Using the Unique Learner Number (ULN) in Post-16 and Adult Learning Provision

Information for Post-16 Learning providers: FE colleges, Training Providers, Higher Education Institutions, Adult and Community Learning Providers, Private Companies and Voluntary Organisations.

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

www.cymru.gov.uk

Learning is changing

A Step Guide to the Learning Records Service

Registering as a Learner Registration Body (LRB)

Step 1

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 & 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

Accessing the LRB Service

Step 2

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

Establishing Processes and Using the Service

Step 3

All learners must have sight of a Privacy Notice and preferences to opt out of sharing PLR data need to be recorded

The identity of Learners should be verified and the form of ID recorded Note: This does not apply to schools

Refer to LRS guidance and agree how to retrieve and assign ULN's in your organisation

Consider how 'exceptions' can be handled most effectively and establish appropriate systems

Tell management, teaching staff, administrators and learners about the ULN

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. All vocational qualifications and their units have a level and a credit value which enable learning to be more flexible.

In addition to the vocational qualifications reform, 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 Unique Learner Number (ULN) is being introduced in Wales 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).

The ULN is being requested by DCELLS in the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) return for all Work Based Learning (WBL) providers from September 2011. Whilst the ULN is not mandated for other provision, awarding organisations will increasingly require the ULN for registration purposes.

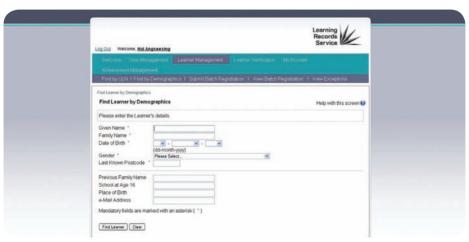## What is the Unique Learner Number? Why is it important?

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.

The sole purpose of the National Insurance number is for use by the Department for Work and Pensions and it cannot be used by the Learning Records Service as an identifier.

The ULN is designed to reduce administration when registering or enrolling learners onto a course, particularly when progressing from school into post 16 learning, further education and beyond into higher education.

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) when they have reached the age of 16 or over (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.

those in offender institutions. (For further information on the use of 'prohibited text' refer to the LRS website. The 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 part of many qualifications - such as the QCF - so opting out may restrict the administration of these qualifications.

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 can 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 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 and

Registering your organisation with the Learning Records Service

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 organisation's details are up to date on the Provider Register at www.ukrlp.co.uk

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 an 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

How the ULN relates to other identifiers already in use

The use of the ULN as a single candidate number - potentially 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 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.

How are ULNs allocated to learners?

Learners cannot get a ULN themselves. All learners will need to have a ULN when they start their course. ULNs can only be obtained from the Learning Records Service Learner Register via the Organisation portal. Colleges, universities and other training providers will need to check whether a ULN has already been allocated and get ULNs from the Learner Register for those learners who don't have one.

Information your organisation needs to provide to get a ULN on behalf of a learner

The Learning Records Service requires basic information about the learner to allocate a ULN:

- given name
- family name
- date of birth
- gender
- postcode

These are the mandatory fields, but if you have additional information available, such as previous family name or school at aged 16, it is useful to enter it.

This data also enables learning and training achievement information (qualifications, awards, credits and other accredited training) to be correctly matched to an individual learner's Personal Learning Record.

In addition, when authorised users are registering learners to obtain a ULN from the LRS Learner Register, learning providers should ensure that:

- you have verified the identify of those learners

- your learners have read and understood your Privacy Notice about sharing their information

- you include learners' personal email addresses with the other data you send to the Service

- you collect and verify ULNs, or get a new ULN using the Learner Register and communicate the numbers to learners directly.

How do you verify the identity of learners?

Verifying the identity (ID) of learners is an important part of the process of obtaining ULNs. A learner will be able to access their Personal Learning Record once their identity has been verified and they have received their ULN.

Wherever practical, learners should be ID verified to 'Level 1' by checking one of the following forms of identification:

• Passport
• National Insurance Card
• Driving Licence
• ID card or other form of national identification
• Bank credit or debit card

However, lack of evidence of ID should not prevent enrolment. Further information is available on the LRS website.

What is the Privacy (or Fair Processing) Notice?

The Privacy Notice is a standard piece of text which informs learners about how their personal information is collected and processed by the Learning Records Service, what it is used for and who is using the information. Learners are able to 'opt out' of sharing the data held in their Personal Learning Record if they wish to do so.

Learning providers must ensure that their learners see a Privacy Notice as part of their enrolment/ examination processes. For more guidance and examples of the text you should use (in English and Welsh) please refer to the LRS website.

Different ways of submitting data to the Learner Register

The Learner Register Organisation Portal: this is used for obtaining individual ULNs. If you have a group of up to 50 ULNs to obtain, this is the quickest way to get them. The organisation portal is also used to edit the details of a ULN such as the preferred name or change of post code, and to resolve 'exceptions'.

The Learner Register Batch Process: this is used for obtaining groups of ULNs in batches of between 50 and 5000. The batch files are submitted via the organisation portal and must conform to the LRS Batch Interface Specification Guide. For further information refer to the Learner Register User Guide and the Batch Toolkit, both available on the LRS website. Batches are processed at regular intervals during the day until 18.00. Batches submitted

after this time will be processed overnight. Exceptions may be produced where the system queries the information provided.

The Learner Register Web Services: this is where your Management Information (MI) software is linked into the Learner Register and automatically retrieves ULNs where they exist or obtains a new ULN. The MI software assists in the resolution of the exceptions.

Your MIS vendor or software supplier may already provide an interface with the Learner Register to automate the process.

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 postcodes have been entered onto the system. To maintain data quality it is essential that ULNs are allocated to the correct individuals against accurate demographic data. Exceptions must be resolved by LRBs via the Learner Register Organisation portal. Guidance on exceptions handling can be found in the Batch Toolkit on the LRS website.

Learning Records Service

Helpline Telephone: 0845 602 2589
Opening hours: 08:00 to 20:00 Monday to Saturday
E-mail: lrssupport@learningrecordsservice.org.uk
Website: www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk

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

Privacy Notices in English and Welsh www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/
documentlibrary/documents/Privacy+Notices+for+Wales

Batch Toolkit www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/documentlibrary/documents/
batchtoolkit

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

Learning Provider Register www.ukrlp.co.uk

Additional information and guidance material on Welsh Assembly Government
website: www.new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/
learningrecordsservice

Guidance on the use of the LRS services in offender learning:
http://olass.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk

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

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

FPN
Fair Processing (or Privacy) Notice

HE
Higher Education

HESA
Higher Education Statistics Agency

ID
Identity/Identification

LLWR
Lifelong Learning Wales Record return

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: