Guide to the Unique Learner Number (ULN) Service for Schools in Wales

Information for maintained Secondary Schools

Learning is changing

A Step Guide to the Learning Records Service

Step 1
Registering as a Learner Registration Body (LRB)

- Obtain UK Provider Registration Number (UKPRN) from the Learning Provider Register www.ukrlp.co.uk
- Nominate a Super User for the LRS Learner Register (LR)
- Download and complete *two* documents: Organisation Registration Form and Learning Provider Agreement www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk
- Submit both completed documents (in full) to the LRS for processing (scan and email/fax/post)
- Agree to terms and conditions of the User Agreement available on the LRS website www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk

Step 2
Accessing the LRB Service

- Super User receives user name and password from the LRS enabling access to the Learner Register (LR) Portal
- Establish Managerial and Data Governance arrangements for using the Service
- Super User assigns and manages additional User accounts
- All Users accept the terms and conditions of the User Agreement
- Assigned Users have appropriate levels of access to the secure LR portal

Step 3
Establishing Processes and Using the ULN Service for Schools

- **All** learners must have sight of a Privacy Notice and preferences to opt out of sharing PLR data need to be recorded
- The DEWi data transmission service will obtain ULNs for school pupils aged 14 and over using PLASC data collected in September and January
- Import CTF file containing ULNs - received from DEWi - into schools record system and view accompanying 'exceptions' file
- Resolve 'exceptions' on the LRS portal and update learner details.
- Tell management, teaching staff, administrators and learners about the ULN

How learning is changing

As a result of the UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme (UK VQRP), vocational and work related qualifications in Wales have changed to meet the needs of employers and learners more suitably. The new QCF qualifications have been designed to be more responsive to needs.

All qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) are built up of 'units' of learning. These units include the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Every unit has a fixed level and a fixed 'credit value'. The level indicates how challenging the unit is to achieve. The credit value indicates learning time - how long it typically takes to complete the unit. Units are combined together, using 'rules of combination', to create qualifications. This could mean, for example, a combination of mandatory units (ones that have to be achieved) and optional units.

In addition, the Welsh Baccalaureate requires enhanced administration systems to aggregate achievement for each learner. The introduction of a unique identifier for learners is essential to accumulate the different components.

The Welsh Assembly Government is encouraging and supporting the use of the Unique Learner Number (ULN) to provide a single identifier for every learner in Wales. The ULN is being introduced by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS). The ULN underpins the Welsh Baccalaureate and the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) which forms part of the wider Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW).

Adoption of this unique identifier

by all secondary schools in Wales will ensure that the ULN is familiar to students from an early age and ensure its use is embedded across the wider education sector.

What is the Unique Learner Number?

The Unique Learner Number (ULN) is a unique 10-digit number allocated to learners aged 14 and over in England, Wales and Northern Ireland by the Learning Records Service (LRS). Learners retain their ULN for life and it links to all learning, wherever it is undertaken. It can be thought of as the educational equivalent of the National Insurance (NI) number.

Why is it important?

The ULN enables a learner to build a lifelong record of their qualifications and achievements in education - a Personal Learning Record (PLR) - which they will be able to view on line and share with learning providers, and advice and guidance professionals, as well as third parties such as employers if they wish to do so.

The ULN will support a number of functions. For example, it will assist with data aggregation for the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification.

Awarding organisations will require the ULN for examination registration purposes. You should use it when submitting exam entries or certificate claims to awarding organisations.

Schools need to hold ULNs against individual records in the school's Management Information System (MIS) and include them in the PLASC return.

The ULN is also needed when learners (aged 16 or over) meet with careers advisors, and advisors will need the learner's permission to access or view their PLR.

The ULN is designed to enable appropriate data sharing. For example, it will reduce administration when registering or enrolling learners onto a course, when progressing from school into post-16 learning, further education and beyond into higher education.

How does ULN relate to the Unique Pupil Number (UPN)?

The Unique Pupil Number (UPN) cannot be used beyond school age. The ULN will stay with learners throughout their life.

How does the ULN relate to other identifiers already in use?

The use of the ULN as a single candidate number - over time replacing the Unique Candidate Identifier (UCI) used by Awarding Organisations - will streamline examination entries and enable the sharing of achievement and award information with other educational establishments and with UCAS.

In Higher Education (HE), the ULN is already collected by UCAS and the HE Statistics Agency, and has the potential to replace separate identifiers used by both organisations.

A Personal Learning Record (PLR) is created for each learner with a ULN

The Personal Learning Record is an online file which, over time, builds into a lifelong record of qualifications and achievement. Learners in Wales will be able to access and view their Personal Learning Record securely via the internet through Careers Wales Online (www.careerswales.com) from the age of 16 (subject to their identity having been verified).

The ULN and Personal Learning Record will help learners throughout their lifelong learning, when accessing careers advice and applying for jobs.

Two distinct views of the Personal Learning Record will be presented to the learner - the full record and a restricted view - to ensure they are clearly aware of what other users will see. Learners will be able to decide who can access their Personal Learning Record and share their full information with learning providers, careers advisors and third parties if they wish to do so. The restricted view will be available to organisations nominated by the learner (such as potential employers) and will only display basic details and achievements the learner chooses.

The Personal Learning Record will not contain any 'contextual' information such as socio-economic background, ethnicity or disability, nor details of exclusions or expulsions from education. Additional safeguards are in place for vulnerable learners. (For further information on the use of 'prohibited text' refer to the LRS website. The web address is given at the end of the leaflet.)

Learners can choose to opt out of having data about their participation and achievement shared. Learning providers have a responsibility to give learners the option to opt out. However, the ULN is now required for many qualifications - such as those in the QCF - so opting out may restrict the administration of these qualifications.

How can my school obtain ULNs for our students?

Learners cannot get a ULN themselves. ULNs can only be obtained from the Learning Records Service Learner Register by learning providers.

Maintained secondary schools will not routinely need to submit data direct to the LRS to obtain ULNs. From September 2011, DCELLS will be making available the **ULN Service for Schools in Wales**. This will largely automate the process of obtaining ULNs for pupils aged 14 years and older in maintained schools in Wales.

Sixth form colleges and private schools will need to register with the Learning Records Service and obtain ULNs for their pupils via the LRS portal - in the same way as other learning providers - refer to the LRS website for more information.

To protect the identity of learners in Special schools and Young Offender Institutions in Wales, secure administrative processes are being established between DCELLS and the LRS. Guidance will be issued by DCELLS in due course. In the meantime these institutions should not register learners for ULNs.

The new ULN service enables the DEWi - The Data Exchange Wales Initiative system to utilise demographic information already captured by schools within the PLASC return to populate the Learner Register and get a ULN for learners via the LRS 'web service' connection. Once ULNs have been obtained, DEWi will generate two files for download by schools:

(i) a common transfer file (CTF) containing the ULNs for import into schools' MIS

(ii) an exceptions file in Excel format.

The system is being developed to reduce and streamline administration in schools and to be as transparent as possible. It will be fully available from September 2011.

What do schools need to do?

All schools wishing to obtain ULNs for their pupils will need to:

- Check that the school's details are up to date on the Provider Register at www.ukrlp.co.uk and note the UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN)
- Register as LRBs with the Learning Records Service
- Issue pupils with a revised Privacy (or Fair Processing) Notice and record any individual's choice to 'opt out' of data sharing

Once registered, schools will need to access the Learner Register secure portal to update demographic information about learners, to record data sharing preferences, and to resolve 'exceptions'.

Registering your school with the Learning Records Service (LRS)

All schools, colleges, universities and other learning and training providers in Wales will need to register with the Learning Records Service (LRS) and become an official Learner Registration Body (LRB) so that they can access the LRS Learner Register Organisation portal.

All LRBs need to have a UK Provider Registration Number (UKPRN) and, as a first step, you should check that your school's details are up to date on the Provider Register at www.ukrlp.co.uk

It's important that the school's details on UKRLP are correct and up to date. You should use the same information and format in the registration process with the LRS.

Registration involves downloading two documents from the LRS website - an Organisation Registration Form and a Learning Provider Agreement - which need to be completed and signed by a senior member of staff. Once completed, they should be submitted in full by scan/email, post or fax to the LRS for approval.

On receipt, once your registration documents have been checked and accepted, the LRS will set up your organisation account on the Learner Register. The nominated 'Super User' (the senior user in your organisation) will be provided with a user name

and password to enable access to the Learner Register Organisation portal and other users can then be set up on the system.

What responsibilities do Super Users have?

A Learner Register Super User is responsible for managing all users within the LRB, including setting up additional Super Users and deleting users. They are also the first contact point for resolving access problems and resetting passwords for other users. It is recommended that an LRB should have at least three Super Users.

LRBs will need to establish managerial arrangements for running the Learner Register and ensure that appropriate arrangements for data governance are in place.

For more information refer to the Learner Register User Guide:
www.learningrecordsservice.
org.uk/documentlibrary/
comms/User+Guide+to+the+
Learner+Register

should complete the relevant local details, check that it fully covers any additional local data processing and issue a copy to all pupils who will be aged 14 or over at the start of the academic year. For more guidance please refer to the Welsh Assembly and Learning Records Service websites.

Individual pupils have the right to request that the data about their learning held in the Personal Learning Record cannot be shared and their choice to 'opt out' must be recorded by their school on the Learner Register Organisation portal against their ULN and related demographic details.

What is the Privacy (or Fair Processing) Notice?

The Privacy Notice is a standard piece of text which informs learners about how their information is collected and processed by the Learning Records Service, what it is used for and who is using the information. It is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998 to provide individuals with notification of the use made of their personal data.

All schools who wish to have ULNs allocated to their pupils must issue pupils with a revised Privacy Notice. An outline Privacy Notice, updated to include specific reference to the use of personal data for the purpose of allocating a ULN, can be found on the Schools section of the Welsh Assembly website. Individual schools

What are 'exceptions'?

Exceptions are generated by the Learner Register when, for example, people have similar names and dates of birth in the same location, or incorrect data has been entered onto the system. To maintain data quality it is essential that ULNs are allocated to the correct individuals against accurate demographic data.

When exceptions come back to the school via the DEWi service, the school will need to log onto the Learner Register Organisation portal to resolve any issues or errors. Guidance on exceptions handling can be found in the Learner Register User Guide on the LRS website.

Further information can be obtained from:

Learning Records Service

Registration: http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/documentlibrary/forms/Registration.htm

Learner Register User Guide: http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/documentlibrary/comms/User+Guide+to+the+Learner+Register.htm

Guidance on Prohibited text: http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/datamanagement/Prohibited+Text.htm

FAQs: http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/about/faqs/

Learning Provider Register: www.ukrlp.co.uk

Privacy Notice for Schools, additional information and guidance material on Welsh Assembly Government website: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/schooldata/ims/learnerregistration/?lang=en

You can find out more about the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales by visiting the website at: **www.cqfw.net**

For enquiries email:
cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk

CREDIT & QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR WALES
FFRAMWAITH CREDYDAU A CHYMWYSTERAU CYMRU

Glossary of terms

CQFW
Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales

DCELLS
Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

DEWi - The Data Exchange Wales Initiative.
DEWi has been developed to provide a Wales specific secure transfer facility for use by schools, local education authorities (LAs) and central organisations.

FPN
Fair Processing (or Privacy) Notice

HE
Higher Education

HESA
Higher Education Statistics Agency

ID
Identity/Identification

LLWR
Lifelong Learning Wales Record

LR
Learner Register

LRB
Learner Registration Body

LRS
Learning Records Service

MI/MIS
Management Information/ Management Information System(s)

NI Number
National Insurance Number

PLR
Personal Learning Record

QCF
Qualifications and Credit Framework

UCAS
Organisation responsible for managing applications to full-time undergraduate degree programmes at UK universities and colleges

UCI
Unique Candidate Identifier

UKPRN
UK Provider Registration Number

UKRLP
UK Register of Learning Providers (also referred to as the Learning Provider Register)

UKVQRP
UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme

ULN
Unique Learner Number

WBL
Work Based Learning

Notes: