Framework for Excellence
2009/10 Learner Views survey – Countdown
1 October 2009 – 12 February 2010


Briefing for college or provider staff administering the survey with learners

1 October 2009: Learner Views survey goes live

Survey is available online through a web link delivered by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/Surveys/

From now and until 12 February 2010

Share the web link with your LSC-funded learners. These are:

- All 16-18 year-olds taking at least one LSC-funded aim.
- All adults with at least one aim funded through the Adult Learner Responsive funding stream (excluding First Steps provision, OLASS provision where the learner is in custody and other programmes not subject to formula funding).
- All adults with at least one aim funded through the Employer Responsive Funding Stream.

Prepare your learners
Make sure that your learners have access to their learner number (field L03 on the ILR) and your organisation’s UKPRN to log in to the website.

Midnight 12 February 2010
Survey closes. No further responses accepted.


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1 Most learners will be completing the online survey. Colleges and providers that requested alternatives by the deadline of 30 September will have heard/ or will hear shortly from the LSC. Please contact your survey co-ordinator for further details.
A. Your role as college or provider staff administering the survey with learners

These guidance notes have been produced to help staff who are administering the Learner Views survey, for example by providing learners with access to the online survey or working alongside learners who need help completing the survey.

What is the survey for?
The results of the Learner Views survey contribute to the outputs and ratings for your organisation for the Framework for Excellence for 2009/10. The Framework for Excellence will provide learners, employers and other stakeholders with useful information about colleges and providers.

Learner information
The LSC will collect and hold all personal data in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the LSC's data security protocols and systems.

When learners choose the 'Submit' button at the end of the survey, their answers are transmitted directly to two research companies, RCU and Ipsos MORI.

After the survey period
At the end of the survey, we will be telling each organisation what their learner views score is as well as providing feedback on the responses to each question and a breakdown of responses by broad learner groups.

How long will the survey take?
The survey is very short, taking three to four minutes for most learners to complete.

B. Who is in scope?

Your LSC-funded learners on the following programmes are in scope:

- All 16-18 year-olds taking at least one LSC-funded aim.
- All adults with at least one aim funded through the Adult Learner Responsive funding stream (excluding First Steps provision, OLASS provision where the learner is in custody and other programmes not subject to formula funding).
- All adults with at least one aim funded through the Employer Responsive Funding Stream.

Can learners enrolled after 1 October 2009 be included?
In-scope learners who are enrolled with you during the period 1 October 2009-12 February 2010 can be included in the survey. For courses longer than six weeks, it may be best to wait to survey learners until they have been on their course or learning programme for six weeks or more.

Can learners who completed their learning before 1 October 2009 complete the Learner Views survey?
Learners who finished their learning programme before 1 October 2009, should not be included. However, all learners who complete learning programmes during the survey period or who are still on learning programmes at the end of the survey period, would be asked to take part.
Does the survey apply to learners not funded by the LSC?
No. The survey only applies to LSC-funded learners (see Step 3). Learners whose funding comes from other sources, such as the Department for Work and Pensions, will not be counted within the Framework for Excellence.

If we receive any completed surveys from learners who are not funded by the LSC, these will be extracted by the LSC before the analysis is carried out.

C. The survey period

The survey will be live from 1 October 2009 to 12 February 2010 and learners can complete the survey at any time during that period. This means, for example, that learners who miss a group session can be asked to complete it on another occasion before 12 February. This may be done on one of your organisation’s internet linked PCs or on any computer in their own time before then. It also means that learners who cannot easily complete the survey during their learning time (for example, those engaged in workplace learning in community venues with no internet access) can still be encouraged to complete the survey.

Your organisation’s survey co-ordinator will be able to monitor the breakdown of responses from your organisation on a daily basis during the survey period.

Can learners log in at any time?
Learners can log in at any time of day provided they have the three key pieces of information listed in Section D below to hand. We are aware that many colleges and providers will ask their learners to complete the survey in organised group sessions, learning resource centres or training rooms with website access but learners can also access the survey site directly in their own time. We will be applying checks to ensure learners can only make one valid submission.

D. What information do learners need to log in to the survey?

In order to log in to the survey, learners will need:
- their UKPRN number – your organisation’s unique provider code (as used when submitting returns to the LSC);
- their personal learning number – field L03 on the ILR; and
- the survey web link – http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/Surveys/

The question that follows this asks the learner to tell us if they are on:
- a course in a college;
- a learning programme as an Apprentice or on a Train to Gain programme;
- a training programme where they are being trained by their employer.

Please ensure that you advise your learners if you think they may be unsure about which of these options to select. We invite the learner to ask you, as the college or learning provider, if they do not know. This only affects the wording of some questions. The questionnaire structure and issues are the same whichever they choose.

After a couple of introductory screens (including an explanation of the range of answers available to them), they go straight into the nine questions about their experience as a learner. These have been worded, and extensively tested, to ensure that the language is accessible to someone learning at Entry 3 or above. Finally, there are three short questions about the learner and their learning programme. The final question is about their highest level of study at present. We have provided some examples to help learners but please ensure that
they know the level of their course, if you think they may not be sure. The options are Entry, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Higher Education.

**E. Helping learners**

We have designed the questions to be, wherever possible, applicable to all learners in the learning context they have selected – that is, on a course, a learning programme or a training programme. We have also aimed to make the wording as clear as possible.

We realise that some learners will need help with the process of completing the survey. We ask you to use your professional judgement to ensure that any help you provide has the most neutral effect possible on the answers the learners give. If someone is giving a learner significant help – for example, acting as a translator or entering the answers on the survey on behalf of the learner – we ask you to let us know this in the survey.

If a learner feels that a particular question does not apply to them at all, they can select ‘This does not apply to me’ and then complete the rest of the survey. We expect occurrences of this to be very rare.

Some learners may ask what a question means. The questionnaires are being completed by hundreds of thousands of learners all over the country in a wide variety of learning contexts and we need to avoid any distortion that might result from different staff giving different explanations.

If learners do not understand a word or phrase in a question, please restrict any help to dictionary definitions of terms. For example, if a learner asks what the word ‘advice’ means, it would be fine to say ‘advice means information and explanations given to help you decide about something’ but not to give examples of specific advice sessions that the learners might have received from your organisation, since this could influence their response.

**F. Appropriate briefing of learners**

Colleges and providers are asked to remind learners to complete the survey. However, encouraging learners to reflect in their answers anything other than their genuine perception of their experiences is not acceptable. The National Union of Students (NUS) is working with the LSC to encourage learners who feel that they have been unfairly monitored or influenced during their completion of the survey to make this known to the LSC. Any allegations of inappropriate actions to influence the outcomes of the survey will be taken seriously by the LSC.

**G. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**

Some providers in the 2008/09 pilot had great success in including learners with severe or complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities, because they planned ahead and survey issues were built into curriculum discussions.

We have published some examples of successful approaches and guidance and protocols on supported completion. Please see the Learner Views pages on the Framework website for details: [http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/learnerviews/](http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/learnerviews/)
For example, some colleges and providers find it most effective to discuss the views of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on a daily or weekly basis with them and to log these using a diary approach. Other providers ask learner support staff to assist learners in the completion of surveys.

Approaches like this are fully acceptable if they allow learners to give their views with no outside influence. The survey asks people to record the fact that they are helping learners to complete the survey or are giving summative reports on views gathered over an extensive period.

The survey has some built-in features to increase its accessibility. It has been designed to be compatible with most standard screen readers and this year we have added the option of using voiced video clips with British sign language.

Learners who need a larger font size can increase it using an onscreen tool and there is also an opportunity to select a different background colour for learners who need this facility.