

# Questions & Answers

## Data Quality Employer Responsive Timeliness Reports

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### Introduction

This document is intended to provide providers with answers to common questions regarding the Data Quality Employer Responsive Timeliness Reports.

If you have a question that is not detailed and answered in this document please contact the Service Desk on: [servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk) or telephone 0870 2670001.

### Question Themes

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## About the Timeliness Standard

### 1. Why has the timeliness standard been introduced?

An informed judgement on allocations and performance relies on the accuracy and timeliness of data. However, across the sector, there is significant concern that starts, achievements and leavers are not being reported in a timely manner. In 2009/10, based on data received, it was not until month 4 that the greater part of month 1's data was reported.

The Skills Funding Agency needs to operate a more dynamic performance management system, where funding will be moved swiftly away from providers that are under-delivering, to those where performance is strong. To do this, it needs to ensure quicker data returns.

### 2. Who has set the timeliness standard?

*The information authority* board agreed at its meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2010 to a standard for Employer Responsive data timeliness. The timeliness standard was published in appendix A of the 2010/11 ILR specification, in August 2010.

### 3. Which ILR returns does the timeliness standard refer to?

The timeliness standard refers to Employer Responsive only.

### 4. What is the timeliness standard for starts?

Starts must be reported within 2 reporting months (which includes the month in which the activity takes place). For Apprenticeship programmes, the standard for reporting starts applies to each individual learning aim within the programme, rather than the overall programme, as the learner may not start all learning aims at the same time.

For a learner starting an aim in month X then a record for that start must be included, at the latest, in the return at the end of month X+1

E.g. A learner starts on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010. This must be reported for the first time in the return for September (ER02) or October 2010 (ER03). That is, at the latest, in the return that closes on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2010 (ER03).

### 5. What is the timeliness standard for leavers?

Leavers / withdrawals must be reported within 3 reporting months (which includes the month in which the activity takes place)

For a learner who leaves, completes or withdraws in month X, that change must be recorded, at the latest, in the return at the end of month X+2

E.g. A learner leaves on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2010. This must be reported for the first time in the return for October (ER03), November (ER04) or December 2010 (ER05). That is, at the latest, in the return that closes on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2011 (ER05).

**6. What is the timeliness standard for achievements?**

Achievements must be reported within 3 reporting months (which includes the month in which the activity takes place)

For a learner achieving an aim in month X, that achievement must be recorded, at the latest, in the return at the end of month X+2

E.g. A learner achieves on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2010. This must be reported for the first time in the return for August (ER01), September (ER02) or October 2010 (ER03). That is, at the latest, in the return that closes on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2010 (ER03).

**7. Are Apprenticeship programmes treated the same as other aims?**

For Apprenticeship programmes, the standard for reporting starts applies to each individual learning aim within the programme, rather than the overall programme, as the learner may not start all learning aims at the same time.

**8. Where can I find a detailed definition of the methodology used for reporting?**

A document is available from the Data Service web site that describes the methodology used to determine timeliness.

**9. Which collections are used for the timeliness reports?**

Data from all closed ER collections will be used when producing the reports, including ER13.

**10. What if I have problems sending in ILR returns?**

The Skills Funding Agency is aware that, in the past, there have been problems with College and training organisations returning data because of issues outside their control: contract/profile agreed late; qualification not on the Learning Aims Database. In such a situation, the Skills Funding Agency would not seek to penalise a College or training organisation.

## **Timeliness Reports**

**11. Why have the timeliness reports been produced?**

The timeliness reports have been produced to support discussions between Skills Funding Agency Account Managers and Learning Providers on the timeliness of the provider's data. From August 2010, when measuring performance, the Skills Funding Agency will only use recorded data that meets timeliness expectations. That is, the judgment of Colleges and training organisations' delivery will be based on the data that is available at the time of the contract discussion - non reported data will not be taken into account (Skills Funding Agency Guidance Note 3).

**12. What timeliness reports are available?**

Separate timeliness reports are available for starts, leavers and achievements. The three reports will be contained in a single .zip file.

**13. What do the timeliness reports contain?**

The reports contain a summary of the starts / leavers / achievers reported on the provider's ILR data return, and the number of starts / leavers / achievers reported outside the timeliness standard, in terms of number of months late.

The reports also list each individual aim that is late, showing the month the start / leaver / achievement occurred, the month it was reported, and by how many months late notification was received.

**14. What if there are no late reported starts?**

A report will be produced listing the number of aims with an A27 Learning Start Date and indicating that all the starts were reported within the timeliness standard.

**15. What if there are no late reported leavers?**

A report will be produced listing the number of aims with an A31 Learning Actual End Date and indicating that all the leavers were reported within the timeliness standard.

**16. What if there are no late reported achievers?**

A report will be produced listing the number of aims with an A40 Achievement Date and indicating that all the achievements were reported within the timeliness standard.

**17. Why is my leavers report missing?**

A report is only produced if leavers have been reported on the ILR. If no aims have a completed A31 Learning Actual End Date then a leavers report will not be produced.

**18. Why is my achievements report missing?**

A report is only produced if achievements have been reported on the ILR. If no aims have a completed A40 Achievement End Date then an achievements report will not be produced.

## **Timeliness Report Production**

**19. How often will the reports be produced?**

The reports will be produced each month.

**20. When will the reports be produced?**

The timeliness reports are produced each month, a few days after the closure of an ER return. See appendix A of the 2010/11 ILR specification for the 2010/11 close dates for ER returns

**21. Where will the reports be published?**

The reports will be published on the Provider Gateway, in the Provider Data Quality Report folder on the Document Exchange.

## 22. How will the reports be named?

The file names of the timeliness reports will be formatted as:-  
*UPIN\_YEAR\_DQ-ER\_ERnn\_ERT-1.zip* where:

- UPIN is the 6-digit UPIN
- YEAR is the academic year - e.g. 1011
- ERnn is the collection - e.g. ER03

Within the zip file the individual reports will be identified with a suffix:  
- str for the starts timeliness report  
- lvr for the leavers timeliness report  
- ach for the achievers timeliness report

An example of the .zip file name is: 105001\_1011\_DQ-ER\_ER03\_ERT-1.zip

## 23. Will there be a history of reports?

Yes. A report will be produced for each ER collection and held in Provider Data Quality Report folder on the Document Exchange (Provider Gateway). Individual monthly reports can be identified as the collection number is part of the file name.

## 24. What format are the reports in?

The starts, leavers and achievements reports are produced in .pdf format and placed in a single .zip file

## 25. What if I cannot open the zip file?

Providers who encounter this problem should ask their IT team for advice as they will need to have an appropriate zip tool installed for them to be able to open the file. The Data Service can provide a link to free software:  
<http://www.winzip.com/trialpay.htm>

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