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Individualised Learner Record 2008/09

Validation Rules Guidance

Version 1

May 2008

Validation rules guidance 2008/09

Contents

Introduction	3
Background.....	3
Format of the 2008/09 validation rules.....	3
Errors within data returns	3
Warning messages.....	4
Validation stages	4
Consistency and credibility checks.....	4
Preliminary data checks	4
Filename.....	4
Header and footer records	4
Import Validation	4
File level validation checks	5
Field level validation checks	6
Cross record validation checks.....	7
Derived Data for Validation.....	7
Cross field validation checks	8

Introduction

1. This document accompanies the Validation rules spreadsheet and the Individualised Learner Record specification 2008/09. It describes how the validation rules spreadsheet is laid out and the meaning of the data under various columns.

Background

2. The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) 2008/09 collects data about learners studying in the FE system in England, and would include data from providers receiving the following types of funding from the LSC:

- 16-18 and adult learner responsive
- employer responsive
- adult safeguarded learning (ASL)
- European social funding (ESF)
- Other LSC funding and have agreed to return ILR data.

3. From 2008/09 the ILR data will be collected by the data service which is an independent FE system data service and was established in April 2008.

4. The Specification of the Individualised Learner Record for 2008/09 was published on *the information authority* website on 25 January 2008 and is available to download from:

www.theia.org.uk/ilr/ilrdocuments/ilrdetail.htm

Format of the 2008/09 validation rules

5. The format of the validation rule spreadsheet is described in detail from paragraph 15 onwards. The rules themselves are laid out in various worksheets, in rule identification number order. Rules that have been deleted since 2007/08 are displayed at the bottom of each worksheet. Changes to rules from 2007/08 and from previous versions, new rules are highlighted. Any queries regarding the validation rules should be directed to the provider's local partnership team.

Errors within data returns

6. It is not possible to send data with errors to the data service through the on-line data capture system. Validation will be applied to each file transmitted and any errors encountered will be reported back to the provider for correction and re-transmission.
7. The data service will produce the learner information suite (LIS), a software application which as well as calculating funding for providers, also assists providers in making valid data returns. The LIS will implement the validation rules for 2008/09 and the data service strongly advises providers to use this software before transmitting data to the web portal.

Warning messages

8. The data service does not wish to reject data that are valid in unusual circumstances. Consequently some validation checks are applied that may result in warning messages. A warning message does not cause the data to be rejected. The warnings allow providers to review the validity of unusual data before they are transmitted to the data service.

Validation stages

9. The validation checks take place in six stages;
 - preliminary data checks
 - import validation checks
 - file level validation checks
 - field level validation checks
 - cross record validation checks
 - cross field validation checks.

Consistency and credibility checks

10. Any return may be checked to confirm that it is;
 - consistent with previous ILR and other returns from the provider
 - credible in the light of the LSCs knowledge of the provider's provisions and plans
 - credible in the light of data returned by other, similar, providers.
11. The rest of this document and associated excel spreadsheet describes in detail the validation checks described in paragraph 9.

Preliminary data checks

12. On transmission to the web portal, preliminary data checks verify that the fields returned by the provider:
 - contain data corresponding to the details supplied at the point of transmission
 - contain learner records, each of which contains the appropriate data sets

Filename

13. Each file returned will be checked to see if it has a filename of the correct format. The ILR specification for 2008/09 contains the rules for the formation of filenames.

Header and footer records

14. The existence of header and footer records will then be checked. Validation will be performed on information extracted, according to the rules set out in the ILR specification for 2008/09.

Import Validation

15. The 'import validation' worksheet tab on the outlines the validation rules applied on import. The import validation rules field formats and record lengths. Failure of any of these rules will cause the file to be rejected. Each column has the following meaning:

Column heading	Meaning
Rule ID	The validation rule code for this validation check.
Description	An explanation of what the rule checks.
LR/UFI	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to learner responsive and Ufi returns.
ER	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to employer responsive returns.
ASL	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ASL returns.
ESF SR	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ESF SR returns.
E/W	Indicates whether the rule generates an error (E) or warning (W).
LIS	Indicates whether the LIS software applies this rule.
On-line data capture system	Indicates whether the on-line data capture system applies this rule.
Reject File	Indicates whether failure of the rule will lead to the whole data file being rejected.
LR Fund	Indicates whether this rule is required for learner responsive funding calculations. Data, which fails these rules, will not be included in the funding calculations.

File level validation checks

16. The 'file level' worksheet tab on the accompanying Excel spreadsheet outlines the validation rules carried out at a file level. Each column has the following meaning:

Column heading	Meaning
From 07/08	Describes type of change from the 2007/08 validation rules.
Ref	The reference used in the spreadsheet to describe the object the rules refer to.
Description	The name of the object that this validation rule refers to
Length	The number of characters that make up the field
Rule ID	The validation rule code for this validation check
Format	The type of data expected within the field. Usually alphanumeric or numeric.
Rule Description	An explanation of what the rule checks
LR and Ufi	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to learner responsive and Ufi returns
ER	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to employer responsive returns
ASL	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ASL returns
ESF SR	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ESF SR returns
External Check	Indicates whether the validation rule includes a reference to an external system, such as the Learning Aim Database
E/W	Indicates whether the rule generates an error (E) or warning (W)

Column heading	Meaning
LIS	Indicates whether this rule is applied by the LIS software
On-line data capture system	Indicates whether the on-line data capture system applies this rule.
Reject File	Indicates whether failure of the rule will lead to the whole data file being rejected.

Field level validation checks

17. The 'field level' worksheet tab on the accompanying Excel spreadsheet outlines the validation rules applicable to each individual field in the data file.

Each column has the following meaning:

Column heading	Meaning
From 07/08	Describes type of change from the 2007/08 validation rules.
Rule ID	The validation rule code for this validation check.
Field number	The number of the field that this validation rule refers to.
Field Name	The name of the field that this validation rule refers to.
Field type	Indicates whether the field is alphanumeric, numeric, alphabetic or date format.
LR, ER, ASL, ESF SR	Indicates whether the data field is required for each return format. (It does not indicate which return type the rule is applicable to).
Rule description	An explanation of what the rule checks.
Metadata description (error condition)	Additional information detailing the conditions that result in an error or warning.
E/W	Indicates whether the rule generates an error (E) or warning (W).
LR and Ufi Rule	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to learner responsive and Ufi returns.
ER Rule	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to employer responsive returns.
ASL Rule	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ASL returns.
ESF SR Rule	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ESF SR returns.
LIS	Indicates whether the LIS software applies this rule.
On-line data capture system	Indicates whether this rule is applied by the on-line data capture system.
Ext	Indicates whether the validation rule includes a reference to an external system, such as the Learning Aim Database
LR Fund	Indicates whether this rule is required for LR funding calculations. Data, which fails these rules, will not be included in the funding calculations.
Batch/Online	Indicates whether this rule will be applied by the batch capture system (B), the provider on-line system (O) or both (B/O).
Business reason for rule	Contains notes on why the rule is required

Column heading	Meaning
Reason for change	An explanation for why a rule has changed or why new rule is needed. Where a new rule replaces a 2007/08 rule this is indicated.

Cross record validation checks

18. The 'cross record validation' worksheet tab on the accompanying Excel spreadsheet outlines the validation rules applied between records in each data file received. Each column has the following meaning:

Column heading	Meaning
Notes	Where a new rule replaces a 2007/08 rule this is indicated.
From 07/08	Describes type of change from the 2007/08 validation rules.
Rule ID	The validation rule code for this validation check.
Description	An explanation of what the rule checks.
LR and Ufi	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to learner responsive and Ufi returns.
ER	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to employer responsive returns.
ASL	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ASL returns.
ESF SR	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ESF SR returns.
E/W	Indicates whether the rule generates an error (E) or warning (W).
LIS	Indicates whether the LIS software applies this rule.
On-line data capture system	Indicates whether this rule is applied by the on-line data capture system.
Reject File	Indicates whether failure of the rule will lead to the whole data file being rejected.
LR Fund	Indicates whether this rule is required for LR funding calculations. Data, which fails these rules, will not be included in the funding calculations.
Reason for change	An explanation for why a rule has changed or why new rule is needed.

Derived Data for Validation

19. The 'Derived data for validation' worksheet tab on the accompanying Excel spreadsheet outlines a number of rules and calculations that are applied to the data to produce a derived field. The derived field can then be used to aid validation and to calculate funding. Each column has the following meaning:

Column heading	Meaning
From 07/08	Describes type of change from the 2007/08 validation rules.
Ref	The reference code for this derived field / validation check.
Field Name	The name of the derived field
Length	The length of the derived field

Column heading	Meaning
Field type	Indicates whether the field is alphanumeric, numeric, alphabetic or date format.
LR and Ufi	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to learner responsive and Ufi returns.
ER	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to employer responsive returns.
ASL	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ASL returns.
ESF SR	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ESF SR returns.
Derivation Rule	An explanation of what the rule calculates and checks.
LIS	Indicates whether the LIS software applies the rule.
On-line data capture system	Indicates whether the on-line data capture system applies this rule.
Ext	Indicates whether the validation rule includes a reference to an external system, such as the Learning Aim Database

Cross field validation checks

20. The 'Cross field validation' worksheet tab on the accompanying Excel spreadsheet outlines the validation rules applied between data fields within each data file. Each column has the following meaning:

Column heading	Meaning
From 07/08	Describes type of change from the 2007/08 validation rules.
Rule	The validation rule code for this validation check.
Rule Description	An explanation of what the rule checks.
Metadata	Additional information detailing the conditions that result in an error or warning.
E/W	Indicates whether the rule generates an error (E) or warning (W).
LR and Ufi Rule	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to learning responsive and Ufi returns.
ER Rule	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to employer responsive returns.
ASL Rule	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ASL returns.
ESF SR Rule	Indicates whether this rule is applicable to ESF SR returns.
LIS	Indicates whether the LIS software applies this rule.
On-line data Capture system	Indicates the on-line data capture system applies this rule.
Ext	Indicates whether the validation rule includes a reference to an external system, such as the Learning Aim Database
LR Funding rule	Indicates whether this rule is required for LR funding calculations. Data, which fails these rules, will not be included in the funding calculations.
B/O	Indicates whether this rule will be applied by the batch capture system (B), the provider

Column heading	Meaning
	on-line system (O) or both (B/O).
Business reason for rule	Notes on why the rule is there
Reason for change	An explanation for why a rule has changed or why new rule is needed. Where a new rule replaces a 2007/08 rule this is indicated.