



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Funding Information System (FIS) User Guide 2021 to 2022

September 2021



What this guide covers:

- What is FIS?
- Where to find FIS for download
- How to download and configure for the first time
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 - export to Access or csv
 - logs
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- Check for updates
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 - connection issues
- How to use FIS
- FIS Settings –export to SQL /SQL connections issues
- 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

BETA This is a new service – your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it.

Submit learner data

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

Use this service to validate and submit:

- Individualised learner records (ILR)
- Earnings adjustment statements (EAS)
- ESF (European Social Fund) supplementary data

You can also view and download reports for data you've submitted.

Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) can only download reports.

[Sign in >](#)

Before you start

You will need:

- your IdAMS (Information Management Services system) login details
- an XML or Zip file to upload - for ILR data
- a CSV file to upload - for EAS and ESF data

Help and support

ESFA support desk

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

Email: esfa.servicedesk@education.gov.uk

Related content

[How to become an approved training provider](#)

[2020 to 2021 submission timetable \(appendix A\)](#)

[2019 to 2020 submission timetable \(appendix A\)](#)

Tools and services

[FIS \(Funding Information Service\)](#)

[Check an employer's status](#)

[ILR Learner entry tool](#)

[ILR FileMerge](#)




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 chose the latest version of FIS available and select the downloadable link.

Figure 1a: link for FIS downloads

 **Submit learner data**

BETA This is a new service – your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it.

[< 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.

2021 to 2022 2020 to 2021 2019 to 2020

Academic year 2021 to 2022

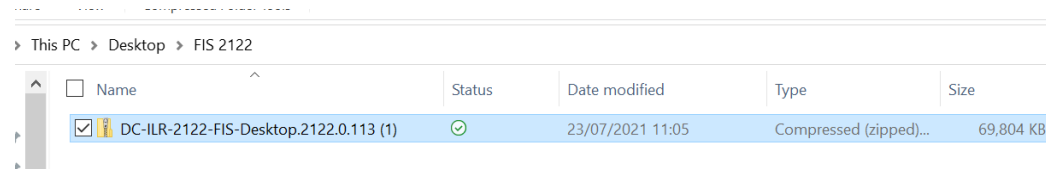
Version	Date and time uploaded	Download Link
2122.1	2 August 2021 at 12:30pm	Download 2122.1



How to download and configure FIS for the first time

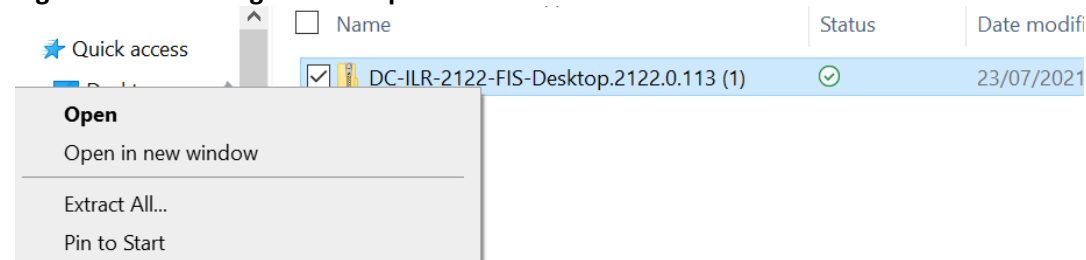
Once you have selected the downloadable link a FIS Desktop compressed (zipped) folder will download. Move this to your chosen folder location to store and run FIS from.

Figure 2: compressed file for download



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

Figure 2a: extracting from compressed file

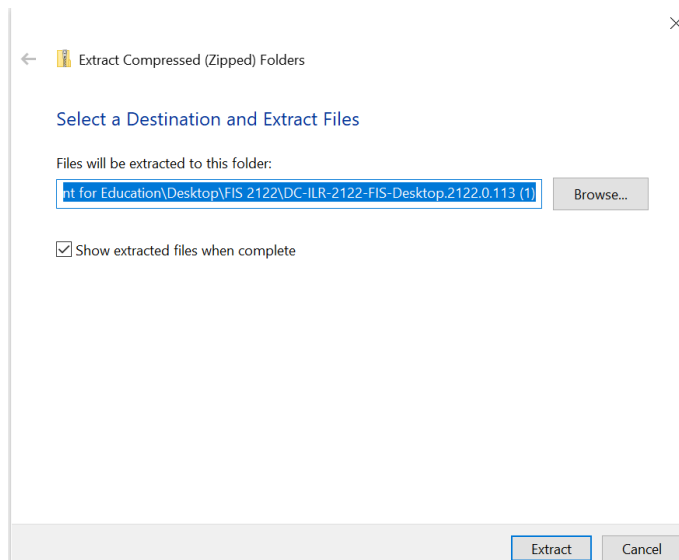




How to download and configure FIS for the first time

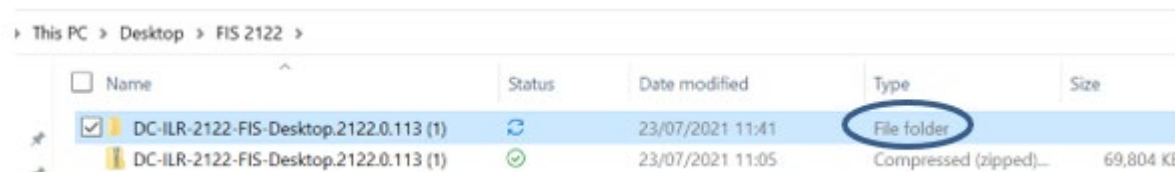
Select the folder (browse to location if required) where you would like FIS to be extracted to and then click on 'Extract'.

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





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

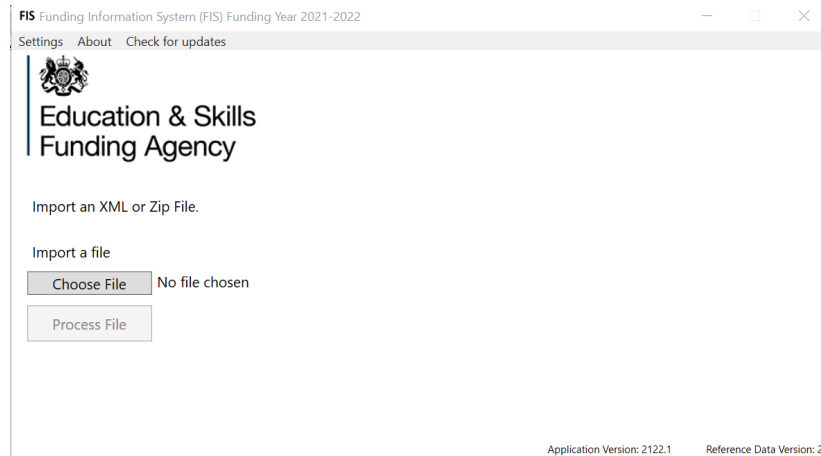
	ESFA.DC.ILR.Desktop.CLI		12/08/2021 10:06	Application	30 KB
	ESFA.DC.ILR.Desktop.CLI.exe.config		12/08/2021 10:06	CONFIG File	23 KB
	ESFA.DC.ILR.Desktop.ExportDatabase.Console		12/08/2021 10:06	Application	26 KB
	ESFA.DC.ILR.Desktop.ExportDatabase.Consol...		12/08/2021 10:06	CONFIG File	23 KB
	FIS ESFA.DC.ILR.Desktop.WPF		12/08/2021 10:06	Application	166 KB
	ESFA.DC.ILR.Desktop.WPF.exe.Config		12/08/2021 12:23	CONFIG File	25 KB

The FIS Application for 2021-22 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



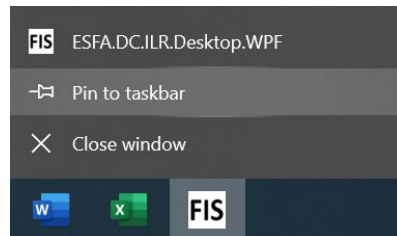
Education & Skills Funding Agency

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





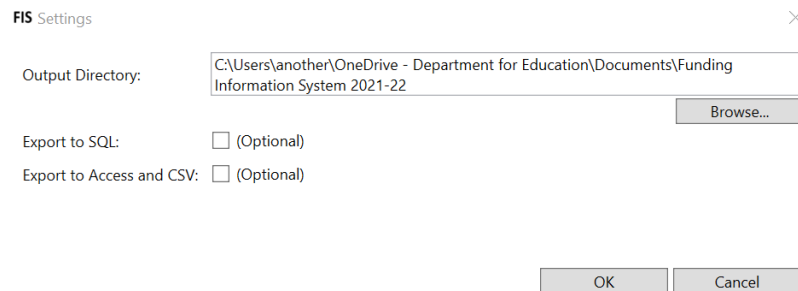
FIS settings – how to change output location

When the FIS Application is open select 'Settings' in the top left-hand 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 screenshot shows the 'FIS Settings' dialog box. The 'Output Directory' field is populated with 'C:\Users\another\OneDrive - Department for Education\Documents\Funding Information System 2021-22'. Below this, the 'Export to SQL' checkbox is unchecked, and the 'Export to Access and CSV' checkbox is checked. At the bottom, there are 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons.

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

Figure 4a: example of Access and csv outputs

Name	Status	Date modified	Type	Size
FIS-CSV 20210812-111221	✓	12/08/2021 12:13	Compressed (zipped) Folder	21 KB
FIS 20210812-111221	✓	12/08/2021 12:13	Microsoft Access Database	1,708 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

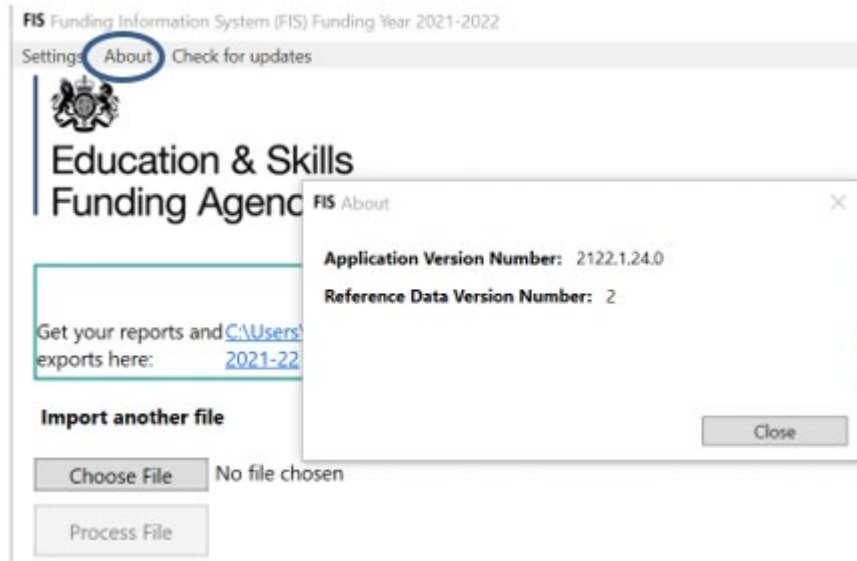
14:02.1	INFO	ILR Desktop Application Start
14:02.4	INFO	Application version number : 1.0
14:02.4	INFO	Reference Data version number : 1
14:03.2	INFO	Retrieving latest known Application Version.
14:03.2	INFO	Retrieving Application versions from SLD API.
14:03.3	INFO	Attempting to call https://publicapi.submitlearnerdatappbeta.fasst.org.uk/api/v1/ApplicationVersions/isLatest/2021/1/0
14:03.8	ERROR	Error retrieving Application versions from SLD API.
14:03.8	INFO	Finished Retrieving latest known Application Version.



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.

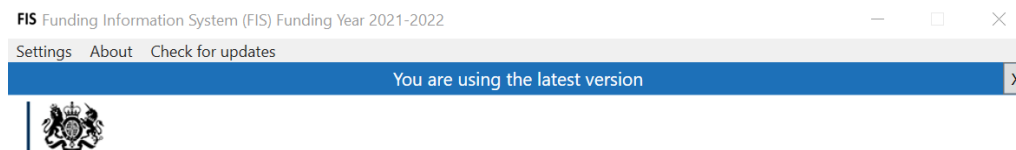
The blue banner contains an X button option to close should you not wish to proceed with any updates.

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



FIS Reference data update



Current reference data version : 1

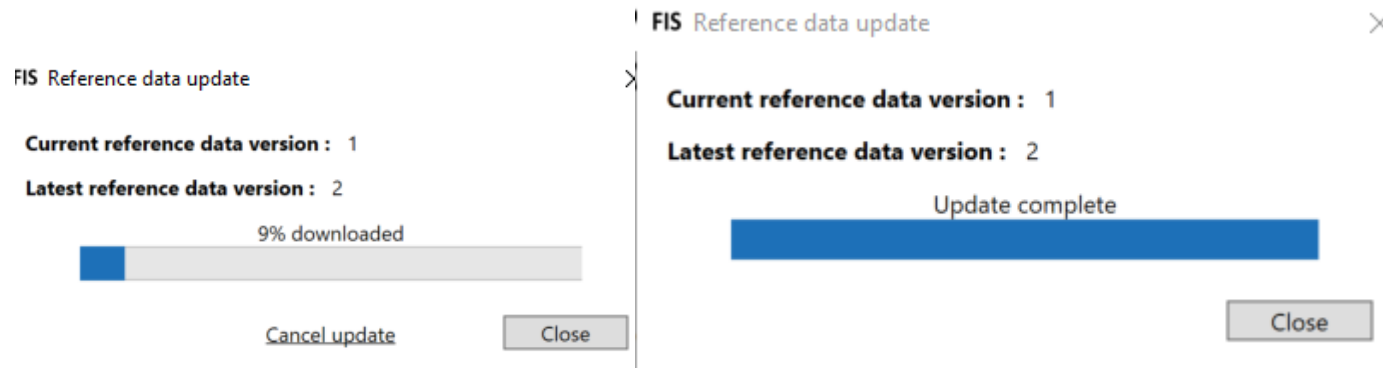
Latest reference data version : 2

Update reference data

Close

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

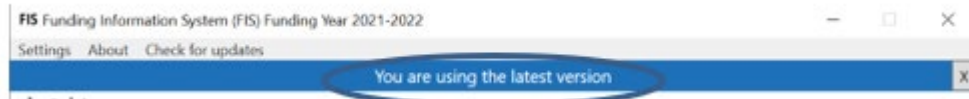
Figure 5e: advisory messages showing % downloaded



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



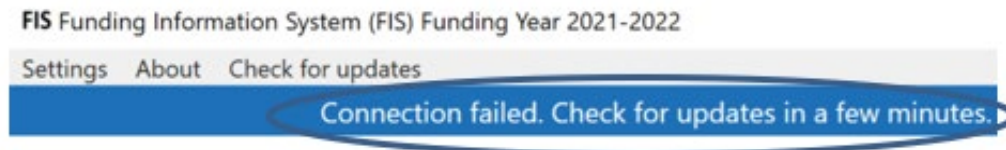
Figure 5f: advisory messages showing you are using the latest version



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

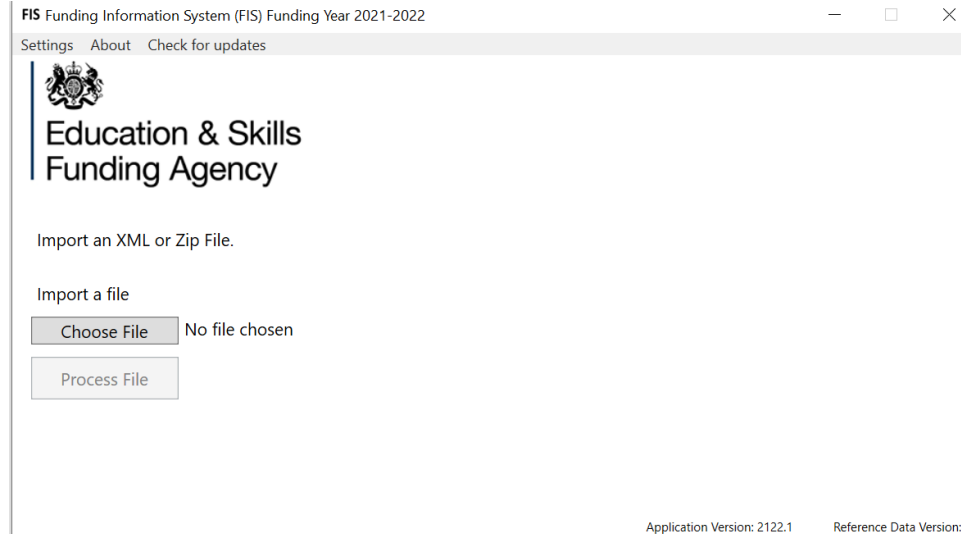




How to Use FIS

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

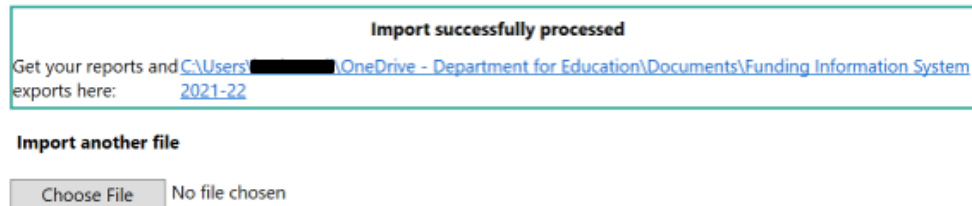




How to Use FIS

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



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
















<input type="checkbox"/>	Name	Date modified	Type
<input type="checkbox"/>	ILR: ██████████-2122-20210312-094349-01	12/08/2021 15:21	File folder



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Figure 6d: FIS reports

Name

-  16-19 Funding Claim Report 20210812-152024
-  16-19 Summary of Funding by Student Report 20210812-152024
-  Adult Funding Claim Report 20210812-152024
-  CL Summary of Learners by Non-Single Budget Category Report 20210812-152024
-  High Needs Students Detail Report 20210812-152024
-  High Needs Students Summary Report 20210812-152024
-  Maths and English Report 20210812-152024
-  ALLB Occupancy Report 20210812-152024
-  Apps Indicative Earnings Report 20210812-152024
-  Devolved Adult Education Funding Summary Report 20210812-152024
-  Devolved Adult Education Occupancy Report 20210812-152024
-  Funding Summary Report 20210812-152024
-  Main Occupancy Report 20210812-152024
-  Rule Violation Summary Report 20210812-152024
-  Summary of Funding Model 35 Funding Report 20210812-152024
-  Trailblazer Apprenticeships Employer Incentives Report 20210812-152024
-  Trailblazer Apprenticeships Occupancy Report 20210812-152024
-  Rule Violation Report 20210812-152024



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: C:\Users\another\OneDrive - Department for Education\Documents\Funding Information System 2021-22 Browse...

Export to SQL: (Optional)

Connection String: Data Source=[yourservernamehere] Copy string Configure...

Export to Access and CSV: (Optional)

OK Cancel

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

FIS Connection Properties

Data source:
Microsoft SQL Server (SQL Client) Change...

Server name:
[yourservernamehere] Refresh

Database name:
ILR2122

Log on to the server
 Use Windows Authentication
 Use SQL Server Authentication

User name
Password

This connection has not been successfully tested.

Test Connection OK Cancel

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

FIS ConnectionPropertiesWindow

Data source:
Microsoft SQL Server (SQL Client) Change...

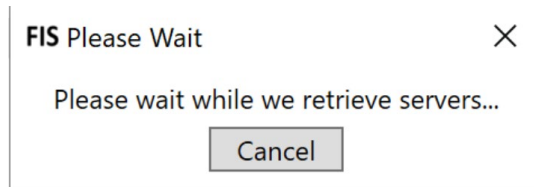
Server names:
(local) Refresh
.\SQLExpress

Use SQL Server Authentication



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 ILR2122, or you can type in your database name for selection.

Figure 7d: adding database name

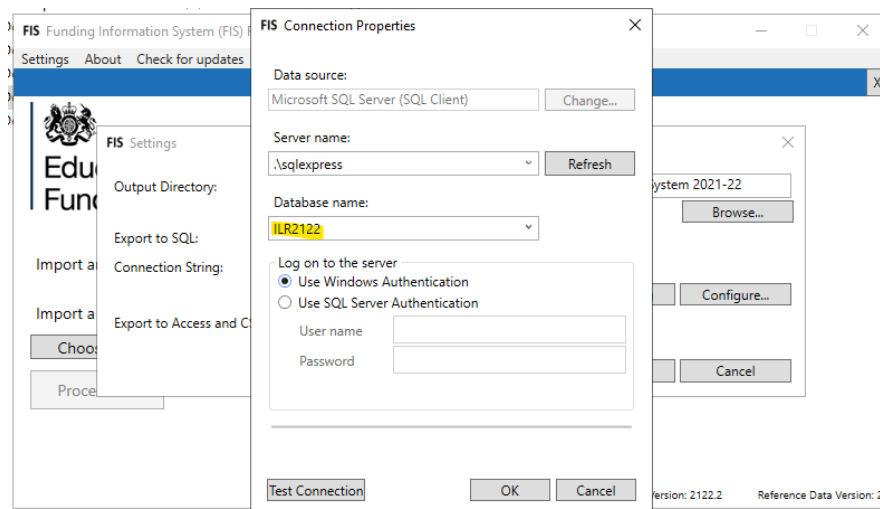




Figure 7e: changing database name

FIS Connection Properties

Data source:
Microsoft SQL Server (SQL Client) Change...

Server name:
.sqlexpress Refresh

Database name:
ILR2122_MyName

Log on to the server
 Use Windows Authentication
 Use SQL Server Authentication

- + ILR2021_Override
- + ILR2021_run2
- + ILR2122_MyName

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

Log on to the server

Use Windows Authentication
 Use SQL Server Authentication

User name

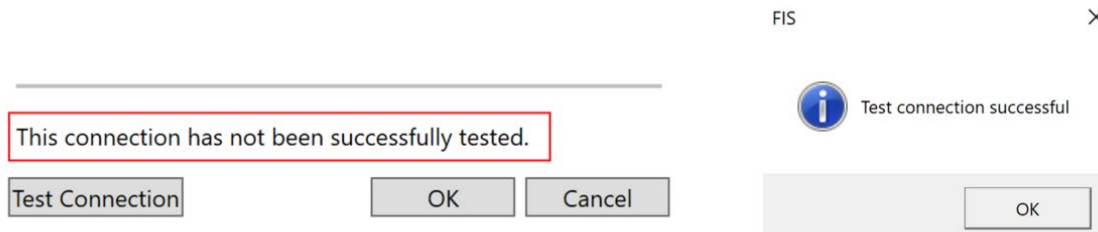
Password

Warning: this password will be saved locally in clear text

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 screenshot shows a dialog box titled "FIS Settings" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The dialog contains the following fields and options:

- Output Directory:** A text box containing the path "C:\Users\DevUser\OneDrive\Documents\Funding Information System 2021-22" and a "Browse..." button to its right.
- Export to SQL:** A checked checkbox followed by the text "(Optional)".
- Connection String:** A text box containing the string "Data Source=.\sqlexpress;Initial Catalog=ILR2122_MyName;Integrated Security=True". This text box is circled in blue. Below it are two buttons: "Copy string" and "Configure...".
- Export to Access and CSV:** An unchecked checkbox followed by the text "(Optional)".

At the bottom of the dialog are two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel".

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

Email: sde.servicedesk@education.gov.uk

Telephone: 0370 267 0001

Service Desk opening hours

<i>9:00am to 5:00pm</i>	Monday to Thursday
<i>9:00am to 4:00pm</i>	Friday
<i>8:30am to 6:00pm</i>	Days when ILR returns are closing

The Service Desk is closed weekends and bank holidays. Queries can be raised out of hours by email.