Skills Funding Agency

A guide to the ILR

This programme is designed for new providers or software suppliers who are sending an ILR for the first time. It will cover topics such as how to interpret the ILR specification and what is needed to send an ILR. Click each item below to find out more information.

- **How to use this programme**
- **An introduction to XML**
- **Schema definitions**
- **Validation**
- **Collection requirements**
- **Aims and programmes**
- **Guidance**
- **Yearly changes**
- **Where do I find?**

Skills Funding Agency

Specification of the Individualised Learner Record for 2014 to 2015

Version 3.1

June 2014

Skills Funding Agency

Provider Support Manual for 2014 to 2015

Version 1

Throughout this programme there are several links to sources of information on the internet. To access these links you will need an internet connection.

Skills Funding Agency

This page shows you how to move around this programme and how to get further information and/or support. Click on each of the icons below to find out what action each one represents.

This page shows you how to move around this programme and how to get further information and/or support. Click on each of the icons below to find out what action each one represents.

This will take you to the next page in this programme, or return you to the last menu page you visited if there are no more pages in that submenu.

Skills Funding Agency

This page shows you how to move around this programme and how to get further information and/or support. Click on each of the icons below to find out what action each one represents.

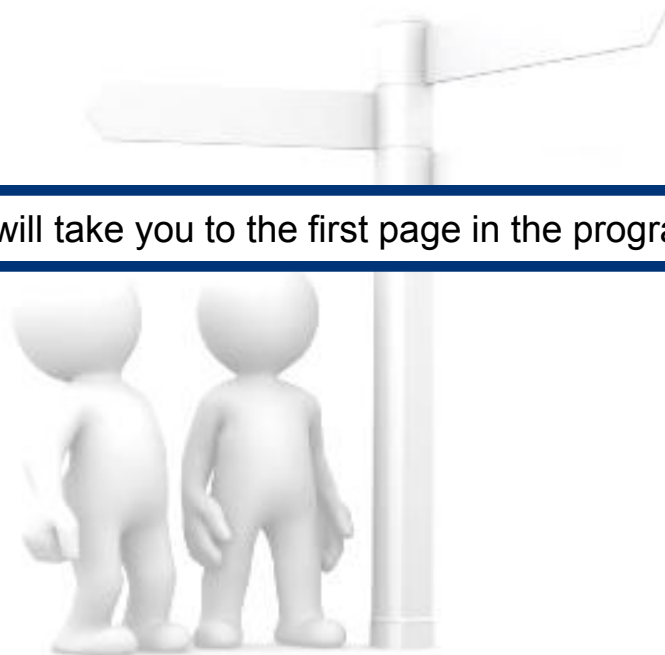This will take you to the last page that you viewed.

Skills Funding Agency

This page shows you how to move around this programme and how to get further information and/or support. Click on each of the icons below to find out what action each one represents.

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This 'home' button will take you to the first page in the programme.

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Skills Funding Agency

This page shows you how to move around this programme and how to get further information and/or support. Click on each of the icons below to find out what action each one represents.

This button will take you to the screen that contains details of how you can get involved in the ILR change process and where to go for further assistance should you need any.

How to use this programme

This page shows you how to move around this programme and how to get further information and/or support. Click on each of the icons below to find out what action each one represents.

This button will take you directly to the Skills Funding Agency pages on GOV.UK.
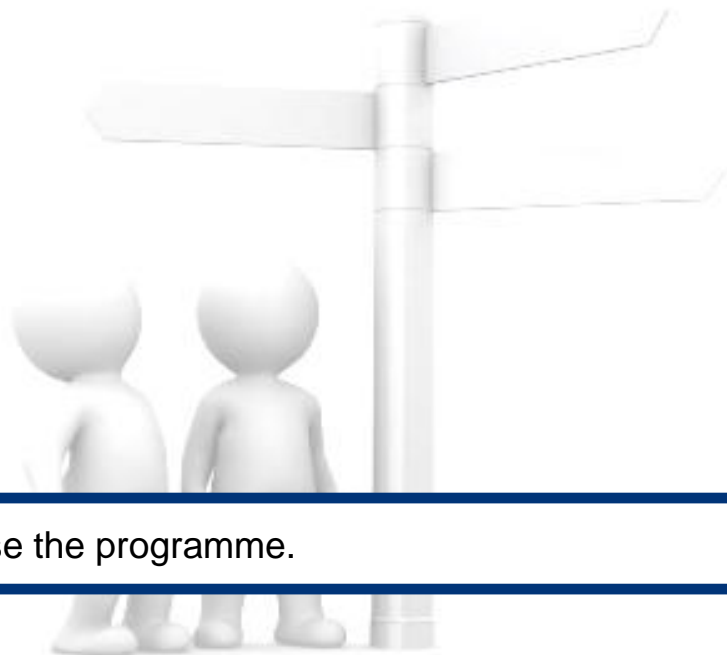
Skills Funding Agency

This page shows you how to move around this programme and how to get further information and/or support. Click on each of the icons below to find out what action each one represents. When you are ready, click on the 'home' button to go back to the first page of the programme or the 'next' button to begin the first section of the programme.

This button will close the programme.

Skills Funding Agency

This part of the programme will give a brief explanation of what XML is. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is XML?

XML format

Hierarchies

More Information

Skills Funding Agency

This part of the programme will give a brief explanation of what XML is. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is XML?

XML format

Hierarchies

More Information

XML (Extensible Markup Language) is a programming language designed primarily to transport and store data.

Skills Funding Agency

This part of the programme will give a brief explanation of what XML is. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is XML?

XML format

Hierarchies

More Information

XML stores data within tags and has a very similar structure to HTML. The example below shows how a learner's name is held within two tags:

```
<FamilyName>Bloggs</FamilyName>
<GivenNames>Joe</GivenNames>
```

Skills Funding Agency

This part of the programme will give a brief explanation of what XML is. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is XML?

XML format

Hierarchies

More Information

XML allows for a hierarchy structure so that data can be grouped into entities, fields and subfields. An example being a learner's contact details:

```
<LearnerContact>
    <LocType>1</LocType>
    <ContType>2</ContType>
        <PostAdd>
            <AddLine1>1 The Street</AddLine1>
            <AddLine2>ToyTown</AddLine2>
        </PostAdd>
</LearnerContact>
```

Here the two address lines are held within the 'PostAdd' subfield, which itself is held in the 'LearnerContact' field.

Skills Funding Agency

This part of the programme will give a brief explanation of what XML is. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is XML?

XML format

Hierarchies

More Information

Further information on how to create and save your XML file can be found in the ILR specification. The **ILR documents page** will provide the ILR specification and supporting documentation for each year.

Skills Funding Agency

This page will explain what an XML schema is. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is an XML schema?

Schema diagrams

Interpreting diagrams

Schema validation

Skills Funding Agency

This page will explain what an XML schema is. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is an XML schema?

Schema diagrams

Interpreting diagrams

Schema validation

An XML schema is a set of rules defining the structure of an XML file . To specify the schema all ILR XML files should start with the following code:

```
<Message xmlns="http://www.theia.org.uk/ILR/2013-14/1"
xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
xsi:schemaLocation="[Schema Location]">
```

[Schema Location] is the location of the schema files on your hard drive. You can download the XML schema definitions from the following link to the **ILR documents page**, this will provide the ILR specification and supporting documentation for each year.

This page will explain what an XML schema is. Click each item below to find out more information.

Schema diagrams are an easy way to interpret a schema. An example is shown below:

What is an XML schema?

Schema diagrams

Interpreting diagrams

Schema validation

Schema definitions

This page will explain what an XML schema is. Click each item below to find out more information.

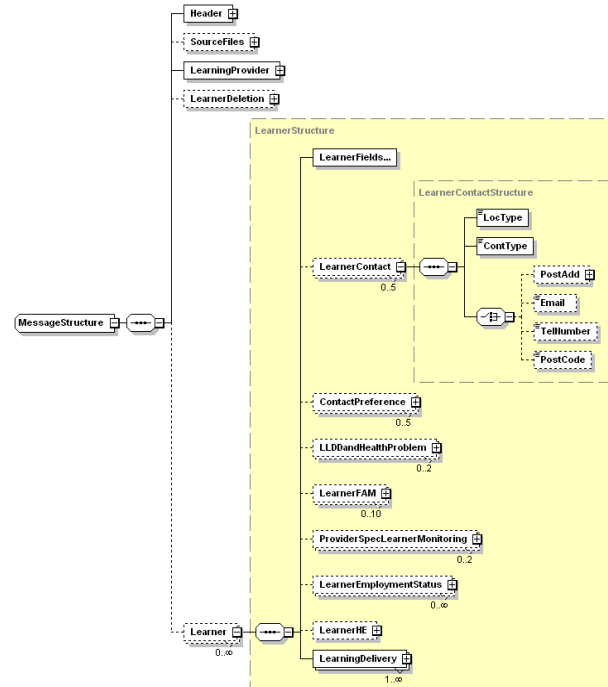**What is an XML schema?**

Schema diagrams

Interpreting diagrams

Schema validation

This is an expandable element that contains sub-elements.

Indicates that all elements contained must be inputted in the order they appear on the schema.

Specifies that **one** of the sub-elements must be used.

The numbers underneath the elements dictate the minimum and maximum number of occurrences. In this example the minimum occurrence is 0 (i.e. it does not have to appear at all) and the maximum is 2.

0..2

Skills Funding Agency

This page will explain what an XML schema is. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is an XML schema?

Schema diagrams

Interpreting diagrams

Schema validation

When a file is returned to the Skills Funding Agency through **the Hub**, the schema of the file is validated against the ILR XML schema definitions.

If it does not pass validation the whole file will automatically be rejected and an error produced advising that there is a schema error.

Most XML coding software will check against the schema definition automatically and highlight any issues when attempting to save or export the file.

Each field on the ILR has specific schema definitions. Click each item below to find out more information.

ILR specification

Data types

Mandatory

Valid entries

UK provider reference number			
Definition	The UK provider reference number of the contracted provider		
Reason required	To identify the contracted provider		
Schema definitions			
XML element name	UKPRN	Mandatory	Y
Field length	8	Data type	xs:int
Minimum occurrences	1	Maximum occurrences	1
Part of	Learning Provider		
Collection requirements			**Validated**
Collected for all learners			Yes - schema
Valid entries (Schema check)			
10000000 – 99999999			

Skills Funding Agency

Each field on the ILR has specific schema definitions. Click each item below to find out more information.

The schema definitions for each field can be found in the ILR specification.

The following link to the **ILR documents page** will provide the ILR specification and supporting documentation for each year.

This will provide information such as the XML element (tag) name, field length, minimum and maximum occurrences, whether the field is mandatory to the schema and its data type. An example is shown below.

ILR specification

Data types

Mandatory

Valid entries

Schema definitions			
XML element name	UKPRN	Mandatory	Y
Field length	8	Data type	xs:int
Minimum occurrences	1	Maximum occurrences	1
Part of	Learning Provider		

Skills Funding Agency

Each field on the ILR has specific schema definitions. Click each item below to find out more information.

ILR specification

Data types

Mandatory

Valid entries

A data type describes what type of data may be entered into the field.

- **xs:string** - String data types are used for values that contain character strings.
- **RestrictedString** - Similar to 'xs:string' except restrictions have been placed on it (e.g. you might not be able to enter wildcards such as *, ?, %).
- **xs:int** - Only integer values may be used.
- **xs:decimal** - Values can be of integer or decimal format.
- **xs:date** - Must be a date of the form 'YYYY-MM-DD'

Skills Funding Agency

Each field on the ILR has specific schema definitions. Click each item below to find out more information.

ILR specification

Data types

Mandatory

Valid entries

The mandatory cell indicates whether or not the element needs to be included in the XML code in order to satisfy the XML schema.

NOTE: An 'N' in this box does not necessarily mean you do not have to complete this field. This box is mandatory for XML validation only, and the field may need to be completed to satisfy the **collection requirements**.

Mandatory	Y

Collection requirements

Each field on the ILR has specific collection requirements. These requirements (based on specific learner data) determine whether the field is returned for that learner. Click each item below to find out more information.

Funding model

Funded

Non-funded

Collection requirements			Validated
EFA funded		Not collected	No
Skills Funding Agency funded	Collected for:	Adult skills (FundModel 35), ESF (FundModel 70) and Other Skills Funding Agency funding (FundModel 81)	Yes
	Not collected for:	Community Learning (FundModel 10)	No
Non funded		Collected for all learners (unless Source of funding = 108)	Yes

Skills Funding Agency

Each field on the ILR has specific collection requirements. These requirements (based on specific learner data) determine whether the field is returned for that learner. Click each item below to find out more information.

Funding model

Funded

Non-funded

In the learner entity the collection requirements are mostly selected according to the funding model. The funding model is a field in the learning delivery entity that determines where the funding comes from for a particular learning aim.

For example EFA-funded learners have a funding model code of 25 and adult skills-funded learners have a funding model code of 35.

	Collection requirements		Validated
EFA funded	Not collected		No
Skills Funding Agency funded	Collected for:	Adult skills (FundModel 35), ESF (FundModel 70) and Other Skills Funding Agency funding (FundModel 81)	Yes
	Not collected for:	Community Learning (FundModel 10)	No
Non funded	Collected for all learners (unless Source of funding = 108)		Yes

Collection requirements

Each field on the ILR has specific collection requirements. These requirements (based on specific learner data) determine whether the field is returned for that learner. Click each item below to find out more information.

Funding model

Funded

Non-funded

The collection requirements for funded aims is split into two: EFA and Skills Funding Agency.

The example below tells us that for EFA-funded learners the field is not collected. For Skills Funding Agency-funded learners it is collected for funding models 35, 70 and 81, and not collected for funding model 10.

EFA funded		Not collected
Skills Funding Agency funded	Collected for:	Adult skills (FundModel 35), ESF (FundModel 70) and Other Skills Funding Agency funding (FundModel 81)
	Not collected for:	Community Learning (FundModel 10)

Collection requirements

Each field on the ILR has specific collection requirements. These requirements (based on specific learner data) determine whether the field is returned for that learner. Click each item below to find out more information.

Funding model

Funded

Non-funded

Some fields are required for non-funded aims.

In the example below, for non-funded learners the field is collected for all (which is funding model 99) with the exception of learners that have a source of funding of 108. The source of funding is recorded in the learning delivery funding and monitoring codes.

Non funded	Collected for all learners (unless Source of funding = 108)

Each field on the ILR has specific schema definitions. Click each item below to find out more information.

ILR specification

Data types

Mandatory

Valid entries

The valid entries box gives a range of values that will be accepted. This can include a range of numbers, a list of codes, or valid characters.

Valid entries (Schema check)
10000000 – 99999999

Skills Funding Agency

Every XML file sent to the Data Service is put through a validation process. This is to ensure that the data is correct and in a valid format. Click each item below to find out more information.

XML validation

Validation rules

Error reports

Corrections

Skills Funding Agency

Every XML file sent to the Data Service is put through a validation process. This is to ensure that the data is correct and in a valid format. Click each item below to find out more information.
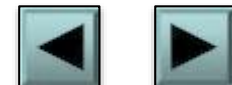
XML validation

Validation rules

Error reports

Corrections

An XML file will be validated against the XML schema definition at the point of transmission to check it is consistent with the schema definitions.

If a file fails a schema check at the point of transmission then it will not be processed.

Skills Funding Agency

Every XML file sent to the Data Service is put through a validation process. This is to ensure that the data is correct and in a valid format. Click each item below to find out more information.

XML validation

Validation rules

Error reports

Corrections

When a file is submitted and passes the schema checks, it is run against the validation rules to ensure that the returned data is robust.

The validation rules are held on the Skills Funding Agency pages on GOV.UK and are used by software providers to ensure their systems record the correct data for transmission.

Validation

Every XML file sent to the Data Service is put through a validation process. This is to ensure that the data is correct and in a valid format. Click each item below to find out more information.

XML validation

Validation rules

Error reports

Corrections

When a file has been submitted a report is produced to show any validation errors. There are two types of error:

• Validation error: this prevents a particular learner record from passing through validation and being recorded in the national database of learners.

• Validation warning: this does not stop the learner record from passing through validation, but it does highlight to the provider that something may need attention.

Every XML file sent to the Data Service is put through a validation process. This is to ensure that the data is correct and in a valid format. Click each item below to find out more information.
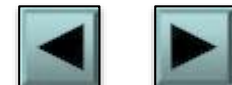
XML validation

Validation rules

Error reports

Corrections

The validation errors will need to be corrected by the provider and the file resubmitted. The error report displays the learner identifier and the appropriate error message highlighting which piece of data has triggered the error.

When attempting to upload the file again remember to update the file preparation date and time.

Each field on the ILR has specific collection requirements. These requirements (based on specific learner data) determine whether the field is returned for that learner. Click each item below to find out more information.

Funding model

Funded

Non-funded

Collection requirements			Validated
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Skills Funding Agency

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Skills Funding Agency

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Funding model

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Some fields are required for non-funded aims.

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| Non funded | Collected for all learners (unless Source of funding = 108) |

Here we explain where to get the learning aim reference for each course. Click each item below to find out more information.

Learning aim reference

Class codes

Valid dates

Skills Funding Agency

Here we explain where to get the learning aim reference for each course. Click each item below to find out more information.

Learning aim reference

Class codes

Valid dates

You can obtain all learning aim reference codes from the **Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS)** database.

The LARS database contains learning aim reference codes for regulated learning aims that are offered in the sector. This includes both funded and non-funded learning aims.

The LARS database can be accessed through **the Hub**.

Skills Funding Agency

Here we explain where to get the learning aim reference for each course. Click each item below to find out more information.

Learning aim reference

Class codes

Valid dates

The class codes are detailed in appendix H of the ILR specification which you can find on the **ILR documents page** will provide the ILR specification and supporting documentation for each year.

Where the provider is delivering non-regulated provision, they should use one of the learning aim references which are available in appendix H.

Here we explain where to get the learning aim reference for each course. Click each item below to find out more information.

Learning aim reference

Class codes

Valid dates

It is important that the learning aim reference is valid for the learners actual start and planned end dates.

The learning start date must be after the 'validity start date' and before the last date for new starts in the **LARS** database for the learning aim, and the planned end date must be before the 'validity end date' in the LARS database (if present) for the learning aim.

Skills Funding Agency

Here we explain what a programme aim is and how to use it. Click each item below to find out more information.

- Programme aims
- Apprenticeship programmes
- Apprenticeship framework and pathway codes
- Traineeships

Here we explain what a programme aim is and how to use it. Click each item below to find out more information.

Programme aims

Apprenticeship programmes

Apprenticeship framework and pathway codes

Traineeships

A programme aim is a learning delivery aim with field 'aim type' recorded as code 1 programme aim. It is used as a wrapper to collect all of the component aims within a programme.

In an apprenticeship programme the whole programme will have a programme aim code of ZPROG001.

Skills Funding Agency

Here we explain what a programme aim is and how to use it. Click each item below to find out more information.

Programme aims

Apprenticeship programmes

Apprenticeship framework and pathway codes

Traineeships

An apprenticeship programme has one specific aim designated the programme aim in the aim type field, that encompasses the whole apprenticeship programme.

All component aims within the apprenticeship must have actual start and planned end dates that are within the corresponding dates of the programme aim.

Detailed information on apprenticeship programmes can be found in the Provider Support Manual located within the **guidance page** for each year's ILR.

Here we explain what a programme aim is and how to use it. Click each item below to find out more information.

Programme aims

Apprenticeship programmes

Apprenticeship framework and pathway codes

Traineeships

Unlike other learning aims, an apprenticeship aim must have a valid framework code and apprenticeship pathway for that learning aim as found on the **LARS** database.

Ensure that the learning aim start date and learning planned end date of an individual apprenticeship pathway of a framework are within the validity period of the pathway as shown in the LARS database.

Here we explain what a programme aim is and how to use it. Click each item below to find out more information.

Programme aims

Apprenticeship programmes

Apprenticeship framework and pathway codes

Traineeships

For **guidance** on recording traineeships, please read the guidance found on the Skills Funding Agency pages of GOV.UK.

Skills Funding Agency

This section contains guidance on recording the employment status of a learner and further information on higher education and EFA study programmes.

Employment status

Higher education

EFA study programmes

Lookups and appendices

This section contains guidance on recording the employment status of a learner and further information on higher education and EFA study programmes.

Employment status

Higher education

EFA study programmes

Lookups and appendices

For the majority of learners, data about the employment status prior to learning is recorded on the ILR when the learner first enrols with a provider. Common sense is needed when determining the period of prior learning.

For example:

A learner who has been in full time education up until July and has had six weeks holiday and goes into further learning, is classed as having been in full-time education prior to learning.

A learner who has been in full-time education up until July and has had six weeks holiday and has been in employment for two weeks before going into learning, would be classed as having been in paid employment prior to learning.

This section contains guidance on recording the employment status of a learner and further information on higher education and EFA study programmes.

Employment status

Higher education

EFA study programmes

Lookups and appendices

For learners who have aims that meet the collection requirements for higher education, providers will need to complete the learner HE fields and learning delivery HE fields. These are sub-entities to the learner fields and to the specific learning delivery entity for that aim.

Many of the HE fields in the ILR specification refer to the **HESA specification** for further guidance on how to complete that field.

This section contains guidance on recording the employment status of a learner and further information on higher education and EFA study programmes.

Employment status

Higher education

EFA study programmes

Lookups and appendices

For guidance on completing the ILR for learners on EFA study programmes, please read the section for EFA study programmes in the Provider Support Manual located within the **guidance page** for each year's ILR.

This section contains guidance on recording the employment status of a learner and further information on higher education and EFA study programmes.

Employment status

Higher education

EFA study programmes

Lookups and appendices

The ILR specification refers to particular appendices at various times. These appendices either give further information or are the look-up tables for particular fields.

The following link to the **ILR documents page** will provide the ILR specification and supporting documentation for each year.

It is important to keep up to date with the yearly changes of the ILR. Click each item below to find out more information.

End of year

Changes

Migration

Skills Funding Agency

It is important to keep up to date with the yearly changes of the ILR. Click each item below to find out more information.

End of year

Changes

Migration

The ILR is updated every academic year. This means you will have to update your system annually to accommodate these changes ready for 1st August.

You must also remember that data from the previous year still needs to be sent until the hard close date, usually in October. Please check the **returns calendar (Appendix A)** for the return dates.

This means that for some of the year your system will need to be able to produce ILR files in two difference formats.
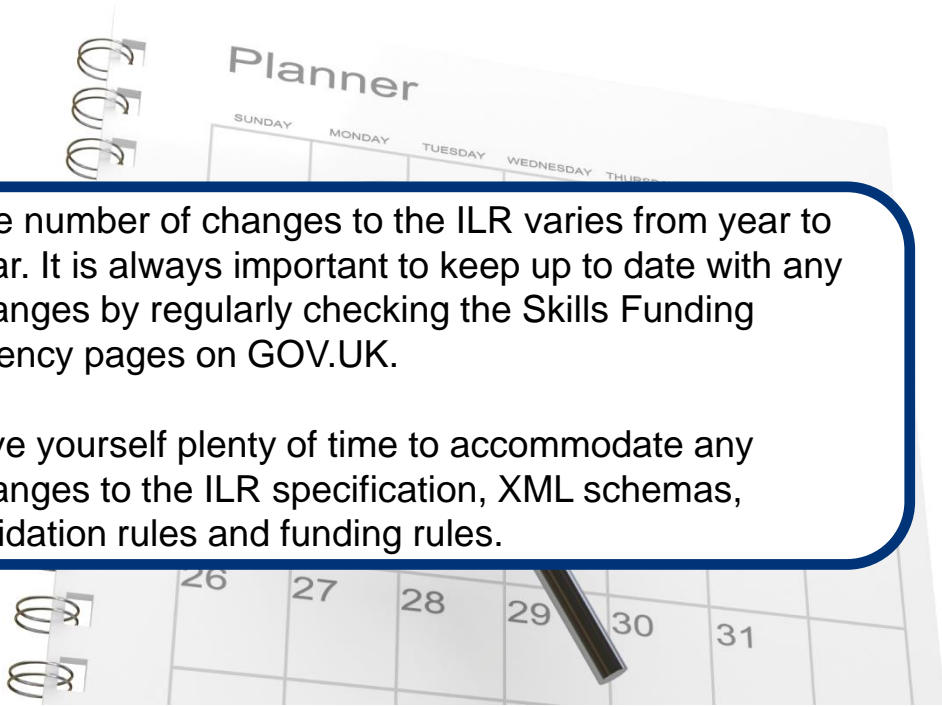
It is important to keep up to date with the yearly changes of the ILR. Click each item below to find out more information.

End of year

Changes

Migration

The number of changes to the ILR varies from year to year. It is always important to keep up to date with any changes by regularly checking the Skills Funding Agency pages on GOV.UK.

Give yourself plenty of time to accommodate any changes to the ILR specification, XML schemas, validation rules and funding rules.

It is important to keep up to date with the yearly changes of the ILR. Click each item below to find out more information.

End of year

Changes

Migration

Providers with their own MI systems are expected to be able to migrate their continuing learners from the previous year into the new year format.

Small providers (of 500 or less learners) can use the **ILR learner entry tool** to migrate these learners.

Skills Funding Agency

This section is to help you obtain information such as your UKPRN and a learner's ULN. Click each item below to find out more information.

- **What is my UKPRN?**
- **Unique learner number**
- **Employer identifier**
- **Funding rules**

This section is to help you obtain information such as your UKPRN and a learner's ULN. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is my UKPRN?

Unique learner number

Employer identifier

Funding rules

The UKPRN is the provider reference number of the contracted provider. This number is located on the **UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP)**.

This section is to help you obtain information such as your UKPRN and a learner's ULN. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is my UKPRN?

Unique learner number

Employer identifier

Funding rules

The ULN is the learner's unique identifier as held on the Learner Register, which is obtained from the **Learning Records Service (LRS)**.

Each ULN is issued and held in the **LRS Organisation Portal**. This is an internet-based register of learners that enables education providers to collect or generate a unique learner number (ULN) for anyone over the age of 14 in UK education and training.

Skills Funding Agency

This section is to help you obtain information such as your UKPRN and a learner's ULN. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is my UKPRN?

Unique learner number

Employer identifier

Funding rules

The ILR specification provides details on how to find employer numbers from the **Employer Data Service**.

Skills Funding Agency

This section is to help you obtain information such as your UKPRN and a learner's ULN. Click each item below to find out more information.

What is my UKPRN?

Unique learner number

Employer identifier

Funding rules

You can find the Skills Funding Agency funding rules on the **Skills Funding Agency pages on GOV.UK**.

Likewise a copy of the Education Funding Agency funding rules can be found on the **Education Funding Agency pages on GOV.UK**.

How to contact us

If after using this programme you have any comments or suggestions for future ILR-related learning programmes, please contact the Sector Engagement team at **cst@sfa.bis.gov.uk**

If you are having issues using this programme, coding your ILR or other general ILR-related issues, then please contact the Service Desk. You can find details of how to contact the team at **www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-data-services-help-and-support**

If you have any other general enquiry that you wish to send to the Skills Funding Agency, please send to **cst@sfa.bis.gov.uk**

Visit **feconnect,** our online forum, to discuss data issues and get help with any ILR-related problems.