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**News from the information authority****Third Exceptional Change Request for 2009/10 ILR - Outcome**

[The information authority board](#) has considered and agreed the third of [three exceptional change requests](#) to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for 2009/10.

The board [agreed the first two changes](#) at its meeting on 4 March which had been consulted on prior to the meeting. The third change, which was for providers to capture the employment status of adult learners returned in a Learner Responsive ILR return, was agreed by the board in principle, subject to further development and consultation.

That consultation process has now drawn to a close - thank you to everyone who took the time to respond. All three changes have now been incorporated into version three of the

ILR specification for 2009/10 which was published on 3rd April 2009.

## **Delivery of consistent ethnicity reporting across different data streams**

*The information authority* provided resource to allow the Information Standards Board (ISB) for education, skills and children's services to develop a standard for ethnicity data across the education sector. This standard will allow ethnicity information to be collected locally at a relevant detailed level and summarised to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) categories used at the national census. *The information authority* will look to introduce the new standard in the individualised learner record once categories for the 2011 National Census have been agreed by parliament in autumn 2009 – any changes are likely to be reflected in the academic year 2011/12.

## **Data users' group – first meeting a success**

*The information authority* recently held its first advisory group meeting for key users of further education data. Organisations invited included the LSC, DIUS, DCSF, DWP, JCP, Connexions, HEFCE and Ofsted. Data Service colleagues assisted in facilitating the meeting and played a valuable role in the discussions.

David Bartholomew, who attended on behalf of DCSF, said: "Many thanks for the meeting - the presentations and associated discussions/networking opportunities were much appreciated. The Data Users' Group appears to be an ideal forum for bringing together a range of users of the ILR data, enabling issues to be raised and ideas on improvements to be discussed from different perspectives."

If you would like to know more about the Data Users' meeting, please email [paul.kelman@theia.org.uk](mailto:paul.kelman@theia.org.uk) or refer to [the information authority website](#)

## **Working towards harmonised success rates**

Government agencies and other organisations are working together to simplify success rate reporting methodologies.

Currently, depending on the success rate methodology chosen, in an extreme case a provider could be judged by different agencies as: poor, satisfactory or good, and a report commissioned by *the information authority* in April 2008 entitled 'Harmonising Ofsted and LSC Qualification Success Reporting' showed that individual colleges and providers were puzzled by the array of success rates used by government agencies such as DIUS, DCSF, LSC and Ofsted.

This report led to the LSC and Ofsted intensifying existing working arrangements and the LSC forming the Success Rate Harmonisation Group.

The group is made up of partner representatives from DIUS, DCSF, the LSC, *the information authority*, the Data Service, Ofqual and QCA. Its main aim is to develop and modify success rate reporting with a view that by simplifying the underlying calculation methods processes will become both transparent and rigorous.

This should be of particular help to providers in understanding how success rates are calculated and how to use them when assessing performance. To move this process forward, widespread consultation with further education and training colleges/providers is planned.

Lesley Davies, Chair of the Success Rates Harmonisation Group, says “I’m pleased to say that all the partners are showing great support for this work and have agreed to make appropriate resources available. Rest assured that any proposed changes in success rate methodology reporting will be widely consulted on and a thorough impact assessment carried out before any are formally introduced.”

The first successful piece of work completed was the harmonisation of reporting FE success rates for 2006/07 dates onwards.

For an update on in-year success rate reporting please read the Data Service section of this edition of *inform*.

For more information see the new Data Harmonisation pages on *the information authority* website <http://www.theia.org.uk/harmonisingsuccessrates/>

## ILR 2009/10 data quality

*The information authority's* focus on data quality steps up over the coming weeks with the launch of a new area dedicated to data quality issues on **feconnect**, the community portal at - <http://forums.theia.org.uk/>, in May. Early features will include a focus on preparing for data migration in June and July, and we’re encouraging providers to document and publicise good practice in data quality through a series of case studies. In addition, we’ll be interviewing sector figures on why data quality is important to them and their work.

We’ll be following this up with a programme of targeted training, devised and delivered by colleagues in the Data Service, and with the development of data management tools and support processes for providers that will roll out later in the summer. For more information on this programme of work contact Nicholas Graham via [nicholas.graham@theia.org.uk](mailto:nicholas.graham@theia.org.uk)

## Data Service and *information authority* out and about

The Data Service and *the information authority* shared a stand at the LARIA conference as part of our efforts to engage with local authorities prior to their new funding responsibilities starting in 2010. Our next joint venture is the sponsorship of the [AoC NILTA CIS conference](#) in Birmingham on 25 June where we will be providing key note speakers and running seminars.

In addition, *the information authority* is presenting two seminars at the [ALP Conference](#) in Nottingham on the 13 May, exhibiting at the [Local Government Association \(LGA\) conference](#) in Harrogate and exhibiting at the [14-19 Reform conference](#) in London – both events are in July.

## News from the Data Service

### Data Collections timetable for 2009/10

The Data Service is currently working on the latest update to the data collections systems and software in preparation for the 2009/10 academic year. These updates will affect the Learner Information Suite (LIS), the Learning Aim Database (LAD), the Provider Information Management System (PIMS) and the On Line Data Collections website (OLDC). The dates for release 1 are confirmed, but please be aware that subsequent release dates are subject to change:

- June: Release 1 of LIS and PIMS
- July: Release 1 of LAD and OLDC
- August: Release 2 of LIS and OLDC
- October: Release 2 of PIMS and LAD and Release 3 of OLDC

More information regarding each of these releases will be communicated in due course.

### In-year success rate reporting for Apprenticeships and Train to Gain

As we mentioned in the last edition of inform there is a delay to the production of the in-year Qualification Success Rates (QSR) reports for 2008/09 Apprenticeships and Train to Gain. The reports will be first produced using 2008/09 data up to and including period 9 and published next month.

This year's reports have been developed in consultation with Ofsted and LSC colleagues and a small working group has been established to consider and propose a common approach to delivering and reporting QSRs for apprenticeships and Train to Gain that would be acceptable to both the LSC and Ofsted. Both organisations are committed to having a common approach.

As a result of this consultation the QSR reports will be presented in a different format to previous years, harmonising the look and feel of the reports and providing consistent variables where appropriate. The reports are designed to support the LSC move to single contracting arrangements with multi site providers and as such the data will be presented at Local Authority level. Previously reports were aggregated at a local LSC level which is useful for recording contracting arrangements but doesn't accurately reflect the location in which the training is delivered.

#### ***The new Apprenticeship reports will show:***

- Success rate data aggregated at Local Authority level and based upon the "delivery postcode"
- Three full years of historical data as well as data from the current academic year
- National benchmarks for previous years
- New sector framework code to sector subject area mapping. Each Apprenticeship framework will now map to one sector subject area

### ***The new Train to Gain reports will show:***

- Success rate data aggregated at Local Authority level and based upon the “delivery postcode”
- Three full years of historical data as well as data from the current academic year
- New provision types to reflect new provision mix

New guidance notes are also being developed to accompany the reports, these will help training providers understand the key differences and how the reports have been calculated.

## **News from the further education sector**

### **New features added to the *Diploma aggregation service***

The *Diploma aggregation service* (DAS), the managed on-line system that holds information about Diploma learners and their achievements and calculates their final grade, has recently been enhanced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Release 3 of DAS provides centres and awarding bodies with some notable new functionality that will improve user efficiency and assist in monitoring learners' progress.

For more information, including the Release 3 training and guidance materials, go to [www.qca.org.uk/das](http://www.qca.org.uk/das) and see the service news and updates section.

### **Becta publish new data handling security guidance**

Becta would like to thank everyone who contributed to their recent review of data security good practice guides (featured in the February edition of *inform*). The feedback has been incorporated into their revised guides and they have also published a new Do's and Don'ts guide for end-users.

The revised guidance is now live [www.becta.org.uk/feandskills/datasecurity](http://www.becta.org.uk/feandskills/datasecurity).

## **About us**

### ***The information authority***

*The information authority* was established in October 2006 to set and regulate data standards for all organisations involved in further education and training in England.

The authority has a decision-making board headed by an independent chairman and made up of senior representatives from across the education and training system in England. This is supported by a small operational secretariat.

## The Data Service

The Data Service was established in April 2008 to collect and disseminate information as the first single source of data for the further education system in England. It will work closely with *the information authority* to streamline and improve the way information is collected and shared. Key principles of the service are to eradicate duplication; improve collection and sharing; increase efficiency; assure quality and; provide new levels of customer service.

Funded primarily by the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and supported by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) at its inception, the new separately managed organisation will have developed by 2011 into a fully operational service provider working in the interests of the sector as a whole.

## Appointments

Peter Ashton would like to welcome Peter Millard, Standards Development Manager, and Rosie Coleman, Standards Development Advisor to *the information authority*. Peter and Rosie will help lead the FE system in the definition of sector standards for the collection, processing and reporting of data and information.

Ellie Fraizer has recently been appointed to the role of Data Quality and Assurance Manager and will be joining Alan Billingham's Production and Quality team from Monday 27 April.

Fazia Saleem starts as new Communications and Marketing Manager for the Data Service and *the information authority* on 5 May.



To find out more about *the information authority* and the Data Service, visit:

[www.theinformationauthority.org.uk](http://www.theinformationauthority.org.uk)

[www.thedataservice.org.uk](http://www.thedataservice.org.uk)