



The information authority

Paper 4: Changes to the Specification of the Individualised Learner Record for 2009/10

Author: Peter Ashton

Date: 1 October 2008

Version: Final

1 Purpose

This paper is prepared for *the information authority* board ("the board") meeting on 1 October 2008 to:

- provide a summary of the requests received by *the information authority* secretariat ("the secretariat") to change the specification of the individualised learner record (ILR) for 2009/10, at section 3.
- outline the work undertaken on these requests and their current status, at sections 4 and 5, and describe next steps at section 14.
- provide a description of the changes that the secretariat is recommending for implementation in 2009/10, the reasons for this recommendation and seek the board's authority for these changes, at sections 6 to 11.
- list the requests that are not recommended for implementation in 2009/10, the reason for this and seek the board's approval of these recommendations, at Appendix C
- ask the board to agree proposals about the final date for receiving learner responsive returns for 2008/09 and the development of the publication timetable for the 2010/11 ILR specification at sections 12 and 13.
- draw the board's attention to specific requests, in bold text, and ask for its approval.

2 Background

A summary of the structure and content of the ILR based on the 2008/09 specification is attached at Appendix A. This is provided for information as some requests refer to the ILR specification for 2008/09.

The timetable for the development and publication of the ILR specification for 2009/10 was agreed at the board meeting in March 2008. This is attached at Appendix B.

Change requests that are not being implemented in the ILR for 2009/10 are described in Appendix C.

For the first time the staff undertaking the ILR change process worked in the secretariat.

Requests for change were evaluated against the improved and more visible criteria developed by secretariat in consultation with stakeholders during the last year.

For the first time providers and other stakeholders were consulted using *the information authority* FEConnect collaboration site as well as through existing consultative groups. This gave all stakeholders the opportunity to comment on changes. Improved visibility is particularly helpful to the secretariat as it decreases the likelihood of unforeseen issues at the implementation stage. Also for the first time the Data Service was consulted about the impact of changes on the systems receiving, transforming and producing management information (MI) from ILR data.

Throughout the paper and Appendix C change request identity numbers (ID numbers) are included so that the secretariat will be able to provide fuller information about particular changes when requested to do so at the board meeting. The ID number act as a reference to detailed information in other documents.

The secretariat is grateful to the large number of provider representatives and data users that have advised it through this process.

3 Summary of Requests Received

The secretariat received 73 requests for changes to the ILR for 2009/10.

The table below summarises the number of requests received from each organisation:

Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF)	5
Department for Innovation Universities and Skills (DIUS)	2
FE College	1
Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)	5
Learning and Skills Council (LSC)	51
Local Authority	1
MI Across Partners Programme (MIAP)	1
<i>The information authority</i>	6
University for Industry	1
Total	73

Several of the requests from the LSC were co-sponsored by or represented requests from DIUS.

4 Progress Report

Providers and data users were informed of the timetable and process, and asked to send requests for change by 27 June 2008. Some requests were extremely vague at this point. In these cases requestors were asked to provide more details by 11 July 2008. The secretariat worked with requestors to clarify requirements and to obtain sufficient information to evaluate the request against the criteria. In some cases new solutions to achieve the requestor's objectives were developed and evaluated.

Where a change failed to meet the criteria requestors were informed of the reason for not taking it forward.

The secretariat has undertaken a significant piece of work to improve the specification of the ILR for 2009/10 as identified in [the information authority](#) workplan. This work includes:

- reviewing data definitions and where these can be expressed more clearly doing so
- identifying how each field is used in reporting and calculation
- assigning ownership, and sub-ownership, of each field to a stakeholder
- assigning a data quality standard to each ILR field.

5 Current Status

The 73 requests received by the secretariat can be classified as follows:

- three requests are for minor changes to guidance and validation
- five requests were withdrawn or implementation delayed after initial investigation
- seven requests were found to be unrelated to changes to the ILR specification
- 26 requests did not meet the criteria after being put through the challenge process and were rejected. The secretariat has written to these requestors advising them of the result of applying the criteria
- 32 requests meet the criteria and have been taken forward by the secretariat.

All the requests resulting in changes to the ILR specification for 2009/10 are described in sections 6 to 11 of this paper. All other requests are described in Appendix C.

In summary the requests result in the following recommended changes:

- removal of three fields
- addition of six new fields
- removal of the ESF data set and nine technical fields
- removal of a facility to collect ad hoc learner responsive ILR returns
- three requests to collect data more extensively
- changes to codes in five fields
- four minor changes to the specification
- for data about higher education (HE) one new field, two new codes in an existing field and a change to collection arrangements to meet the needs of HEFCE.

The secretariat recommends that the board supports most of these changes given that they have met the criteria. In some cases it recommends more work be done, postponement or rejection. The following sections provide more detail about these changes to enable the board to make decisions about them.

The board is particularly asked to look at the recommendations at sections 6.1, 6.3, 7.1 and 8.3 in the paper and change IDs 1, 60 and 64 in Appendix C to ensure it is content with the secretariat's recommendations.

6 Changes to Data Collection Arrangements

6.1 Identification of Sub-Contract Provision

The LSC sent five requests, request IDs 2, 9, 43, 44 and 66, to change the 2009/10 specification to identify the role of sub-contractors in the delivery of LSC funded learning. In the two years prior to this other similar requests were received. In summary these changes request that:

- the data collected is changed to make it fit to measure the performance of sub-contract partners
- for the first time sub-contract data is collected for provision delivered by LSC employer responsive funding

- all the sub-contract partners are identified where a learning aim is delivered by more than one.

For 2008/09 data about sub-contract partners is collected for LSC funded learner responsive provision. The nature of the contract relationship is collected in the Franchised out and partnership arrangement field, field A21, and the identity of the sub-contractor is collected in the Franchise and partnership delivery provider number field, field A22. Providers are requested to return the UK provider reference number (UKPRN), from the national MIAP UK register of learning providers (UKRLP) in field A22 and only where it is unable to obtain a UKPRN to use their own reference number and complete and return a register of sub-contractors. Only major sub-contractors are identified. A major sub-contractor is defined as one that delivers more than 50% of the learning for a particular learning aim.

This data allows the LSC to monitor the extent of sub-contracting and identify sub-contract partners, for example so it can raise concerns where provision is sub-contracted to partners with which it would not contract directly because of quality issues. It is not possible using data collected to the current specification to accurately measure the performance of sub-contractors or individual partners in a consortium.

The five requests have been received from staff in the LSC with responsibility that extends only partially over the areas of funding, contract monitoring and performance measuring. The secretariat has identified that the proposed changes are only partial solutions. Consequently they have not been taken forward individually.

In order to make progress towards a coherent solution the secretariat wrote to senior colleagues in DIUS, LSC and the Office for Standards in education (Ofsted) to gauge their appetite to measure and monitor the performance of sub-contractors and consortia partners.

These colleagues confirmed that:

- there is a need to identify sub-contract partners
- there is a need to measure the contribution of sub-contractors
- there is no appetite to measure systematically and publish information about the performance of sub-contractors
- the changes described below would meet their needs in these respects.

The secretariat proposes, subject to experience in 2008/09, to tighten guidance to providers and introduce data validation rules, so that by 2010/11 the use of local sub-contractor number will have ceased.

The secretariat recommends the board to agree to the tightening of guidance so that by 2010/11 the use of local sub-contract numbers ceases and is replaced by the use of the MIAP UKPRN.

The extent of sub-contracting of LSC funded employer responsive provision is increasing particularly for Train to Gain. The LSC wishes to monitor this sub-contracting in the same way and for the same reasons it monitors LSC funded learner responsive provision. Providers have raised no concerns about this request.

The secretariat recommends the board to agree to providers for the first time returning sub-contract and consortia information for provision funded by LSC employer responsive funding.

The final request, request ID 2, asked that where more than one sub-contractor was involved in delivery that all sub-contractors are identified. This was rejected because it would require extra fields on the ILR thereby involving providers in extra administration and not significantly increase the usefulness of data available to stakeholders without also collecting the proportion of delivery undertaken by each partner.

The secretariat asks the board to confirm it is content that only the major sub-contract partner is identified as in 2008/09.

6.2 Removing Low Value Fields

The secretariat in its workplan committed to review the ILR on a rolling year by year basis to remove low value fields, request ID 59.

Through a process of consultation with providers and data users six fields were considered for removal. These were:

- Country of domicile, field L24
- NES delivery LSC number field, field L44
- Employer role field, field A19
- Occupation relating to learning aim field, field A24
- Number of units completed field, field A37
- Number of units to achieve full qualification field, field A38.

By using the standard process for evaluating requests to change the ILR the secretariat identified:

- the case for retaining three of the fields is weak. These fields are the Occupation relating to learning field, field A24, the Number of units completed field, field A37, and the Number of units to achieve full qualification field, field A38. Data consuming agencies have made no case of substance for their retention
- there is a strong case for retaining the Country of domicile field, field L24, the NES delivery LSC number field, field L44, and the Employer role field, field A19. The information provided by

stakeholders about how these fields are used will be included in the ILR support manual for 2009/10.

The board is recommended to agree to the removal of the Occupation relating to learning field, field A24, the Number of units completed field, field A37, and the Number of units to achieve full qualification field, field A38.

During the process for agreeing changes to the ILR for 2010/11 further fields will be reviewed.

6.3 Collecting ILR Returns from Independent Specialist Colleges

The LSC Young Peoples Learning and Skills group have requested, request ID 63, that independent specialist colleges (ISCs) for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities send ILR returns for their learners for the first time. It has agreed that there is no need to change the ILR specification to accommodate these learners.

The change is requested to allow the LSC to bring ISCs within scope of LSC Framework for Excellence (FfE). The LSC's ambition is to do this for 2009/10. The change would also provide LSC and DIUS with data for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities at ISCs on the same basis as that for similar learners at other institutions. It would allow the LSC to include the contribution of ISCs to the achievement of national targets. Background information about this is included in paper 4a to this board meeting "Overview of LLDD funding reforms".

The LSC is currently consulting with these providers and their representative body the Association of National Specialist Colleges (NATSPEC) about piloting ILR collection in 2009/10 with a view to all such providers making a return in 2010/11. It has confirmed that it has funds to support these providers to prepare for making these returns.

NATSPEC are content for a pilot of the new arrangement involving a small number of volunteer providers to take place in 2009/10

The pilot will enable the LSC to assess how ready ISCs are to make returns and the resources that would be needed to enable them to do so.

The change would apply in 2010/11 to approximately 60 providers delivering education and training to around 3500 learners.

The board is asked to confirm it is content for a pilot with a small number of volunteers to proceed. The board will be consulted again before the collection is extended to all ISCs.

6.4 Changing the Threshold Below which Some Fields are Collected for Adult Safeguarded Provision

Last year the board agreed that some fields already in the ILR specification should be collected for adult safeguarded learning (ASL) provision but only for learners studying for more than 30 guided learning hours. At that time the board asked that "The secretariat ensures that the ASL collection of additional disability data and the minimum threshold for guided learning hours is reviewed as part of the 2009/10 ILR review." The fields affected are:

- Disability, field L15
- Learning difficulty, field L16
- Contact data, fields L09, L10, L18, L19, L20, L21, L22, L23 and L27

Analysis of data from a previous year shows that 81% of enrolments are on courses of less than 30 guided learning hours. Consequently the LSC lifelong learning team has asked, request ID 21, that the minimum threshold, measured in guided learning hours, below which these fields in the ASL return, are requested is reduced.

The secretariat has consulted about the threshold with providers and the LSC and gained their agreement that a new minimum of ten guided learning hours is supported. Analysis of data from a previous year shows that only 25% of enrolments are on courses of less than ten guided learning hours. The two board members representing providers making ASL returns, Bob Powell and Caroline Miller, have confirmed they are content with this limit.

The board is recommended to agree that the threshold for returning the ASL fields described above is set to ten guided learning hours.

6.5 Remove the ESF data set

The board agreed to the removal of eight fields from the European Social Fund (ESF) data set of the ILR for 2008/09. At the time it agreed this change the secretariat informed it that "it plans to withdraw the ESF data set for 2009/10 and incorporate the remaining seven fields in the learner and learning aim data sets as appropriate. The board will receive more information about this at a future meeting."

The secretariat now proposes that for 2009/10 the ESF data set is removed from the ILR specification and the seven remaining fields needed to support ESF are moved to the learning aim dataset. These fields are:

- Date started ESF co-financing field, field E08
- Planned end date for ESF co-financing field, field E09
- Date ended ESF co-financing field, field E10
- Employment status on day before starting ESF project field, field E12

- Length of unemployment before starting ESF project field, field E14
- Project dossier number field, field E22
- Local project number field, field E23.

A further nine fields used to maintain data integrity will no longer be returned. While this appears beneficial to providers it will have little affect on the burden of data collection on them since they are populated automatically by their MIS. Consequently removal of these nine fields is not included in the summary of changes.

The board is asked to confirm it is content with this proposal.

6.6 Remove the Facility to Request Ad Hoc ILR returns

The secretariat raised a request, request ID 58, to remove the facility for data users to request an ad hoc learner responsive ILR return sent to the portal using the "X" series of data collections.

For years up to and including 2008/09 data users may request providers to send ad hoc learner responsive returns in the "X" series of collections. This facility has been little used.

Given that the board balances the need of data users and providers when it agrees the timetable for data collection it appears inconsistent for it then to provide a facility to allow for extra ad hoc collections.

The "X" collection facility has been little used as it supports only the collection of data and not its transformation into a ready to use MI source by adding derived variables.

The secretariat consulted with providers, national and regional LSC colleagues and failed to find anyone who wished to retain the facility.

The secretariat recommends the board to approve the withdrawal of the "X" series of data collections used for ad ho data collections.

7 Requests Requiring New Data Fields or Extending the Use of Existing Fields

7.1 Overall Number of New Fields

This section 7 describes recommendations for six new fields. Providers commented that while they were generally supportive of the new fields individually they were concerned about the overall number of requests for new ones given that only three are being removed.

The board may wish to consider its overall appetite to add new fields. To that end the six new fields proposed in section 7 are listed in the sequence that places those which the secretariat mostly strongly recommends first.

7.2 New field to identify apprenticeship pathways

The LSC funding team has requested, request ID 5, a mechanism to identify pathways within apprenticeship frameworks.

Currently the ILR identifies apprenticeship frameworks using a three digit code in the Framework code field, field A26. The code is used to ensure the framework is funded at the correct rate. Some frameworks have more than one pathway and some pathways are funded at significantly different rates. The current arrangement allows a framework to be funded at only one rate. Consequently providers need to make manual adjustments to their funding in some cases.

For example the electro-technical apprenticeship has a technical pathway and a management pathway funded at significantly different rates.

Providers support the request as they recognise the need to support automated funding calculations.

The secretariat and the Data Service are discussing the most appropriate mechanism to achieve the aim of the request.

The board is recommended to agree to a new field in the learning aim data set in which to record framework pathway and to give the secretariat scope to agree an alternative mechanism if it would be helpful to the overall FE system to do so.

7.3 New field in which to record the identity of national skills academy

The LSC adult learning team has asked, request ID 48, for a new field in the learning aim data set in which to record the identity of the national skills academy (NSA) delivering provision.

NSAs are a key instrument in the Government's agenda for a more specialised skills system. For years up to and including 2008/09 the identity of a NSA delivering a learning aim has been identified using the National learning aim monitoring field, field A46. This field is used to collect extra information about low volume national programmes and initiatives. Changes to it can be made in year and are administered by the secretariat usually without reference to the board.

A new field is requested in which to record NSAs as they become mainstream and are delivering increasing volumes of provision. This gives the board the

opportunity to agree to collection of this data now the programme requires significant volumes of data.

The new field would be used to generate information:

- about the achievements of each NSA
- to reconcile LSC development and delivery funding for each NSA
- demonstrate the value for money delivered by NSAs
- identify the quality of provision delivered by NSAs.

These data are already collected in field A46. Consequently the change does not cause any extra burden on providers. The current burden in any case is not great since the data can be attached at a high level within provider MIS, such as at location, faculty or course level. Consultation about the proposed new field identified that providers which are involved in NSAs support the proposal.

The board is recommended to agree to a new field in the learning aim data set in which to record national skills academies.

7.4 New fields to record planned one to one contact visit and group-based hours for employer responsive provision

The LSC has requested, request ID 4, that for LSC funded employer responsive provision providers return two new fields to allow it to set funding rates for employer responsive funded provision.

Currently the LSC sets rates for learner responsive funded provision using the Guided learning hours field, field A32. It currently sets rates for employer responsive provision based on specific research into the costs of delivery of individual programmes. It now wishes to set employer responsive rates in a similar way to learner responsive rates, that is in a more systematic and consistent way based on comprehensive information collected through the ILR.

To achieve the above goal the LSC asked for two new fields in the ILR to record:

- planned one to one contact hours
- planned one to one group hours.

In each case planned hours would be sufficient as long as actual hours was within 20% of planned hours.

Providers were concerned about the need to track actual hours and any audit there would be of actual hours. They identified that to know whether actual hours were within 20% per cent of planned hours they would need to record all actual hours, so that what appeared to be a generous arrangement would have only a limited effect on their workload. Providers while not welcoming

the extra work involved were willing to return planned hours for both these fields.

The LSC would prefer to receive actual hours but accepts that a comprehensive collection of planned hours would be much more helpful than current arrangements.

Consequently the secretariat recommends the board to agree to the addition of two new fields from 2009/10 in the learning aim data set in which to record planned one to one visit hours and planned group hours for employer responsive provision. If this change is approved there would be no need for providers to track and record actual hours in the ILR.

7.5 Add a new field in which to record contract number for LSC non-mainstream funded provision

The LSC integrated employment and skills (IES) team has requested, request ID 37, that a contract number is collected for all non-mainstream funded provision

Non-mainstream provision in this context covers pilots and programmes which are not subject to formula funding and offenders' learning and skills service (OLASS) provision where the learner is in custody. It excludes all formula funded provision, ASL funded provision, ESF co-financed provision and provision not funded by the LSC.

At the moment a provider may be receiving funding for more than one non-mainstream funded contract. In these cases the LSC is unable to identify against which contract this provision is being delivered.

The LSC now wishes to add a contract number field in the ILR for providers to complete for non-mainstream funded provision only. It would use the data to:

- monitor delivery of its non-mainstream provision by contract number to enable it to:
 - have meaningful conversations with providers about delivery of contracts
 - confirm the quality of provision by contract
 - confirm contracts are delivering value for money.

Providers have raised no concerns about the work involved in meeting this request.

The board is recommended to consider whether it supports adding a new field in the learning aim data set in which to record contract number for LSC non-mainstream funded provision.

7.6 New field in which to indicate learners identified as gifted and talented at a provider

The DCSF supported by the LSC Young Peoples Learning and Skills group requested, request ID 19, a new field in which to identify learners identified by that provider as gifted and talented.

DCSF with LSC have been extending to the FE system the scheme that delivers extra support to learners identified as gifted and talented. It wishes to identify them in the same way that they are identified in the schools census so that DCSF can evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme and make improvements to it.

FE providers which have been involved in pilots during 2007/08 confirm that these learners are identified in their MIS and that including them on the ILR is no extra burden.

The proposed new field would not directly support funding or measurement of government targets.

In the unlikely event that the similar field in the schools census is removed as a result of a review of it then the field would not be included in the ILR. The final outcome of the review will not be known until later in 2008.

The board is recommended to consider whether it supports adding a new field in the learner data set in which to identify gifted and talented learners.

8 Requests Requiring Changed Codes in Existing Data Fields

8.1 Record National Apprenticeship Service Provision in a Similar Way to National Employer Service

The LSC skills directorate apprenticeship policy team has asked, request ID 29, that contract information for provision contracted by the new national apprenticeship service (NAS) is collected in a similar way to that for the existing national employer service (NES). This change is needed to monitor that national contracts deliver to LSC local team requirements.

The NES places contracts with national employers. Where this occurs contract data is recorded in the ILR using the LSC number of funding LSC field, field L25, to indicate a NES contract and the NES delivery LSC number field, field L44, to record the LSC number of the LSC in which training takes place.

It is proposed the same mechanism is used to record NAS provision by adding an extra code for NAS to field L25 and renaming field L44 to "NES/NAS delivery LSC number".

Providers have raised no concerns about this proposed change.

The secretariat recommends the board agrees to the proposed changes described above.

8.2 Prepare for more new skills programmes than usual in 2010/11

The LSC skills directorate apprenticeship policy team have requested, request ID 27, the secretariat to increase the number of unassigned codes in the National learning aim monitoring field, field A46, to cope with an expected greater than usual number of new skills related programmes.

Unassigned codes in field A46 are used to identify learning aims delivered as part of a new programme often when these are introduced in-year. Provider and Data Service systems are prepared to handle these unassigned codes. Typically three or four are used each year. Already two have been allocated for 2008/09.

The secretariat recommends the board agrees to include fifteen rather than ten unassigned codes in the National learning aim monitoring field.

The board may wish to consider whether it is content with the current arrangement in which the secretariat evaluates and approves requests to implement unassigned codes in the six ILR fields in which they are used.

8.3 Prepare for funding changes in 2009/10 announced after changes to the ILR are agreed by the board

The LSC funding team requested, request ID 38, an increased number of unassigned codes in certain fields to collect information about as yet unannounced new funding arrangements.

The board, including the LSC and DIUS, agreed at its meeting in March 2008 to publish the ILR specification by 28 November 2008. At the time the benefits and risks of early publication were identified as:

- benefit, all concerned have sufficient time to prepare processes and software systems for the next year
- benefit, more robust data is collected because everyone has prepared well

- benefit, cost reductions delivered by early publication make more money available for delivery of training and learning to learners
- risk, early publication means that the ILR is unable to reflect requirements that emerge late in the planning processes.

The LSC is now asking the board to note that it receives its grant letter from the government and publishes its *Statement of Priorities* in October/November each year and aims to publish the funding guidance by the end of the year. In past years, this has in most cases left sufficient time for funding changes to be incorporated in the specification of the ILR. The LSC says the changed timetable for developing the ILR means that in principle there could be some funding changes which miss the ILR deadline. It also says a potential result of this is that it and providers may need to implement manual systems outside the ILR to allow the correct funding to flow to providers.

The request can be considered in two parts.

Part one; for two of the fields including unassigned codes is a standard arrangement since the codes are used to identify conditions in management information which can be changed inexpensively or affect calculations in a pre-assigned way. The two fields are the Reason for full funding/co-funding of learning aim field, field A14, and the Special projects and pilots field, field A49.

The secretariat recommends the board agrees to unassigned codes being included in the Reason for full funding/co-funding of learning aim field, field A14, and the Special projects and pilots field, field A49, to support collection of basic information about as yet unannounced funding arrangements.

Part two: for the other three fields there is no facility to include unassigned codes. This is because the code values in these fields are used extensively in the validation of other fields and determine how LSC funding is calculated in the automated calculation processes integrated with the data collection system. The inclusion of any new code in these fields results in changes to algorithms in systems at the Data Service and providers. The three fields are the Eligibility for enhanced funding field, field L28, the Programme type field, field A15, and the Main delivery method field, field A18.

Further investigation identified that the LSC funding team was in effect asking that for LSC funding related changes the ILR specification was not finalised until the end of March 2009.

Given that the board previously discussed and agreed the timetable for publishing the ILR specification balancing the needs of data users and providers the secretariat recommends the board does not agree to postpone its publication for LSC funding changes until 31 March 2009.

The secretariat also recommends the board reminds the LSC that requests to introduce data collection arrangements outside the ILR to support funding changes would need to be referred to it.

8.4 Change codes used in LSC number of funding LSC field

A LSC region has asked, request ID 68 duplicated by ID 13, for changes to the codes used in the LSC number of funding LSC field, field L25. Another request, request ID 55, was raised by the secretariat to remove the field given that local LSCs no longer exist and a third, request ID 15, asks that the field is moved from the learner data set to the learning aim data set. The reason request ID 15 was not taken forward is described in annex C.

Field L25 is used to monitor delivery against local LSC team plan and budget when a provider is delivering on behalf of more than one local LSC team.

In 2007/08 and 2008/09 the data is being collected using an inconsistent set of codes describing the former 47 local LSCs. In many cases a code describing a former local LSC is being used to represent a new local partnership area or sub-regional grouping with a completely different area and name.

To address the inconsistent use of codes the LSC has developed and is agreeing a more coherent set of LSC local team and regional codes which reflects the way the LSC is contracting its provision.

Given that 2009/10 is the last year in which the LSC will fund providers the secretariat was not minded to support significant changes to this field. In particular it did not support moving the field from the learner data set to the learning aim data set. Instead it supports the more limited change to introduce a set of area codes consistent with current LSC contracting arrangements.

The secretariat asks the board to agree to the use of a more coherent set of codes approved by LSC governance in the LSC number of funding LSC field, field L25 subject to the approved new codes being confirmed to the secretariat by 10 October 2008.

8.5 Add a new code to Reason learning ended field

The LSC strategic analysis team has asked, request ID 72, for a new code in the Reason learning ended field, field A50, to identify when a learner ceases learning on a learning aim at an institution because of the voluntary dissolution of a consortium.

Where a consortium voluntarily dissolves and a learner continues learning the funding for that learning may be routed through a different provider. This

means that in the ILR of the original provider the learning ceases and the aim is counted as not achieved in success rate calculations.

The request asks that a new code is introduced to identify voluntary dissolution of a consortium in field A50 so that these data can be treated differently by success rate calculations. The secretariat is seeking confirmation from Ofsted and the LSC FfE team that there is an intention to change the success rate calculations to treat learning aims in this situation differently in future.

The secretariat recommends the board to agree to the request for a new code in the Reason learning ended field, field A50, to identify the voluntary dissolution of a consortium subject to confirmation by 10 October 2008 from Ofsted and the LSC FfE team that this will change the way success rates are calculated.

9 Other Minor Changes

9.1 Increase length of the Proportion of funding remaining field

The LSC funding team has asked, request ID 10, that the length of the Proportion of funding remaining field, field A51a, is increased from two to three digits.

Field A51a is two digits long and needs to handle values between “1” and “100”. The value of “100” is represented using the value “0”. This results in errors, confusion for providers and otherwise unnecessary support calls to the LSC, Data Service and secretariat.

The secretariat recommends the board agrees to increase the length of the Proportion of funding remaining field to three digits.

9.2 Increase length of the Learning outcome grade field

The secretariat, request ID 56, has requested that the length of the Learning outcome grade field, field A36, is increased to accept all valid grade combinations following a question from a provider.

Field A36 is currently three characters long. A provider has identified that there is already a qualification with a grade of four characters. The grade field is used to identify progress to Public Service Agreement (PSA) and other targets.

To address the current need and avoid further changes the secretariat recommends that the board agrees to increase the length of the Learning outcome grade field to six characters.

9.3 Use Employer Number to Identify Employers

The LSC skills directorate apprenticeship policy team has asked, requests ID 26 and 40, that providers in future use only the employer number from the employer data registration service (EDRS) to identify employers in the Employer identifier field, field A44. This change is requested to improve the usefulness of the data and its consistency.

In 2008/09 providers must use the employer number from EDRS in field A44 to identify employer for Train to Gain provision. They are encouraged to use the employer number for other employer responsive provision and for entry to employment but retain the option of using a free format employer name. Where employer name is used it is not possible to produce consistent and reliable management information. There have been some early issues for providers using the EDRS system to obtain employer numbers for provision other than Train to Gain.

The proposal is to ask providers in 2009/10 to always use an employer number from the EDRS to identify employers in field A44 subject to initial issues with use of the EDRS by providers being resolved. Where a provider was unable to obtain an employer number from the EDRS it would use a standard employer reference number indicating this would be the case, for example "999999999".

A related request, request ID 39, from the MIAP programme asks for improved validation of field A44. This is being taken forward with the changes described here.

The board is recommended to agree to the request that providers use only the employer number from the employer data registration service to identify employers in the Employer identifier field, field A44, as described in the proposal above.

9.4 Rename Discretionary learner support type field

The LSC learner support team has asked, request ID 50, for the Discretionary learner support type field, field L49, to be renamed as Discretionary support funds field.

The change will more accurately match the language used in the FE system and more accurately indicate how the field is used. The change in name does not imply any change in the way the field is completed or the information it contains.

The secretariat recommends the board agrees the request to rename the Discretionary learner support type field, field L49, as Discretionary support funds field.

10 Improved Guidance

There have been two requests which are being addressed by improving guidance to providers in the ILR specification. The requests are to:

- improve the accuracy of recording family, literacy, language and numeracy qualifications - request ID 20 from the LSC lifelong learning team
- avoid providers systematically completing the Restricted use field, field L27, so that the LSC and HEFCE are unable to contact learners for survey purposes - request ID 41 from the LSC quality improvement team and also supported by HEFCE

The guidance will be improved with input from the requestors.

11 Changes to HE Data Set

HEFCE have requested five changes to the ILR for 2009/10

11.1 Send Higher Education Outcomes by the F04 Return Date

HEFCE have requested, request ID 14, that providers send all outcome data for HE qualifications included in the learner responsive return by the collection reference date for the F04 return in early September. Priority is for learning aims funded by HEFCE.

Currently outcome data is sent to HEFCE from the F05 return but this is too late for them to publish achievement information containing it along with that from HE institutions. HEFCE wish to publish achievement data from HEIs and FE providers at the same time.

Providers are content that they can meet this request for HEFCE funded learners since outcome data about them is available in time for it to be included in ILR F04. This is not the case for some FE qualifications.

The secretariat recommends the board approves the request to include all HE outcome data in the learner responsive F04 return.

11.2 Changes to the HE Data Set

HEFCE and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) made requests for 4 changes, change request IDs 16, 17, 18 and 73, to the HE data set.

HEFCE, HESA and the LSC have a longstanding reciprocal arrangement covering data collection for individualised learner data from HEIs that receive LSC funding and/or deliver FE level provision and FE Colleges that deliver HEFCE funded and/or HE level provision.

The arrangement is that HESA collects individualised learner data from all HEIs about all their provision and then shares records for FE learners with the LSC. The LSC does the same for FE Colleges and shares records for HE learners with HESA. Each organisation that collects data is responsible for converting these data into the other organisation's format. Changes to this arrangement are being discussed by HEFCE, HESA, LSC and the secretariat.

The current 2008/09 ILR specification includes a discrete HE data set containing 34 fields relevant only to HE funded and HE level provision. These fields are specified to HESA definitions and standards.

After extensive consultation HESA has made changes to the specification of the HE learner record for 2008/09. HESA and HEFCE are asking that these changes are reflected in the ILR so that the two collections are compatible for the fields in the HE.

The net result is one new field and two new codes in the National learning aim monitoring field, field A46. The changes are a new:

- field to identify NHS bursary funded by HEFCE
- code in field A46 to identify employer co-funding
- code in field A46 to identify the lifelong learning networks model.

The secretariat asks the board to note these changes.

The fourth request, request ID 73, to change the format of the UCAS application code field, field H41, was found to be unnecessary after investigation. Consequently it was withdrawn.

12 Final Date for Receiving Learner Responsive ILR Returns for 2008/09

The LSC funding team has requested, request ID 8, that the last date on which providers may send learner responsive ILR returns, F05 returns, for 2008/09 is brought forward so that it can bring forward its processes dependent on end of year data.

The board at its meeting in June 2008 agreed to bring forward the last date for sending F05 returns for 2007/08 from 30 March 2009 to 6 February 2009. This change had a major benefit in that stakeholders agreed that all MI about participation and achievement would be produced from the same version of data. The board also asked the secretariat to consider further changes to the F05 final collection date for 2008/09 onwards.

Consequently the secretariat has consulted with providers funded from the LSC learner responsive budget about their capacity to send complete and final data by:

- mid-December

- mid-January
- early February.

In summary the responses indicated that:

- some considered they would find it difficult to complete their returns earlier than early February
- some considered that they would be able to complete their return by mid-January
- few considered they would be able to complete a return by mid-December.

Issues for providers about earlier returns:

- Autumn is already by far the most busy period for administrative staff
- the first learner responsive return for the current year, F01, and the final Employer responsive return for the previous year, W13, already fall in late November to early December
- not all results are available by the end of November. Learners completing portfolios have six months to do so from when they stop learning, consequently some portfolios for learning in the previous year do not need to be completed until the end of January.

The Data Service expressed concern that a mid-December F05 closing date would clash with the F01 and W13 return dates and cause slow service and delays for providers using its data collection portal.

When the consultation process was almost complete DIUS asked LSC to meet a revised timetable for issuing 2009/10 allocations that could be met only by closing F05 in mid-January. The LSC with help from the secretariat negotiated a revised 2009/10 allocations timetable based on closing F05 on 6 February 2009 as previously agreed by the board.

DIUS is now seeking to close F05 sufficiently early to meet its timetable for making 2010/11 allocations. The latest date F05 could be closed to allow funding bodies to meet the DIUS timetable would be mid-January 2010.

The secretariat proposes that further consultation and investigation takes place to identify and resolve the particular issues with closing F05 in mid-January. This first strand of work would include an investigation with the LSC quality team and Ofsted of a suggestion from DIUS that outcomes are counted in the year in which they are assigned by the awarding body rather than the year learning finishes. This approach used in calculating employer responsive success rates is particularly helpful for qualifications involving the

production of a portfolio which can be sent up to six months after learning at the provider ends. A second strand of work in February and March 2009 would identify the experience of providers and data users in the light of closing F05 for 2007/08 on 6 February 2008.

In the light of these two strands of work the secretariat would prepare a paper identifying the issues, risks and mitigations necessary to close F05 in mid January 2010 and produce reliable and sufficiently complete data and MI to meet DIUS allocations timescales. This paper would be presented to the board at its meeting on 10 June 2009.

The secretariat recommends the board supports the proposals above to further investigate the capacity of providers to deliver complete and final learner responsive ILR returns for 2008/09 by mid-January 2010.

If the board supports the proposal then the secretariat would in October 2008 communicate the intention to close ILR F05 for 2008/09 by mid-January 2010 unless evidence from closing F05 for 2007/08 in early February 2009 showed this would produce unreliable data.

13 Development and Publication Timetable

The change in the timetable for publishing the ILR specification for 2009/10 has resulted in much of the process of change development, consultation and evaluation falling in July and August when it proved difficult to take work forward quickly because of leave within stakeholders and the secretariat.

The collaboration website proved an effective way of sharing information about change requests with stakeholders, particularly with providers. The number of stakeholders contributing to discussions about the changes was less than projected.

The secretariat will undertake a thorough review of the process with stakeholders during Autumn so that improvements can be made to it for next year. In particular the secretariat will seek to find ways to encourage more stakeholders to contribute through the collaboration site. The review will feed into development of the timetable for 2010/11 changes which the secretariat proposes to bring to the board meeting in December 2008.

The board is asked to confirm it is content to receive a paper on the timetable for consulting about and publishing the ILR specification for 2010/11 at its December meeting.

The board is asked to suggest how it would like to see the equivalent paper on 2010/11 changes improved.

14 Next Steps

Once the board has confirmed at this meeting which changes are to be implemented for 2009/10 the secretariat will confirm them to FE system stakeholders and incorporate them into the full specification by the dates agreed with the board and published in the timetable.

15 Contact Details

Creator:	Peter Ashton
Job Title:	Standards and Quality Manager
Organisation:	<i>the information authority</i>
E-mail address:	peter.ashton@theia.org.uk
Phone Number:	02476 823710
Date Paper Created:	20 August 2008

Appendix A

ILR Specification for 2008/09

1. This Appendix summarises the structure and content of the ILR and is based on the ILR for 2008/09.

Formats of ILR data

2. There are four formats for ILR data, these are:
 - Learner Responsive (LR);
 - Employer Responsive (ER);
 - Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) and;
 - European Social Fund short record (ESF SR).
3. Each format of return is sent in a separate file and has its own set of required fields and return timetable.

Structure of the ILR

4. An ILR file comprises of up to 4 data sets for each learner. The four types of data set are:
 - a learner data set
 - a learning aim data set
 - ESF co-financing data set
 - HE data set
5. The ILR is made up of 197 fields, arranged into the four data sets. The full definition of the ILR and all the fields required for the four data sets can be found in the ILR Specification document which is available on the ILR documents section of the *information authority's* website at: <http://www.theia.org.uk/ilr/ilrdocuments/ilrdetail.htm>

Learner data set

6. In each return there is only one learner data set, for each learner on a programme of learning at a provider. The learner data set contains basic information specific to the learner such as their name, date of birth, sex and ethnicity.
7. Each learner data set has associated with it one or more learning aim data sets and these may have ESF co-financing data sets or HE data sets associated with them, as shown in figure 1. These other data sets are linked to the learner data set. That is, the learner data set 'owns' these other data sets.
8. Providers should report all learning aims being followed by the learner.

Learning Aim data set

9. There is one learning aim data set for each learning aim that a learner is studying. A learning aim data set contains learning aim related information such as start date, end date, fee information and outcome.

In addition for certain types of programme, a learning aim data set is required to describe the programme being followed. This learning aim is known as the 'programme aim'. The programme aim contains information about the overall learning programme being followed and comprises a sub-set of data fields in a learning aim data set. The information in a learning aim data set relates specifically to the learner data set that owns the learning aim data set.

For example

- where a learner is studying three GCE A levels; there would be three learning aim data sets
- where a learner is studying on an NVQ and a key skill under Train to Gain; there would be two learning aim data sets
- where a learner is studying on an Apprenticeship programme comprising of an NVQ, three key skills and a technical certificate; there would be one programme aim data set and five learning aim data sets.

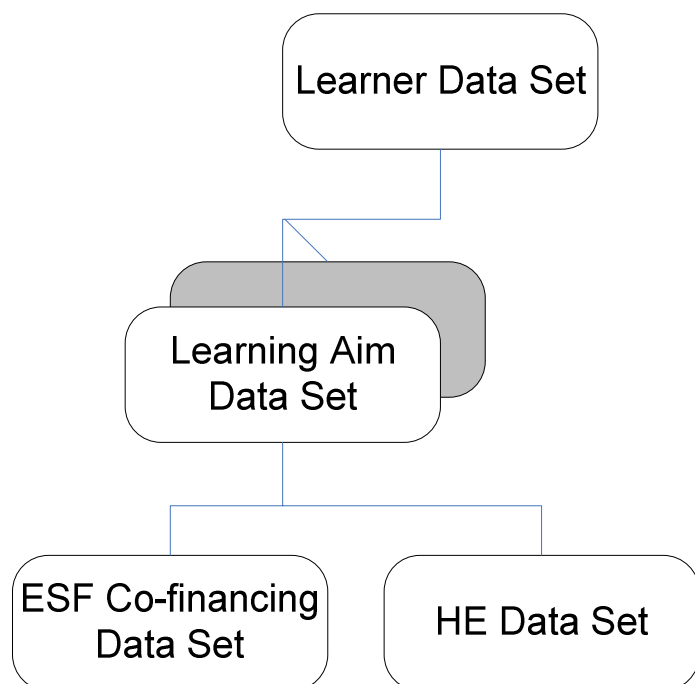
ESF co-financing data set

10. An ESF co-financing data set is requested for each learning aim for which LSC ESF co-financing is claimed and each learning aim matched to such funding. In the case of learning aims matched to ESF co-financing the local LSC will inform providers for which programmes an ESF co-financing data set is requested.
11. The ESF co-financing data set holds information for learners on co-financed ESF projects. The learning aim data set owns the ESF co-financing set, there is a one to one relationship between the learning aim and ESF co-financing data sets.

HE data set

12. For LR – if a learning aim data set for a learner is recorded as HEFCE funded and/or indicated as Level 4, Level 5 or HE level on the learning aim database (LAD), an HE data set is requested. An HE data set would need to be completed for each of the learner's learning aims where they were recorded as HEFCE funded and/or indicated as Level 4, Level 5 or HE level. These HE data sets are requested by HEFCE and HESA.
13. For ER, ASL and ESF SR – HE data sets are not returned.

Figure 1. Individualised Learner Record structure.



LEARNER DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
L01	Provider Number	6	1	6	Numeric	ALL
L02	Contract/Allocation type	2	7	8	Numeric	LR
L03	Learner reference number	12	9	20	alphanumeric	ALL
L04	Data set identifier code	2	21	22	Numeric	ALL
L05	Learning aim data sets	2	23	24	Numeric	ALL
L06	ESF co-financing data sets	2	25	26	Numeric	ALL
L07	HE data sets	2	27	28	Numeric	ALL
L08	Deletion flag	1	29	29	Alphabetic	ER/ESF SR
L09	Learner surname/family name	20	30	49	Alphabetic	ALL*
L10	Learner forenames	40	50	89	Alphabetic	ALL*
L11	Date of birth	8	90	97	Date	ALL
L12	Ethnicity	2	98	99	Numeric	ALL
L13	Sex	1	100	100	Alphabetic	ALL
L14	Learning difficulties and/or disabilities and/or health problems	1	101	101	Numeric	ALL
L15	Disability	2	102	103	numeric	ALL*
L16	Learning difficulty	2	104	105	numeric	ALL*
L17	Home postcode	8	106	113	alphanumeric	ALL
L18	Address line 1	30	114	143	alphanumeric	ALL*
L19	Address line 2	30	144	173	alphanumeric	ALL*
L20	Address line 3	30	174	203	alphanumeric	ALL*
L21	Address line 4	30	204	233	alphanumeric	ALL* (Optional)
L22	Current postcode	8	234	241	alphanumeric	LR Optional/ ER Optional/ ASL* Optional
L23	Telephone number	15	242	256	alphanumeric	ALL* (Optional)

LEARNER DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
L24	Country of domicile	2	257	258	alphabetic	LR/ER
L25	LSC number of funding LSC	3	259	261	numeric	ALL
L26	National insurance number	9	262	270	alphanumeric	ER/LR†
L27	Restricted use indicator	1	271	271	numeric	ALL*
L28	Eligibility for enhanced funding (occurs 2)	2	272	275	numeric	LR/ER
L29	Additional learning support	2	276	277	numeric	LR
L31	Additional learning support cost	6	278	283	numeric	LR
L32	Eligibility for disadvantage uplift	2	284	285	numeric	LR
L33	Disadvantage uplift factor	6	286	291	numeric	LR
L34	Learner support reason - other (occurs 4)	2	292	299	numeric	LR/ER
L35	Prior attainment level	2	300	301	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
L36	Learner status on last working day before learning	2	302	303	numeric	ER
L37	Employment status on first day of learning	2	304	305	numeric	ER
L38	No longer used - blank field	2	306	307	zero filled	Blank field
L39	Destination	2	308	309	numeric	LR*/ER/ESF SR
L40	National learner monitoring (occurs 2)	2	310	313	numeric	LR/ER/ASL
L41	Local learner monitoring (occurs 2)	12	314	337	numeric	LR Optional/ ER Optional/ ESF SR Optional
L42	Provider specified learner data (occurs 2)	12	338	361	alphanumeric	ALL Optional

LEARNER DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
L44	NES delivery LSC number	3	362	364	numeric	ER#
L45	Unique Learner Number	10	365	374	numeric	ALL
L46	UK provider reference number	8	375	382	numeric	ALL
L47	Current employment status	2	383	384	numeric	LR†/ER
L48	Date employment status changed	8	385	392	date	LR†/ER
L49	Discretionary learner support type (occurs 4)	2	393	400	numeric	LR

LR† - only where requested for pilot projects

LR* - required for ESF co-financed projects only

ER# - only for NES contracts

ASL* - required for ASL only if learning aims total more than 30GLH

ALL* - Required for ASL only if learning aims total more than 30GLH

LEARNING AIM DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
A01	Provider Number	6	1	6	numeric	ALL
A02	Contract/Allocation type	2	7	8	numeric	LR/ER
A03	Learner reference number	12	9	20	alphanumeric	ALL
A04	Data set identifier code	2	21	22	numeric	ALL
A05	Learning aim data set sequence	2	23	24	numeric	ALL
A06	ESF co-financing data sets	2	25	26	numeric	ALL
A07	HE data sets	2	27	28	numeric	ALL
A08	Data set format	1	29	29	numeric	ALL
A09	Learning aim reference	8	30	37	alphanumeric	ALL

LEARNING AIM DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
A10	LSC funding stream	2	38	39	numeric	ALL
A11	Source of funding (occurs 2)	3	40	45	numeric	LR/ASL
A12	No longer used - blank field	6	46	51	zero filled	Blank field
A13	Tuition fee received for year	5	52	56	numeric	LR/ASL
A14	Reason for full funding/co-funding of learning aim	2	57	58	numeric	LR/ER/ASL
A15	Programme type	2	59	60	numeric	LR/ER
A16	Programme entry route	2	61	62	numeric	ER
A17	Delivery mode	1	63	63	numeric	LR
A18	Main delivery method	2	64	65	numeric	LR/ER
A19	Employer role	1	66	66	numeric	LR
A20	Re-take	1	67	67	numeric	LR
A21	Franchised out and partnership arrangement	2	68	69	numeric	LR
A22	Franchise and partnership delivery provider number	8	70	77	alphanumeric	LR
A23	Delivery location postcode	8	78	85	alphanumeric	ALL
A24	Occupation relating to learning aim	4	86	89	numeric	LR+/ER/ESF SR+
A26	Framework code	3	90	92	numeric	LR/ER
A27	Learning start date	8	93	100	date	ALL
A28	Learning planned end date	8	101	108	date	ALL
A31	Learning actual end date	8	109	116	date	ALL
A32	Guided learning hours	5	117	121	numeric	LR/ER/ASL
A33	No longer used - blank field	5	122	126	space filled	Blank Field
A34	Completion status	1	127	127	numeric	ALL
A35	Learning outcome	1	128	128	numeric	ALL

LEARNING AIM DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
A36	Learning outcome grade	3	129	131	alphanumeric	ALL
A37	Number of units completed	2	132	133	numeric	LR/ER
A38	Number of units to achieve full qualification	2	134	135	numeric	LR/ER
A39	No longer used - blank field	1	136	136	zero filled	Blank field
A40	Achievement date	8	137	144	date	ER
A43	No longer used -blank field	8	145	152	zero filled	Blank field
A44	Employer identifier	30	153	182	alphanumeric	LR/ER
A45	Workplace location postcode	8	183	190	alphanumeric	LR/ER
A46	National learning aim monitoring (occurs 2)	3	191	196	numeric	ALL
A47	Local learning aim monitoring (occurs 2)	12	197	220	numeric	LR Optional/ER Optional/ ESF SR Optional
A48	Provider specified learning aim data (occurs 2)	12	221	244	alphanumeric	ALL Optional
A49	Special projects and pilots	5	245	249	alphanumeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
A50	Reason learning ended	2	250	251	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
A51a	Proportion of funding remaining	2	252	253	numeric	ER/LR
A52	Distance learning SLN	5	254	258	numeric	LR
A53	Additional learning needs	2	259	260	numeric	ER
A54	Broker contract number	10	261	270	alphanumeric	LR/ER
A55	Unique Learner Number	10	271	280	numeric	ALL
A56	UK provider reference number	8	281	288	numeric	ALL
A57	Source of tuition fees	2	289	290	numeric	LR

LEARNING AIM DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
A58	ASL provision type	2	291	292	numeric	ASL/LR/ESF SR
A59	Planned credit	3	293	295	numeric	ALL
A60	Credit achieved	3	296	298	numeric	ALL
			299	400	space filled	

LR* - required for ESF co-financed projects only

LR+/ER+ - required for continuing learners on the 2000-2006 ESF programme only

ESF CO-FINANCING DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
E01	Provider Number	6	1	6	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
E02	Contract/Allocation type	2	7	8	numeric	LR/ER
E03	Learner reference number	12	9	20	alphanumeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
E04	Data set identifier code	2	21	22	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
E05	Learning aim data set sequence	2	23	24	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
E06	ESF co-financing data set sequence	2	25	26	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
E07	HE data sets	2	27	28	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
E08	Date started ESF co-financing	8	29	36	date	LR/ER/ESF SR
E09	Planned end date for ESF co-financing	8	37	44	date	LR/ER/ESF SR
E10	Date ended ESF co-financing	8	45	52	date	LR/ER/ESF SR
E11	Industrial sector of learner's employer	2	53	54	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR§
E12	Employment status on day before starting ESF project	2	55	56	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR

ESF CO-FINANCING DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
E13	Learner's employment status	2	57	58	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR§
E14	Length of unemployment before starting ESF project	2	59	60	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
E15	Type and size of learner's employer	2	61	62	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR§
E16	Addressing gender stereotyping (occurs 5)	1	63	67	alphabetic	LR/ER/ESF SR§
E17	No longer used – blank field	5	68	72	space filled	Blank field
E18	Delivery mode (occurs 4)	1	73	76	alphabetic	LR/ER/ESF SR§
E19	Support measures to be accessed by the learner (occurs 5)	1	77	81	alphabetic	LR/ER/ESF SR§
E20	Learner background (occurs 3)	2	82	87	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR§
E21	Support measures for learners with disabilities	2	88	89	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR§
E22	Project dossier number	9	90	98	alphanumeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
E23	Local project number	3	99	101	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
E24	Unique Learner Number	10	102	111	numeric	ALL
E25	UK provider reference number	8	112	119	numeric	ALL
			120	400	space filled	

§ - not required for learners starting ESF co-financing New Plan 2007/13

HIGHER EDUCATION DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
H01	Provider Number	6	1	6	numeric	HE
H02	Contract/Allocation type	2	7	8	numeric	HE
H03	Learner reference number	12	9	20	alphanumeric	HE
H04	Data set identifier code	2	21	22	numeric	HE
H05	Learning aim data set sequence	2	23	24	numeric	HE
H06	ESF co-financing data sets sequence	2	25	26	numeric	HE
H07	HE data set sequence	2	27	28	numeric	HE
H08	No longer used – blank field	8	29	36	spacefilled	Blank field
H09	Learner instance number	20	37	56	alphanumeric	HE
H10	Learner nationality	2	57	58	alphabetic	HE
H11	Highest qualification on entry	2	59	60	numeric	HE
H12	New entrant to HE	1	61	61	alphanumeric	HE
H13	Type of programme year	1	62	62	numeric	HE
H14	Mode applicable to Funding Council early statistics, HESES	2	63	64	numeric	HE
H15	Level applicable to Funding Council HESES	2	65	66	numeric	HE
H16	Completion of year of programme study	1	67	67	numeric	HE
H17	Learner FTE	5	68	72	numeric	HE
H18	Year of programme of study	2	73	74	numeric	HE
H19	No longer used – blank field	2	75	76	zero filled	Blank field
H20	Major source of tuition fees	2	77	78	numeric	HE
H21	Term time accommodation	1	79	79	numeric	HE*
H22	No longer used – blank field	9	80	88	zero filled	Blank field

HIGHER EDUCATION DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
H23	SOC occupation code	4	89	92	numeric	HE*
H24	Last institution	8	93	100	alphanumeric	HE*
H25	No longer used – blank field	4	101	104	zero filled	Blank field
H26	No longer used – blank field	2	105	106	zero filled	Blank field
H27	No longer used – blank field	2	107	108	zero filled	Blank field
H28	No longer used – blank field	2	109	110	zero filled	Blank field
H29	No longer used – blank field	2	111	112	zero filled	Blank field
H30	No longer used – blank field	2	113	114	zero filled	Blank field
H31	Reason for leaving	2	115	116	numeric	HE*
H32	Proportion not taught by this institution	5	117	121	numeric	HE*
H33	Proportion taught in first LDCS subject	5	122	126	numeric	HE
H34	Proportion taught in second LDCS subject	5	127	131	numeric	HE
H35	Proportion taught in third LDCS subject	5	132	136	numeric	HE
H36	Socio-economic indicator	1	137	137	numeric	HE
H37	Unique Learner Number	10	138	147	numeric	HE
H38	UK provider reference number	8	148	155	numeric	HE
H39	UCAS tariff points	3	156	158	numeric	HE*
H40	UCAS personal identifier	10	159	168	numeric	HE
H41	UCAS application code	9	169	177	alphanumeric	HE
H42	Special fee indicator	1	178	178	numeric	HE
H43	Learner FTE completed	5	179	183	numeric	HE Optional
			184	400	Space filled	

* see individual fields for details

Appendix B

Timetable for Publishing the ILR Specification for 2009/10

Date	Event	Description
April 2008	Communicate change process	Communicate the timetable, process and criteria to the FE system. Invite requests for new or changed data and MI requirements.
April to June 2008	Initial requirements gathering.	Meet with FE system data and MI users to discuss their requirements. Start discussion through online community and stakeholder data advisory groups.
June to mid September 2008	Consult with providers and stakeholders on possible changes.	Meet with stakeholders. Discuss changes requested and options developed with; stakeholders; providers; and software suppliers. Change requests published on 2009/10 ILR Change Discussion forum for comment.
27 June 2008	Closing date for requests for change to the specification.	
Mid September 2008	Consultation with stakeholders closes.	
By October 2008	Obtain sign off from the information authority board.	Final date by which all changes must be confirmed in detail. Confirm business and governance groups are content with any changes to the specification.
October 2008	Confirm 2009/10 ILR specification.	Publish summary of confirmed changes. Primary audience is software suppliers and providers that write their own software for returning ILR data.
28 November 2008	Publish 2009/10 ILR Specification	Publish on web site for use by stakeholders
30 January 2009	Publish 2009/10 ILR Validation Rules	Publish validation rules on web site for use by stakeholders
March 2009	Publish provider support manuals.	Publish support manuals on web site for use by providers
August 2009	2009/10 ILR specification in use.	

As agreed at *the information authority* Board meeting of 5 March 2008 with an amendment agreed later by the chair of the board.

Appendix C

Changes that have been rejected, withdrawn or are not recommended for implementation in 2009/10

The following requests that were received for changes to the ILR specification for 2009/10 have been rejected or withdrawn for the reasons listed below each request.

ID 1: Collect fee information for employer responsive provision

The LSC funding team requested that the same tuition fee information is requested from providers for adults on employer responsive provision as is currently requested from learner responsive provision.

DIUS as a result of a ministerial request has asked the LSC to set and monitor fee targets for employers.

The LSC has considered collecting the data through the ILR rather than using a separate collection and prefer that option. The secretariat confirmed with the LSC that the requirement was to collect tuition fee information for employer responsive funded provision in the same way it was collected for learner responsive funded provision.

The secretariat led consultation identified that for most provision at most providers tuition fees would be zero. Providers also raised concerns about the value of the data that would be collected given that there is some payment in kind and when an employer pays a provider to run a course solely for its own employees it pays a fixed amount, irrespective of learner numbers, which is classed as funding not tuition fees.

As a result of that useful feedback the LSC in consultation with the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) has identified that the real business requirement is to collect employer contribution including payments in kind. This revised business requirement was communicated to the secretariat on 10 September 2008. The last date for sending detailed business requirements was 11 July 2008. This new requirement requires a new field to be added to the ILR.

The secretariat has had insufficient time since 10 September 2008 to develop a technical requirement, carry out an appraisal against the assessment criteria, consult with providers and other stakeholders, and impact assess this new requirement in order to give the board a recommendation in this paper.

The secretariat asks the board to reject this change for 2009/10 so that further investigation to assess it can be undertaken with a view to reconsidering it for 2010/11.

ID 3: Identify learners with skills accounts in the ILR – requested by LSC.

- agreed with the LSC that since both the skills account administration system and the ILR will hold the unique learner number (ULN) it is unnecessary to carry a separate field or flag in the ILR. Learners in the

ILR with a skills account can be identified by matching data from the two sources using the ULN.

IDs 6, 47, 62 and 67: Improve the quality of data in the Prior attainment field, field L35 – requested by LSC funding team.

- agreed with the LSC that this was not a change to the ILR specification
- this issue has been addressed over the last year by a project led by Colin Wilkie-Jones of DIUS. The secretariat has supported this project.

ID 7: Review the need for Employment status on first day of learning field

- confirmed the field is needed

IDs 9 and 70: Identify where provision sub-contracted to a provider has an ultimate source of the LSC

- unreasonable for a provider to consistently know the source of funding received from another organisation
- increased use of the ULN will address the main use of requested data to eliminate double counting of provision
- agreed to issue improved guidance about when and how to record sub-contracted provision

ID 11 and 54: Move Destination field, field L39, to learning aim data set

- destination is used to identify where a learner goes to after all learning is finished at a provider
- request wishes to use destination to identify the next step after a learning aim is completed. If a learner stays at the same provider for further learning episodes then this already can be identified from the ILR.
- increased use of the ULN will enable better tracking of learners through a series of learning episodes across different providers

ID 12: Identify learner breaks for learner responsive provision

- insufficient detail about the requirement is available to develop a solution at this stage
- the requirement relates to future proposals to fund some provision at the programme level, for example Diplomas
- provider concern at the extra administration.

IDs 15 and 69: Move LSC number of funding LSC field, field L25, from learner data set to learning aim data set

- this field will become irrelevant when the LSC dissolves in 2010
- change would address issue for only small number of learners
- the Data Service has concerns about the high cost of extensive system changes.

ID 22: Introduce greater consistency of data standards between schools and FE system – requested by DCSF

- this request is well made and supported by the secretariat.
- the secretariat is already actively engaged with the ISB for education, skills and children's services which has approved a set of aligned data definitions. The status of these definitions is under review.
- as the request is not for any particular change targeted on 2009/10 it has been given a closed status on the register of ILR changes for that year.

ID 23: Adopt a common approach for recording AS levels and A levels, including recording of A2s – requested by DCSF

- after investigation DCSF and LSC identified that there does not appear to be a problem in terms of the data quality on the ILR, or one requiring an immediate change to the ILR.
- it is a policy question regarding how DCSF and LSC might change the guidance and funding system in the future such that retention and success on 2 year aims might be improved.

ID 24: Identifying the location and type of learning provider in the ILR – requested by DCSF

- the ILR already identifies the learning provider and from this descriptive data can be identified on the LSC provider information management systems (PIMS) or the MIAP UKRLP
- the Data Service has been alerted to this request so it can investigate automatically adding the extra derived variables to ILR data freezes shared with stakeholders.

ID 25: Identify the training/education of offenders serving sentences in the community – requested by DCSF

- early investigation has identified that this is a complex issue.
- there is insufficient time to complete investigation and development of options before the ILR specification is published for 2009/10.
- further work is to be undertaken on this request during the coming year.

ID 28: Specifically identify learners on programme led apprentices – requested by LSC apprenticeship team

- there is already sufficient information recorded in the ILR to identify programme led apprentices
- requestor has stated one of the purposes of adding the new code for programme led apprenticeships is to cross-check the accuracy of existing

data which can be used to identify that a learner is a programme led apprentice. This is an inappropriate reason for adding a new code.

ID 30: Identify job centre plus customers by benefit type – requested by LSC integrated employment and skills (IES) team

- learners are unlikely to provide reliable information about their benefits to providers – there may be a data protection issue here in any case
- the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Job Centre Plus (JCP) have data about their clients' benefits. If there is a need to analyse ILR data in the light of the benefits a learner receives then this can be achieved by matching ILR and DWP/JCP data if this can be done without infringing restrictions in the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA)
- this request is one of a series all of which need to be implemented to achieve the desired result. Others in the series have been rejected in their own right.

ID 31: Identify economically inactive learners not in receipt of benefits – requested by LSC IES team

- learners are unlikely to provide reliable information about their lack of benefits and economic inactivity to providers – there may be a data protection issue here in any case
- the DWP and JCP have data about their clients' benefits and Her Majesty's Customs and Revenue have data about their economic activity. If there is a need to analyse ILR data in the light of the benefits a learner receives then this can be achieved by matching ILR, DWP/JCP and HMRC data if this can be done without infringing restrictions in the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA)
- this request is one of a series all of which need to be implemented to achieve the desired result. Others in the series have been rejected in their own right.

ID 32: Identify and generate payments for short non-accredited pre-employment learning episodes that are currently identified as Skills for Jobs – requested by LSC IES team

- skills for jobs is already identified in the ILR
- the ILR cannot of itself generate payments, this aspect needs pursuing with the LSC funding team and through them with the Data Service
- this request is one of a series all of which need to be implemented to achieve the desired result. Others in the series have been rejected in their own right.

ID 33: Track learner progression through a succession of learning episodes and job outcome achievements post-learning into sustainable jobs – requested by LSC IES team

- the ILR is able to contribute to longitudinal information, it cannot do this itself
- there may be changes required to the ILR to support this requirement. At this stage it is too early to identify whether there are such changes and what they are
- this request is one of a series all of which need to be implemented to achieve the desired result. Others in the series have been rejected in their own right.

ID 34: To record and generate payments for job outcomes via the ILR and associated funding and payment systems for an extended range of provision – requested by LSC IES team

- the ILR already supports this for the employability skills programme (ESP) and other skills for jobs funded provision
- the ILR has a time limited ability to identify outcomes which already has an impact on entry to employment funded provision. It is not an appropriate vehicle for tracking long-term outcomes
- this request is one of a series all of which need to be implemented to achieve the desired result. Others in the series have been rejected in their own right.

ID 35: Record and generate provider payments for employability skills programme (ESP) non-starters for whom assessments and taster sessions have been undertaken and provision arrangements put in place – requested by LSC IES team

- it would be necessary for the ILR to record non-learning activity. It is not an appropriate vehicle for collecting non-learning activity
- the ILR cannot of itself generate payments, this aspect needs pursuing with the LSC funding team and through them with the Data Service
- this request is one of a series all of which need to be implemented to achieve the desired result. Others in the series have been rejected in their own right.

ID 36: Record the number of provider direct referrals to LSC-funded ESP /Skills for Jobs provision – requested by LSC IES team

- requires more information to assess the requirement
- this request is one of a series all of which need to be implemented to achieve the desired result. Others in the series have been rejected in their own right.

ID 42: Ask providers to complete the Destination field, field L39, for learners on learning funded from the learner responsive budget

- requested by LSC quality team to support FfE
- collecting destination for all learners on FE provision was attempted over several years. The data received was for only a low proportion, typically between 20% and 40%, of learners in many providers
- the ILR is not an appropriate mechanism for collecting destinations except in the case of immediate intended destination
- providers are concerned at the very high burden associated with collection of actual destination
- changes to bring forward the close date for the final learner responsive return, F05, mean it is increasingly difficult and in some cases impossible to obtain actual destination and return it in the ILR
- change is not consistent with assurance by the FfE team to the board on 5 December 2007; "As far as possible, the Framework will be based on information that a provider could reasonably be expected to use to manage its own business. In other words, the Framework is designed to minimise bureaucracy and burdens."

ID 45: Use unassigned code in the National learning aim monitoring field to identify learners on a new programme

- requested by LSC
- this is a standard process not requiring a request to change the ILR
- included in this list only for completeness

ID 46: Collect the National Insurance number for learners in learner responsive provision – requested by DIUS.

- the requestor withdrew the request when the data protection issues were pointed out

ID 49: use an unassigned code in the Learner support reason – other field, field L34, to record recipients of a new form of LSC learner support funding to be known initially as 'childcare scheme for adults'

- withdrawn by requestor

ID 51: Collect new field for relevant contributing credit

- this is related to a previous request which resulted in the board agreeing to add two new fields to the ILR in 2008/09 in order to pilot credit based performance indicators
- the pilot is yet to take place and so evidence is unavailable about the effectiveness of the change implemented for 2008/09
- the new field requested for 2009/10 is intended to support development of a credit based distance travelled measure for the qualification and credit framework (QCF)
- agreed with requestor that more work is needed to identify the detail of what is needed.

ID 52: Remove Socio economic indicator field, field H36, from HE data set

- requested by college
- confirmed the field is needed with HEFCE and HESA
- identified need to improve guidance in the ILR specification

ID 53: Reintroduce Learner background field, field E20, removed in 2008/09

- request is from LSC regional team
- LSC national office ESF team confirmed this data is not required at the national level and previously stated that data not required to run the national system should not be collected locally

ID 57: Introduce an extended character set in the learner name fields

- request is from secretariat
- currently learner names may contain only alphabetic characters, spaces and a very limited number of special characters such as hyphen
- standards approved by the information standards board for education, skills and children's services recommend use of an extended character set to allow the accurate representation of all European students' names including some British Gaelic names.
- students increasingly expect their names to be accurately represented in all contexts
- investigation identified that it would be less costly to implement this change at the same time as moving to describing the ILR in XML as described in the last entry in this annex

ID 60: Amend the ethnicity code classification to include "Gypsy/Roma" and "Travellers of Irish Heritage"

- the need for a consistent ethnicity classification has been endorsed by the education, skills and children's services information standards board (ISB)
- it is included in the ISB data definition special interest group (SIG) 2008/09 plans
- aim is to implement the standard developed for 2010/11

ID 60: Add a new field to identify volunteers

The LSC Skills group requested, request ID 61, a new code in the Employment status on first day of learning field, field L37, in which to identify volunteers.

This request is to allow LSC and DIUS to better assess the size and impact of engagement with the third sector and allow the LSC to target appropriate communication to those who are volunteers and those who are employed. It will also provide assurance to DIUS and the LSC that providers are making sufficient enquiry of learner status.

This last benefit has been ignored for the purpose of assessing this request. The reason for ignoring it is that is inappropriate, as suggested in the benefits, to collect a data item in the ILR in order to provide assurance that providers are complying with policy guidance that does not in itself require the return of data in the ILR.

Investigation identified that volunteer is not an employment status and inclusion of a code for volunteer would introduce a source of inaccuracies into the employment status field.

Consequently the requestor asked for a new field in which to identify volunteers on LSC employer responsive funded provision.

The proposed new field would not directly support funding or measurement of government targets.

Providers in receipt of employer responsive funding confirmed that they systematically collect this data.

A similar request was rejected for 2008/09.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects the request for a new field in the learner data set in which to identify volunteers on employer responsive funded provision.

ID 64: Add a new field in which to identify learners who are carers

The Carers Equal Opportunities Act (2004) states; "carers have a right to have their learning and work needs assessed as part of the carers' assessment procedure". The LSC and DCSF need statistical evidence to inform strategies to enable this cohort to develop and provide them with appropriate opportunities to enable to get back into work.

Most providers do not collect this information systematically and enter it into their MIS and would be concerned about doing so given the sensitive nature of this data. The secretariat has been unable to identify a clear definition of "carer". Without one the usefulness of this information would be limited.

Given the concerns raised by providers, the lack of a clear definition and the overall pressure to increase the extra information collected in the ILR the secretariat do not support this request.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects the request for a new field in the learner data set in which to identify a learner as a carer.

ID 65: Rename data collection labels, for example F01 to L01, W01 to E01 – requested by LSC information management team.

- the intention of the request is supported by the secretariat
- it is likely that SFA and the YPLA will wish to introduce their own terminology which could lead to further re-labelling
- as the change is largely cosmetic the secretariat has postponed any re-labelling until the terminology of SFA and YPLA is confirmed.

ID 71: Record soft outcomes which identify the wider benefits of learning to the individual – requested by Northamptonshire adult learning service.

- the categories for soft outcomes are local and not endorsed by any national standards setting body
- Ofsted do not support the request and see it as a distraction from recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning (RARPA).

ID Other: Implement the ILR in XML

- the secretariat sponsored a project to identify how to implement the ILR specification in XML and collect data in XML format in line with e-government data standards
- following a visit by the secretariat and the Data Service to HESA to discuss their implementation the head of the secretariat and the head of the Data Service agreed implementation of the ILR in XML should be in 2010/11 at the earliest in order to:
 - benefit from HESA's experience in running its student data collection for 2007/08 in XML during autumn 2008
 - allow *the information authority* and Data Service time to formulate a data collection strategy and identify the underpinning technologies to be used so that XML can be introduced based on them rather than applying it to historic and ageing systems.