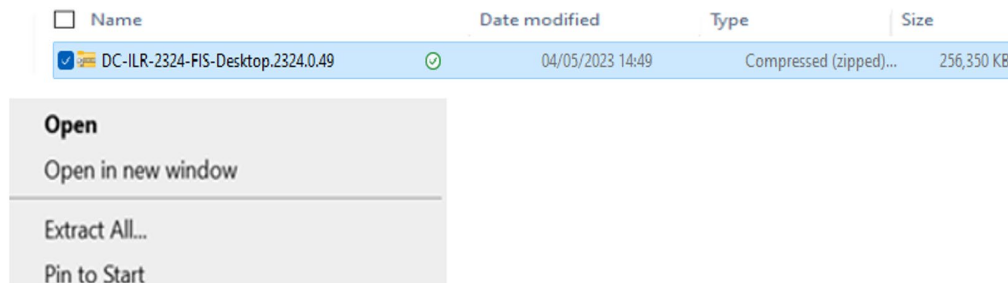
Once you have selected the downloadable link a FIS Desktop compressed (zipped) folder will download. Move this to your chosen folder location to store and run FIS from.

Figure 2: compressed file for download



Right click on the file and then select 'Extract All'.

Figure 2a: extracting from compressed file

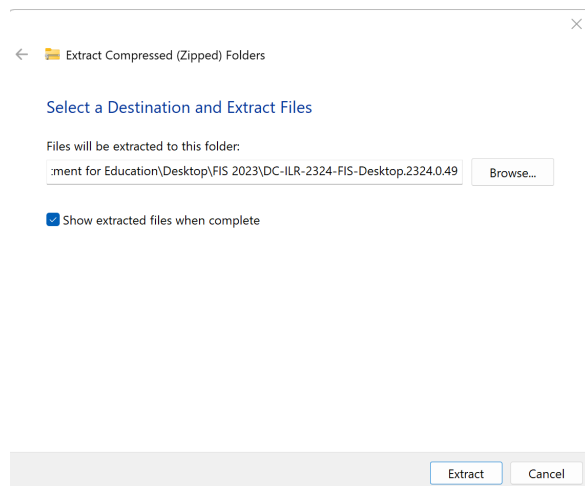




How to download and configure FIS for the first time

Select the folder (browse to location if required) where you would like FIS to be extracted to and then click on 'Extract'.

Figure 2b: choosing extract location



The extract will create a new File Folder, double click on the file name.

Figure 2c: extract creates new folder

<input type="checkbox"/> Name	Status	Date modified	Type	Size
DC-ILR-2324-FIS-Desktop.2324.0.49		04/05/2023 15:05	File folder	
DC-ILR-2324-FIS-Desktop.2324.0.49		04/05/2023 14:49	Compressed (zipped)...	256,350 KB



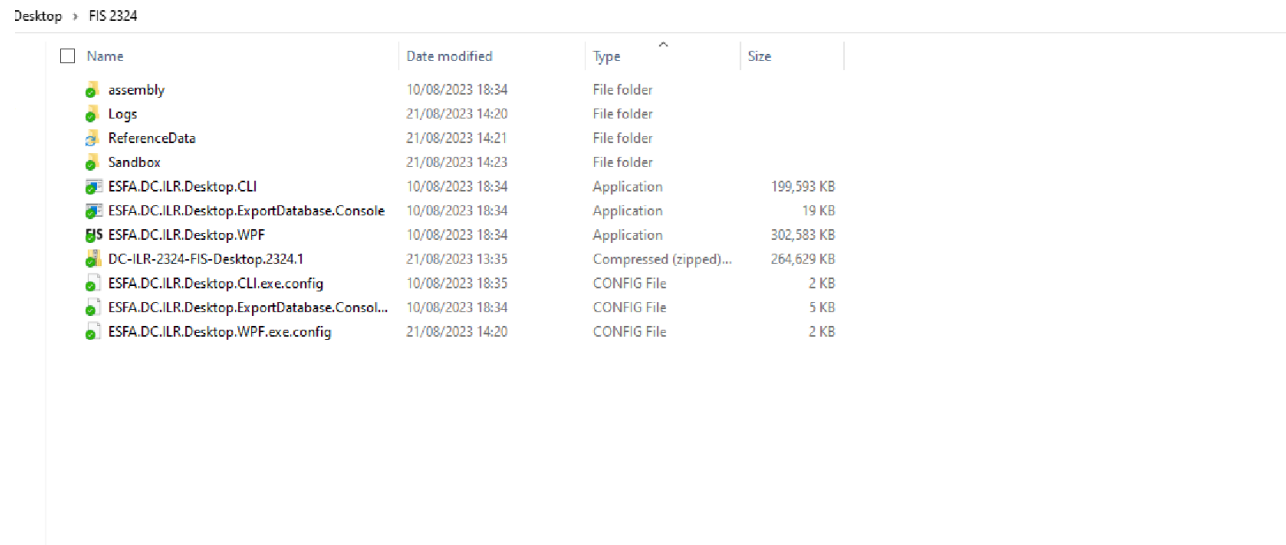
Whilst processing a bar will display to indicate completeness of download

Figure 2d: progress bar during extraction



Open the new folder and the FIS extract files will now be displayed, scroll down to the file showing the **FIS** icon and double click the file named “ESFA.DC.ILR.Desktop.WPF”

Figure 2e: opening FIS

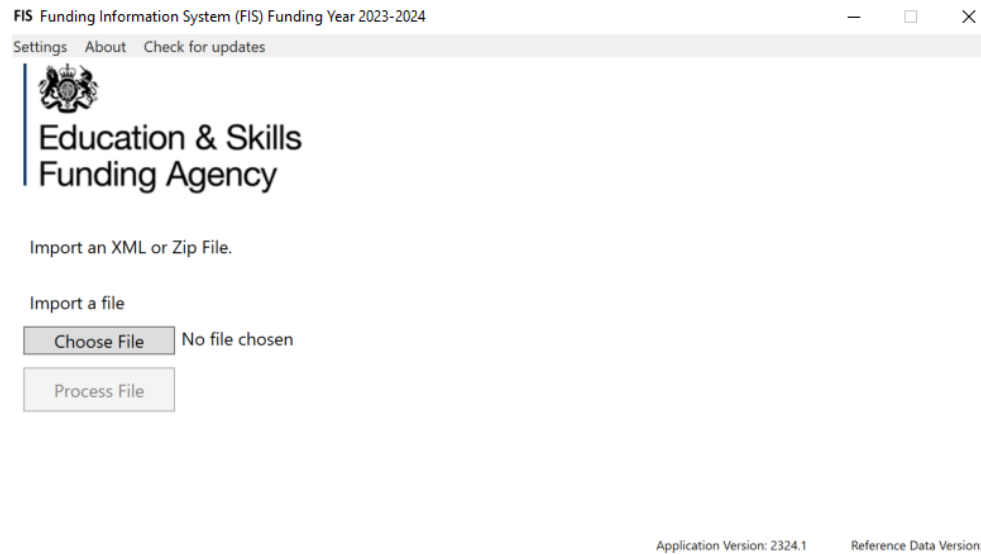


The FIS Application for 2023-24 will now open. When opening new versions of FIS they will normally contain the latest reference data, it is always advisable to ‘Check for Updates’ to ensure this is the case, especially when the version has been available for some time. See section on: Checking for Updates – new versions for download or new reference data.



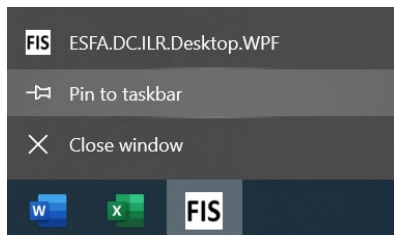
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Figure 2f: FIS main screen



When opening FIS, the FIS ICON will appear on your taskbar. If you use FIS often it is a good idea to right click and pin to taskbar

Figure 2g: settings function





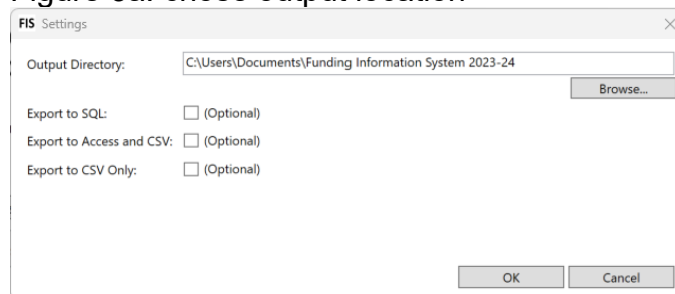
FIS settings – how to change output location

When the FIS Application is open select 'Settings' in the top left-handed corner. For 'Output Directory', choose the folder where you want the reports FIS generates to be exported to.

Figure 3: settings function



Figure 3a: chose output location



You can also Browse to change the location

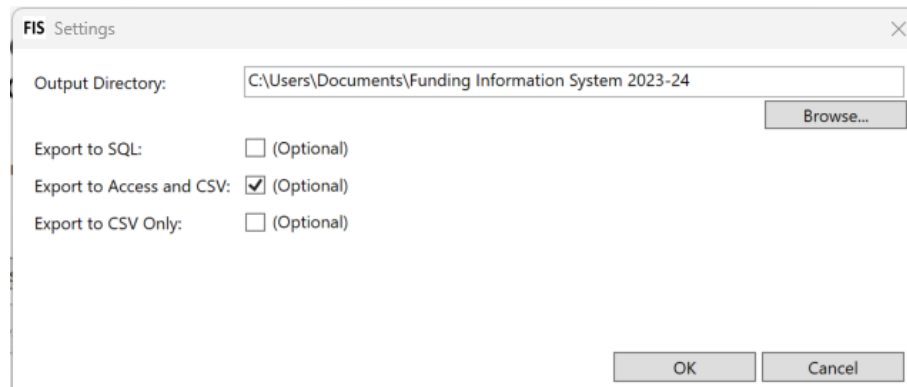
Note: For advanced technical users there is an option to connect and exporting output to SQL – Please see the final pages of this document for further information



FIS Settings - export to Access and CSV

FIS exported reports will display in XLS or CSV format. If you also wish to export to an Access database please tick the Export to Access and CSV box and then select the Output Directory where the database should be exported to and then click on OK.

Figure 4: selecting to export to Access and CSV



The mdb access database and csv zip file will appear in the selected output directory.

Figure 4a: example of Access and csv outputs

<input type="checkbox"/> Name	Date modified	Type	Size
FIS-CSV 20230823-123516	23/08/2023 13:37	Compressed (zipped) Folder	49 KB
FIS 20230823-123516	23/08/2023 13:37	Microsoft Access Database	1,956 KB



FIS Settings - Logs

When running FIS logs are created to advise on any errors and the steps processed. These logs will be found in the output directory location previously selected. If you are experiencing any issues and raise a call to our helpdesk it is important that the associated logs are also sent as they hold vital information to enable us to investigate.

Figure 4b: example log

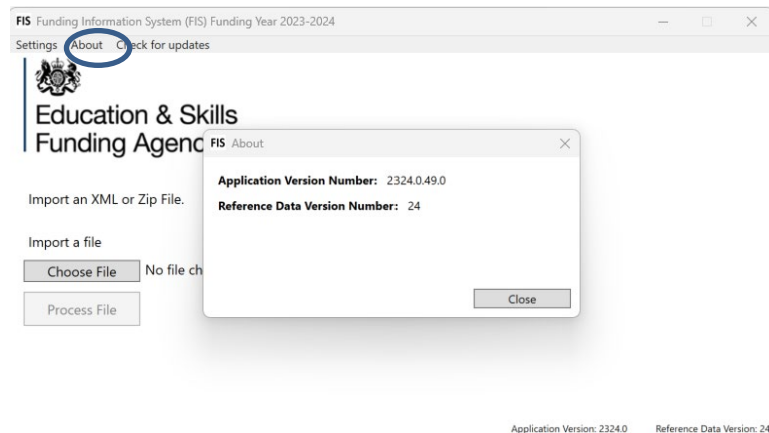
DateTime	Level	Message
35:11.4	INFO	Writing appsettings to C:\Desktop\FIS 2324\ESFA.DC.ILR.Desktop.WPF.exe.config
35:17.0	INFO	Checking Reference Data in [C:\Desktop\FIS 2324\ReferenceData\]
35:17.0	INFO	Found Reference Data File C:\Desktop\FIS 2324\ReferenceData\FISReferenceData.4.zip
35:20.7	INFO	Deleting Sandbox Directory : Sandbox
35:20.7	INFO	Creating and Populating Sandbox Directory : Sandbox, C:\Users\ILR-12345678-2324-20230815-090100-01.XML, C:\Desktop\FIS 2324\ReferenceData\FISReferenceData.4.zip
35:21.2	INFO	Starting File Validation Preparation Service
35:21.2	INFO	Finished File Validation Preparation Service
35:21.2	INFO	Starting Loose Message Provide
35:21.7	INFO	Finished Loose Message Provide
35:21.7	INFO	Starting Message Validation
35:22.2	INFO	Finished Message Validation
35:22.2	INFO	Starting Valid Learner Filter
35:22.2	INFO	Finished Valid Learner Filter
35:22.2	INFO	Starting Map to Tight Schema
35:22.2	INFO	Finished Map to Tight Schema
35:22.2	INFO	Starting Validation Output
35:23.0	INFO	Finished Validation Output
35:23.1	INFO	Starting ILR File Retrieval.
35:23.4	INFO	Finished ILR File Retrieval
46:41.1	ERROR	File Validation Failure Output
46:41.2	ERROR	Task Execution Handled Failure - Step 7



FIS – About

At any point you can check the About tab at the top of the screen to see what application version and reference version you are using.

Figure 4c: about – showing application and reference data version details



Check for updates – new versions for download or new reference data

This feature will let you know if there is new reference data available or a new application version is available. New application versions are only necessary when structural enhancements are made, whilst reference data is normally updated twice monthly. On opening FIS it will automatically perform checks for all updates and if found will indicate the results by highlighting in the blue banner, these results may be: you are using the latest version, new reference data and/or a newer version of the FIS application may be available. It will also warn you if your connection has failed.

If you have left FIS open for a few days, it is always good to close it down and reopen as it will perform the updates check. This can also be done at any time by selecting the check for updates tab at the top of the screen.

The blue banner contains an X button option to close should you not wish to proceed with any updates.

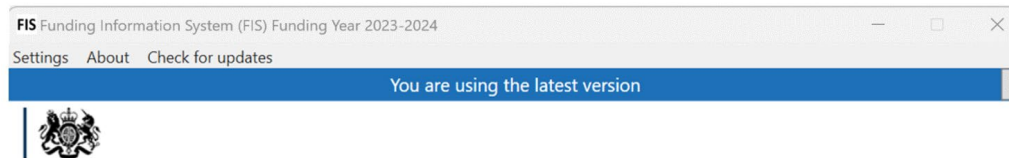


Figure 5: check for updates



Example: no updates needed

Figure 5a: check for updates confirms you are using the latest version



When a new version of FIS is available the following message will appear – all **new versions** will contain the latest reference data when the version was created. The link will take you back to the FIS Download page as shown previously. It will be necessary to select the latest version of FIS for download and follow the earlier steps to download and configure FIS.



Example: new version of FIS is available

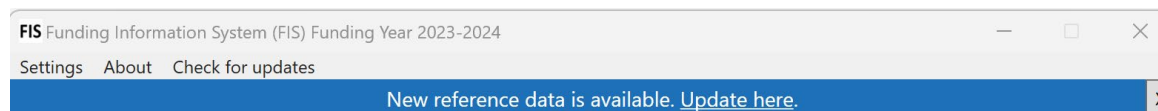
Figure 5b: example where new version is available



When only new reference data is available the following message will appear. For the **reference data** you will be able to update it within your current version by clicking on the 'Update here' link.

Example: new reference data is available

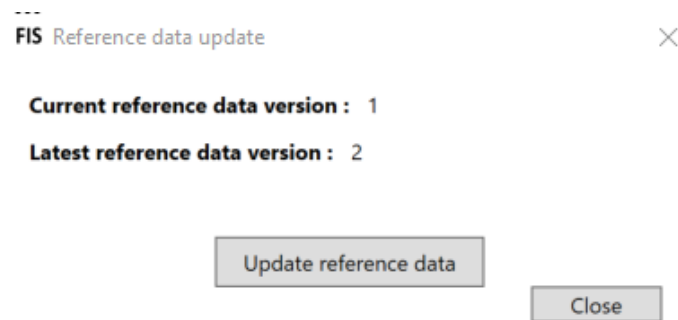
Figure 5c: example where new reference data is available





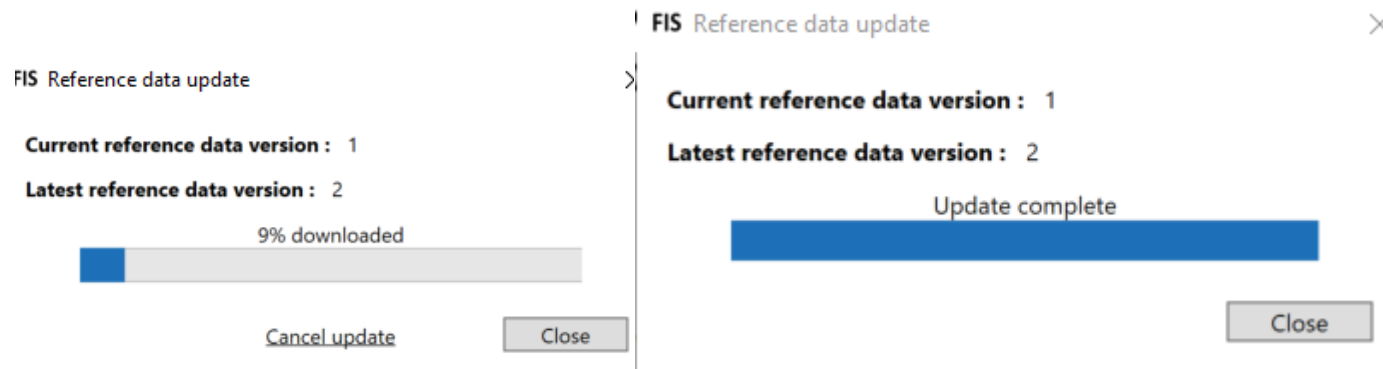
Select the update here link and the next screen will display version details with an option to update the reference data.

Figure 5d: displays version details and update option



When uploading reference data the screen will indicate % downloaded and also advise when completed

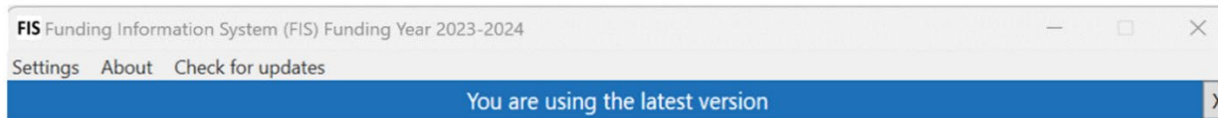
Figure 5e: advisory messages showing % downloaded





Once completed select Close and the screen will show you are using the latest version

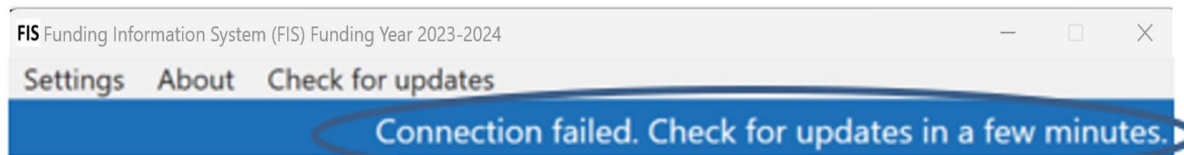
Figure 5f: advisory messages showing you are using the latest version



Check for Updates – Connection Failed

If the API connection is unavailable the following message will appear. To retry select Check for Updates again.

Figure 5g: advisory messages showing you your connection has failed

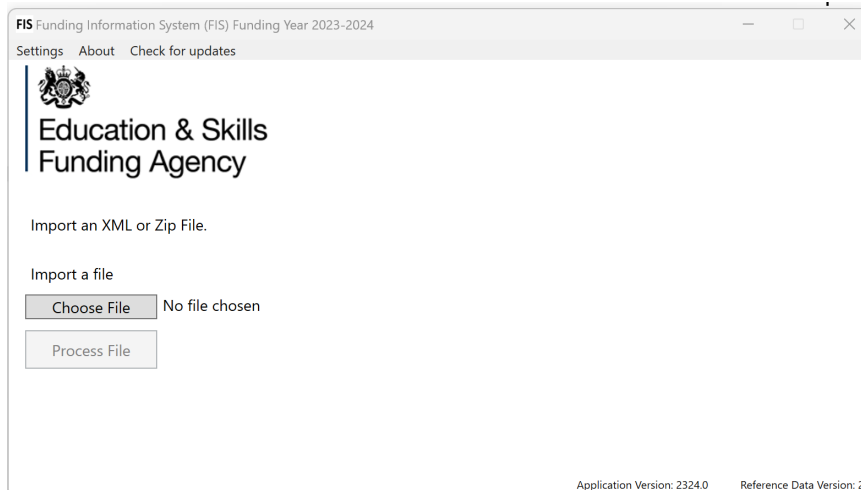




How to Use FIS

Open FIS – either go to the File Folder where FIS is stored and click select the ESFA.DC.ILR.Desktop.exe file, or you may have pinned FIS to your taskbar. Select ‘Choose file’ to select your Zip or XML file from your file location and then click on ‘Process File’.

Figure 6: choose file



You will see a progress bar indicating how long is left to process your file.

Figure 6a: progress bar





How to Use FIS

When processing has finished you can get your reports by selecting the link, this will be the Output Directory you have chosen in 'Settings'.

Figure 6b: example location where outputs are stored.

Import successfully processed

Get your reports and [C:\Users\██████████\OneDrive - Department for Education\Documents\Funding Information System 2023-24](#) exports here:

Import another file

No file chosen

Open the file folder and your reports will be displayed

If the file could not be processed the Message 'We can't process your file' will display and the link to find the validation reports where you can find the information as to why the file did not work.

Figure 6c: example output folder

› This PC › Documents › Funding Information System 2023-24






















Name	Date modified	Type	Size
 ILR-██████████-2324-20230815-092610-01	23/08/2023 14:08	File folder	



Figure 6d: FIS reports

-  16-19 Funding Claim Report 20220616-140752
-  16-19 Summary of Funding by Student Report 20220616-140752
-  Adult Funding Claim Report 20220616-140752
-  ALLB Occupancy Report 20220616-140752
-  Apps Indicative Earnings Report 20220616-140752
-  CL Summary of Learners by Non-Single Budget Category Report 20220616-140752
-  Devolved Adult Education Destination and Progression Report 20220616-140752
-  Devolved Adult Education Funding Summary Report 20220616-140752
-  Devolved Adult Education Occupancy Report 20220616-140752
-  Funding Summary Report 20220616-140752
-  High Needs Students Detail Report 20220616-140752
-  High Needs Students Summary Report 20220616-140752
-  Main Occupancy Report 20220616-140752
-  Maths and English Report 20220616-140752
-  OfS HE Quality Control Report 20220616-140752
-  Rule Violation Report 20220616-140752
-  Rule Violation Summary Report 20220616-140752
-  Summary of Funding Model 35 Funding Report 20220616-140752
-  Trailblazer Apprenticeships Employer Incentives Report 20220616-140752
-  Trailblazer Apprenticeships Occupancy Report 20220616-140752



FIS settings – connections and export output to SQL (optional)

You may wish to integrate FIS with your SQL server software if you have it. This is entirely optional, in general you would only do this as an advanced technical user. If you do wish to, select the checkbox that says 'Export to SQL' and then 'Configure' to add connection details.

Figure 7: selecting export to SQL with no connection string set up

FIS Settings

Output Directory:

Export to SQL: (Optional)

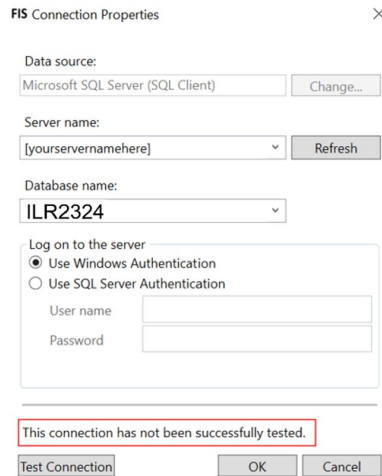
Connection String:

Export to Access and CSV: (Optional)

To configure you will need to select the Server name, Database name, add the username and password (if needed) and then the connection string will be created automatically once they click ok. The users will be able to see their updated connection string on the Figure 7 screen.



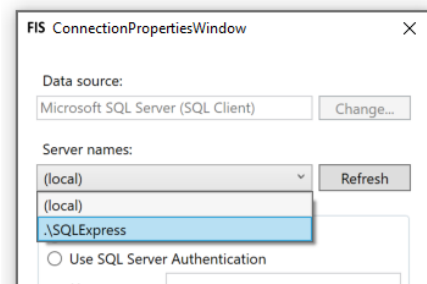
Figure 7a: choosing server details - configure



The screen will display a warning if the connection has not been successful.

To select the server name chose from the drop down list of SQL servers connected to your PC. You can also use refresh if you wish to select a different SQL server.

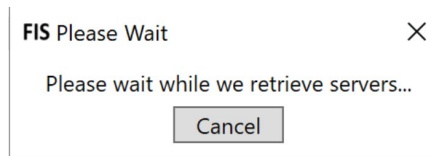
Figure 7b: choosing server name





Whilst retrieving server details the following message will appear.

Figure 7c: message whilst retrieving server details



Once the server is selected the database name dropdown will be populated with all available databases for this server. The default value is ILR2324, or you can type in your database name for selection.

Figure 7d: adding database name

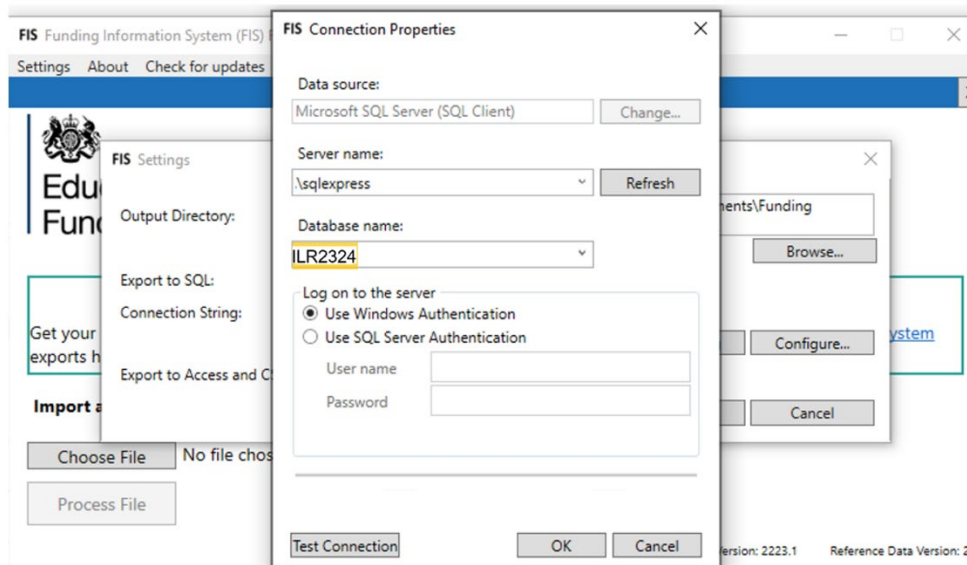
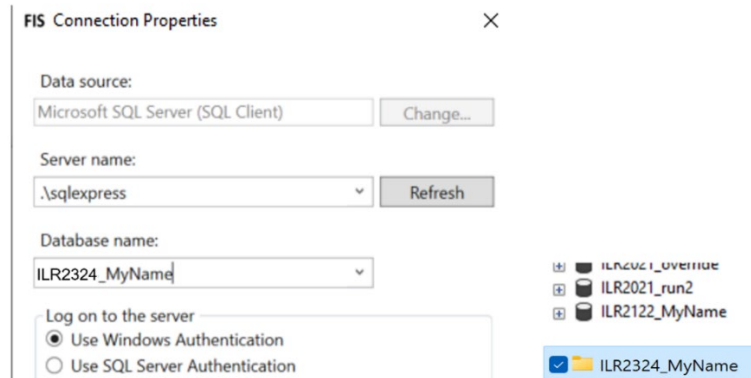


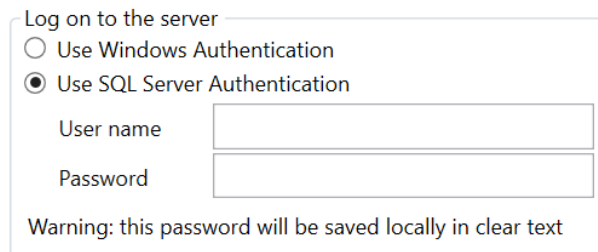


Figure 7e: changing database name



For logging on to the server there are options are to use Window Authentication, or if selecting SQL Server Authentication a user name and password will be required.

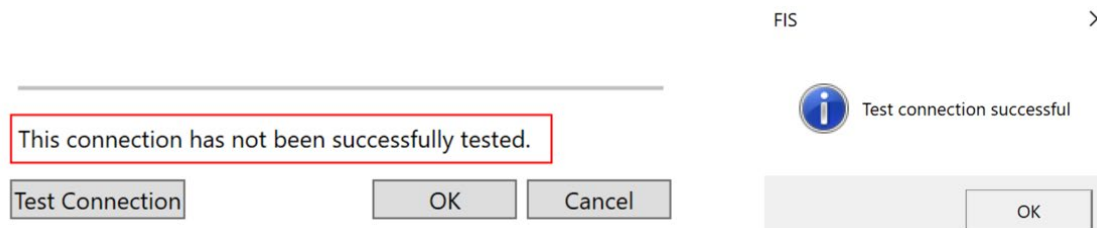
Figure 7f: selecting SQL server authentication



Once you have completed all server and database details you will need to ensure your connection is successful. Whilst setting up the message 'This connection has not been successfully tested will appear. You can select the **Test Connection** button to ensure your connection is now successful. The success window will appear and you can select Ok to continue.

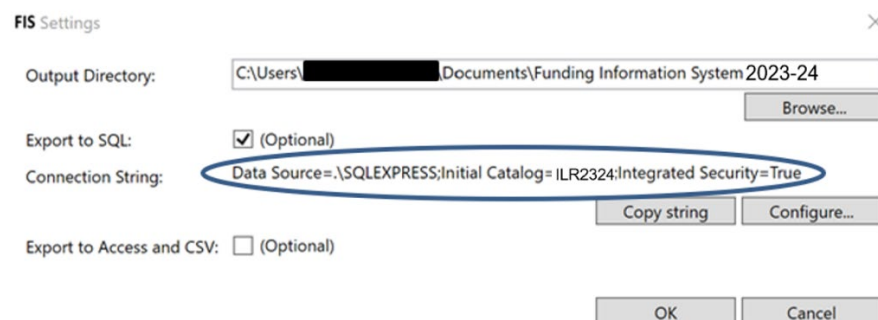


Figure 7g: test connections results



Once Ok is selected you will be brought back to the FIS settings page which will show the connection string details and you will need to select OK to complete this configuration. You cannot change the connections string here, if required you will need to go back through the configure functionality.

Figure 7h: selecting export to SQL shows connection string set up



The connection string will display where the database is created. If required you can also use the Copy String option to copy the connection string. This may be useful in the Provider Data Self-Assessment Toolkit (PDSAT).



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Help and support

Enquiry form: [ESFA enquiry form](#)

ESFA Support Desk opening hours

9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Thursday

9:00am to 4:00pm Friday

8:30am to 6:00pm On ILR return days

The ESFA Support Desk is closed weekends and bank holidays. Queries can be raised out of hours by the ESFA enquiry form.