

Learning Records Service



Awarding Organisation Frequently Asked Questions

Awarding Organisation – Frequently Asked Questions

A list of frequently asked questions and answers, grouped;

1. [General](#)
2. [Support Documentation](#)
3. [Provisional/Final Results](#)
4. [Batch](#)
5. [Event Data Challenge](#)
6. [Qualifications and Credit Framework \(QCF\)](#)
7. [Useful Links](#)

1. General

What if I can't or haven't begun to upload achievements by 30 April 2013?

As you will be aware, the Chief Executive of Skills Funding wrote to all colleges and training organisations in September 2012, confirming that signing of the Awarding Organisation Agreement for the Personal Learning Record would be one of the criteria the Skills Funding Agency will apply for the approval of qualifications for public funding.

For awarding organisations that have signed the Agreement, it remains a condition of public funding that the organisation should have begun the process of uploading achievement data for existing vocational qualifications by 30 April 2013 and/or for existing general qualifications by 30 June 2013. If an awarding organisation has not begun this process, or, in the case of newly accredited qualifications, has not confirmed their intention to upload achievement data and shown they have the capability and capacity to do this by 31 March 2013, funding will cease for all qualifications from 31 July 2013.

Since 1 November 2012 the Agency has not been approving for funding any newly accredited qualifications belonging to awarding organisations that have not signed the Agreement. From 31 July 2013, the Agency will cease funding any existing qualifications belonging to awarding organisations that have not signed the Agreement.

For awarding organisations that have not signed the Agreement the Agency can confirm that:

- Any qualifications currently approved for public funding have **not** been added to the 2013/14 catalogue of approved qualifications and funding will cease for new starts from 31 July 2013.
- Where units of qualifications from an awarding organisation that has not signed the Agreement are currently offered as part of the offer to

those who are unemployed or through OLASS, funding will cease for new starts from 31 July 2013.

- Where qualifications are part of an Apprenticeship, public funding will cease for that qualification in the framework in 2013/14. The qualification may still be available as part of the framework, but it will not be publicly funded.

The Learning Aims Reference Application (LARA) will be updated to reflect the above by end April 2013.

What if I decide to sign the Agreement now?

Where an awarding organisation signs the Agreement after 31 March 2013; new and existing qualifications will be in scope to be approved for funding for new starts from 1 January 2014. This will be on condition that the awarding organisation has demonstrated they have the capability and capacity to upload achievement data for all qualifications by 31 December 2013.

Should we upload results where the learner has failed?

Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) units that a learner has failed to achieve should not be uploaded to the Personal Learning Record (PLR) as this breaks the QCF rules of combination and may lead to a qualification being awarded inappropriately.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF) qualifications with grades such as 'U' or 'X' can be uploaded as this helps providers focus their advice and guidance to the learner. In future, learners will have the option to 'switch off' these qualifications when sharing with employers or other third parties.

Should historic data be uploaded, we notice that the Learning Records Service (LRS) only accepts data with an achievement date later than 1 September 2006?

There is no obligation to send historical data. However, if the AO has the Unique Learner Number (ULN), and it is verified by LRS, the AO has the option of uploading this data for the benefit of the learner.

What is the process for a learner to opt out from sharing their Personal Learning Record?

It is between the LRS and the learner, and is managed by the centre. Centres (as learner registering bodies) have a duty under the Data Protection Act 1998 to tell learners that their data is being shared with the AO and the Learning Records Service for the purposes of achieving a qualification and

updating the PLR. The mechanism for doing this is called a privacy notice. Learners have the right to refuse to share their PLR with other Learning Providers. Centres can flag this in the learner's ULN record. The LRS will not share the PLR with Learning Providers unless the learner or a provider acting on behalf of the learner decides to remove the flag. None of this prevents the AO from uploading achievement data to the PLR, or maintaining that achievement data within the PLR.

Can centres post results to the Personal Learning Record (PLR) and therefore overwrite those uploaded by awarding organisations?

Centres cannot overwrite data from awarding organisations. Awarding organisations are the authority on achievement data, not centres. LRS collects data from centres through ILR returns, but where there is a duplicate on a learner's PLR the awarding organisation data would always have precedence.

2. Support Documentation

What support documentation is available depending on the AO's upload mechanism?

AO Journey Roadmap (Appendix A) – This is a high level process for awarding organisation's once [Awarding Organisation Agreement](#) has been signed.

Portal (Direct)

[Awarding Organisation \(AO\) User Guide](#)

[On-Line Guide for Awarding Organisation using the LRS Organisation Portal](#)

Batch (Portal)

[Awarding Organisation \(AO\) User Guide](#)

[Batch Toolkit for Awarding Organisation Validation Tool](#)

Web Services

[Developer Team Site](#) (support documentation). To access web service supporting documentation, developers must register first.

[Developer Registration Process](#)

3. Provisional/Final Results

What is the difference between a 'Provisional' and 'Final' Type of Job in the batch header?

National Qualification Framework (NQF) provision may be Provisional or Final and the parameter identifies this. It also means there should be two batch files submitted: a Provisional batch which is then superseded by a Final batch. Final and Provisional results cannot be submitted in the same batch. Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) achievements are always treated as Final by default.

What are the rules around the timescales for sending Provisional and Final results?

Provisional is only applicable for NQF provision. In both cases, the expectation is that results must be uploaded to the PLR within a maximum of 10 working days of results being issued to the learner.

Is there a requirement to send updates to Provisional results, for example, if a learner's grade changes?

This is a decision for the AO. We recommend for compliance with the Data Protection Act that both Provisional and Final results are kept up to date by the AO. As a minimum any updates to grades should be included when Provisional results are updated to Final.

Will a Final batch file overwrite a Provisional batch file?

The results in the final batch file will update and overwrite the provisional results. (Results in the Final batch file supersede the Provisional results previously submitted).

What changes were made in Release 9?

Release 9 is the latest version of the Learning Records Service (LRS) Organisation Portal, deployed on 26 January 2013. It introduces the following for Awarding Organisations:

- Improved qualification batch-handling process so the uploaded batches are processed in a queue.
- The ability to identify qualifications as provisional before they are deemed final.
- Optional identifier fields for Management Information Supplier (MIS) and Language for assessment.

- Development of new screens for awarding organisations to manage and process Event Data Challenges.
- Improved Management Information (MI) reporting for awarding organisation.
- A new set of web services have been developed; Submit Achievement Batch and View Achievement Batch
- Email address to notify the AO that provisional/final information in batch files has been uploaded to the PLR.

What is the size limit for submitting batches through the portal or web services?

One of the changes made as part of R9 is the ability for awarding organisations to upload batch files up to 6mb and containing up to 10,000 individual records via the portal.

From 11 March 2013 the batch size limit, submitted through web services will match the portal batch files of up to 6mb, containing up to 10,000 individual records.

4. Batch

Do you have any recommendations or guidance on what should be included in a single batch?

We recommend that data is ordered by the learner's ULN so that learners with multiple units or qualifications are grouped together.

What should be put in the MIS Identifier field?

This is an optional field for your own internal records. Suggestions include: candidate and centre number.

Why do we need to include an email address in the batch submission?

LRS uses the e-mail address to notify the completion of a batch run.

What should we use for Achievement Award Date for series based achievements?

LRS understands that not all awarding organisations award certificates on a particular date and tends to be month specific. We have no recommendations around what day you should use as this should be aligned with your business

rules. In general, the PLR should reflect what is on the exam certificate wherever possible.

What are the rules around updating, withdrawing and reinstating achievements?

Updating

When updating an achievement record, only the grade, UKPRN, or language for assessment can be updated. Should you need to update any other fields, you need to withdraw the achievement and create a new one.

Reinstating

An achievement that is reinstated can also be updated but only grade, UKPRN or language assessment can be updated.

Where can we find a copy of XML requests and responses?

These can be found in either the 'How to prepare an achievement batch' document that can be found on the LRS website or in the Web Services Interface Specification, depending on your development method.

What format should be used for the Grade field?

The grade submitted should match that held in Ofqual's RITS database wherever possible.

The QAN code is not always a unique reference and there is occasion when some QAN codes have more than 1 qualification/unit assigned. How does LRS manage these?

LRS has been made aware of this and understands there are different pathways for different achievements. We would like to explore with Ofqual an update to RITS to differentiate the more common pathways (at least).

Error RS005 – too many achievement records have been rejected according to the threshold set by QCF can be returned. What is the threshold?

Currently, if more than 30% of records in a batch file are rejected, the whole batch job fails with this error.



5. Event Data Challenge

Can a learner raise a Data Challenge against an achievement that has a Provisional status?

Yes, but only if there is a data error. A data challenge is not the same as the appeals process, which should be managed by the awarding organisation's existing arrangements.

How do I inform the LRS where I want the Event Data Challenge notification email to be sent or of any changes?

Please email the (new) given name, family name, contact telephone number, email address to lrssupport@learningrecordsservice.org.uk and we will update our records.

6. Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF)

Where can I find the latest information about the QCF?

To find the latest information about the QCF please visit;
<http://qcf.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/qcf-funding/confirmationfunding/>

7. Useful Links

LRS Customer Helpdesk

General Enquiries:

Email: lrssupport@learningrecordsservice.org.uk

Telephone: 0845 602 2589

Fax: 024 7682 5681

Service Desk opening hours:

08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Saturday

08:00 - 18:00 Christmas Eve

08:00 - 18:00 New Year's Eve

The Service Desk is closed on Sunday's and English public holidays (inc Christmas and New Year's Day). If you have any queries out of hours please [email](#) us.

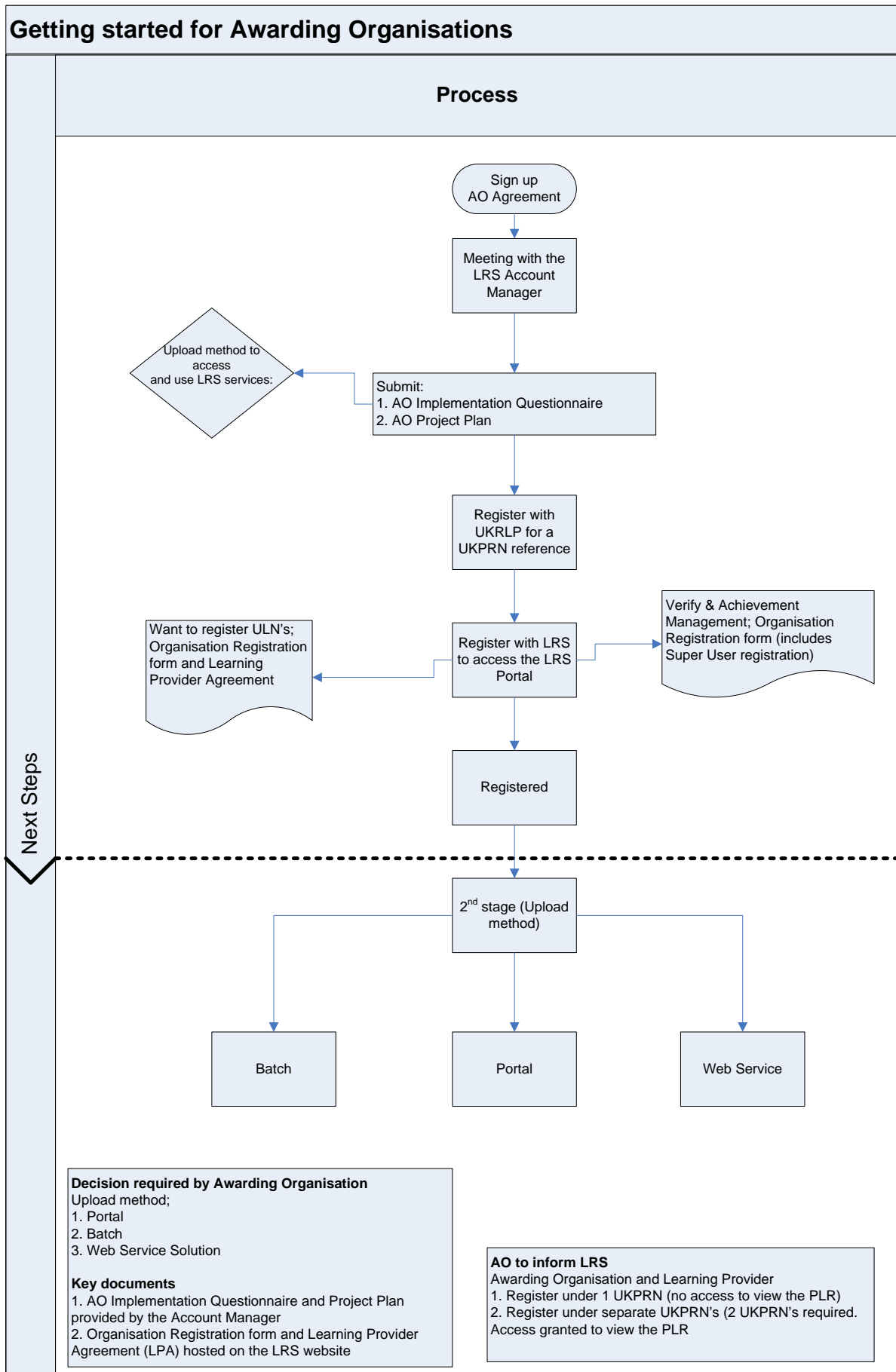


LRS Maintenance Schedules

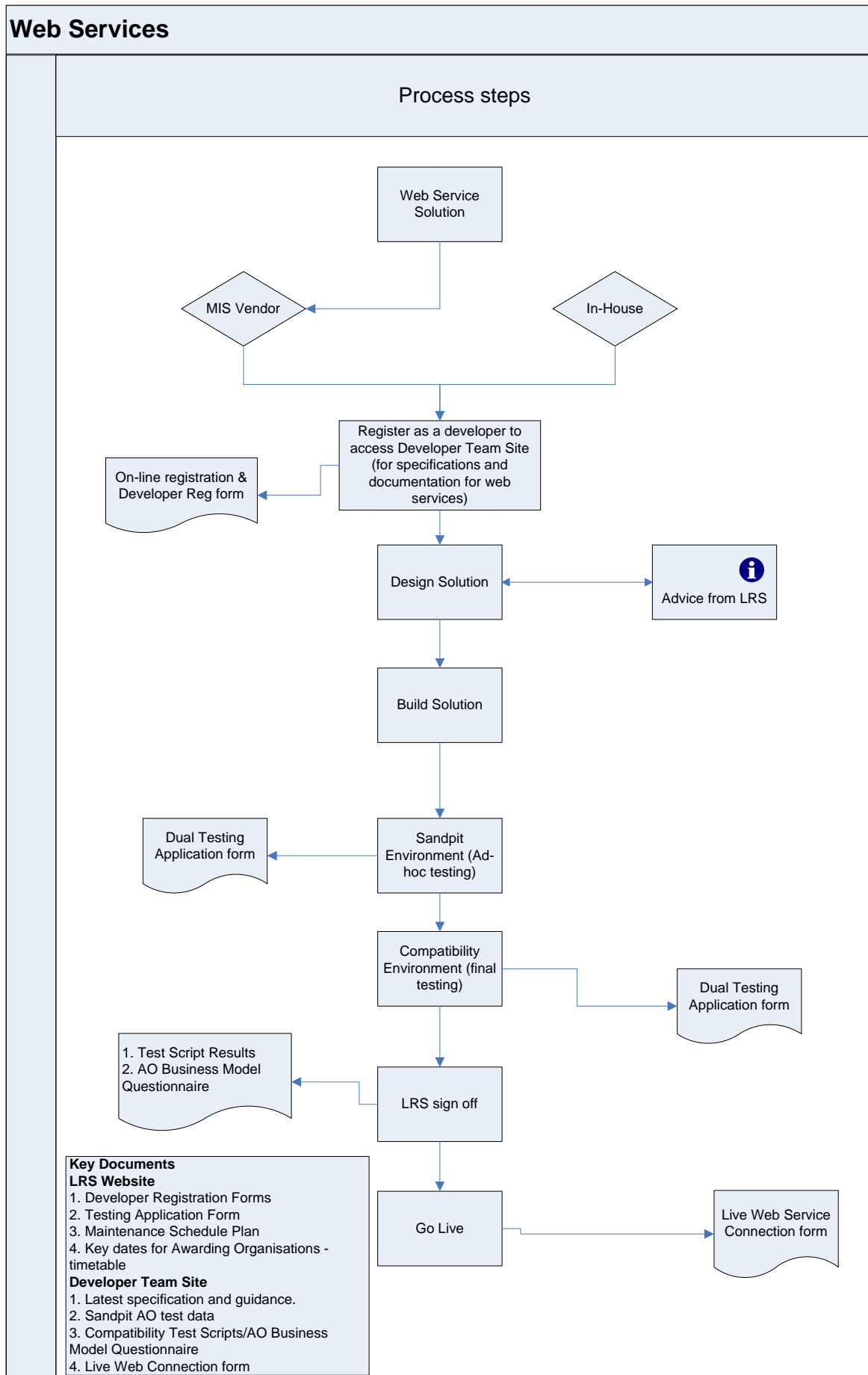
Maintenance windows have been introduced to carry out routine maintenance, non-urgent changes and minor releases to the LRS Organisation Portal and the Sandpit environment.

Planned outage dates are available in the updated system maintenance schedule for 2013 and be found on the LRS [website](http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk).

Appendix A



Appendix A



Appendix A

