



Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

Education and Skills Funding Agency  
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## **ESFA Funding Assurance Review Visits**

Dear colleague

ESFA's Provider Market Oversight Assurance Team is performing its current round of funding assurance review visits to assess the Individualised Learner Records (ILR) returns and associated funding for the 2018/19 funding year. This letter explains the arrangements for those assurance review visits.

We wish to remind you that any provider can be selected for an assurance review and it is your responsibility to ensure that ILR returns are complete, accurate, up-to-date and are consistent with the information contained in the individualised learner records/files.

### **Notification of assurance review visit**

We plan to give providers between two and four weeks' notice of the assurance review visit. It is important that providers make arrangements to facilitate the visits in this period to ensure that the Assurance Team is given access to individuals, who have knowledge of ILR and learner records. To facilitate the assurance visits, we will normally send you the sample of learner files, that we will need to see, 3 to 5 working days before the visit date, so that you can collate the individual learner files and associated evidence including any information required from subcontractors. This will enable our Assurance Team to complete the assurance checks efficiently and effectively. The records must be available on the first day of the visit.

### **Timing of assurance review visits**

We are adapting our approach and wish to inform you that our assurance visits may take place at any point during the relevant funding year, as well as after the funding year and / or submission of the final ILR return.

### **Access to ILR and learner records**

The Assurance Team will require direct access to the learner records and files. Where you hold digital records, you must make arrangements for the Assurance Team to be granted read only access to your learner records when the visit is arranged, so that we can perform our tests effectively and efficiently. The Assurance Team will need access to learner files and associated documents.

## **Improving ILR data quality**

It is important that you ensure that you perform regular data quality checks to confirm that your data and the data provided by any subcontractors is up-to-date, complete, accurate and records the learning undertaken by individuals. As part of your data checks, you must check and ensure that you comply with the terms and conditions associated with the funding that you receive.

We are seeking to facilitate improvements to the quality of ILR reporting by providers and, to help you, we publish common findings from previous assurance review visits. These will help you to focus your data quality checks so that you can check and correct your own ILR return and thereby avoid delays in correcting data and avoiding large errors or subsequent funding adjustments because errors were not detected or corrected earlier. In addition, we strongly recommend that you regularly run the Provider Data Self-Assessment Tool and perform other data quality checks to identify and correct potential errors or issues in your return. PDSAT can be accessed via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ilr-data-check-that-it-meets-standards-and-quality-requirements>

## **Funding monitoring and ILR data analysis**

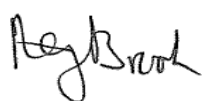
Funding monitoring and ILR data analysis arrangements have been enhanced, such that provider ILR data is reviewed frequently throughout the funding year. Where data errors or anomalies are identified, providers will be asked to explain and, where required, correct ILR data and repay funds. These queries may be raised during an assurance review visit or at any point during or after the funding year under review and could cover previous years', as well as current year returns.

## **Reporting ILR errors**

If you identify errors after your ILR return has been submitted, you must notify the ESFA immediately, explaining why the error has occurred and the actions taken to correct the error and avoid repetition. All errors identified in the ILR return must be corrected immediately.

For further guidance on common findings arising from funding assurance review visits, follow this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-assurance-work-on-post-16-funding/common-findings-from-funding-assurance-work-on-post-16-providers-and-institutions>



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