

The proposal: For all 2012/13 ILR data to be returned by Friday 27 September 2013 (seven weeks earlier than currently planned).

The reasoning: The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills needs timely full year data for the previous teaching year in October to make the case for the funding appropriate to the FE sector on the same basis as schools and Higher Education. The data will help the department demonstrate the effectiveness of the sector and its value to the economy. Currently, the funding negotiations take place before the final ILR dataset is available.

The information authority secretariat's view: There is a very strong case to bring the closing date forward. We believe it is something that the sector should support, because it will help to secure funding for the sector. For this change to be implemented, there are several barriers that will need to be overcome. We want to gather views from the sector on what the main barriers are and what can be done to help meet an earlier collection date.

1. What type of organisation do you work for?

- What type of organisation do you work for?
College
- Employer
- Government department/ agency
- Independent provider
- Local authority
- Software developer
- Other (please specify)

The Sixth Form Colleges' Forum is the representative body for Sixth Form Colleges in England

2. In 2011/12, approximately what proportion of outcomes did your organisation know by the end of September 2012?

- In 2011/12, approximately what proportion of outcomes did your organisation know by the end of September 2012? 90%-100% of outcomes were known
- 70%-89% of outcomes were known
- 50%-69% of outcomes were known
- Less than 50% of outcomes were known
- Don't know / not applicable

3. For the outcomes that are not known by the end of September, please tell us what types of provision or qualifications these are.

Entry level Qualifications, Vocational Level 2, Vocational Level 3, Re-marks

4. Below is a list of actions we could take to help learning providers complete their 2012/13 ILR returns by 27 September 2013. Please rank them in order of importance, where 1 is the most important action.

Ensure all Awarding Organisations provide timely achievement data

Publicise the need for providers and awarding organisations to ensure that external verification will meet this timescale.

Improve timeliness of the Apprenticeship Certificates England system

Reduce the workload in the autumn term by removing the need for R01 and R02

Inform principals and chief executives that MI managers may need additional resources to meet this closing date

5. Please give any further comments you have on this proposal.

The SFCF has consulted the 92 Sixth Form Colleges we represent and we share the concern of our members that bringing the ILR return date forward will result in incomplete and less accurate data. Remarks and revised results will be excluded from a Sixth Form College's data return. In turn, this will have a negative effect on success rates and Level 3 Value added across the sector.

Bringing forward the return date will bring additional burdens on Sixth Form Colleges at an extremely busy time of year. Sixth Form Colleges will require additional resources to complete the return at an earlier date. Informing Principals that MI managers may need additional resources will not in itself help complete the returns at an earlier date as at a time of funding cuts and national austerity where will Principals find the resources required? Any additional staffing will need to be of the right calibre to ensure quality of data as well as meeting the return deadline.

As the vast majority of Sixth Form Colleges do not participate in Employer Responsive activity, the timeliness of Apprenticeship Certificates and removing the R01 and R02 are not actions which will benefit the Sixth Form College sector.