Framework for Excellence, Learner Views Survey – Countdown
2 January to 13 February 2009


Briefing for college or provider staff administering the Survey with learners

1. 2 January 2009: Learner Views Survey goes live

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

3. From now and until 13 February
   Share the web link* with your LSC-funded learners on priority programmes. These are:
   • all learners aged 16–18;
   • all learners on Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships;
   • all learners on Train to Gain programmes;
   • all learners on target-bearing Skills for Life programmes;
   • all adults on programmes contributing to a full Level 2 or a full Level 3 qualification, as flagged on the ILR; and
   • all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (at the discretion of the college or provider).

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

5. Midnight 13 February 2009
   Survey closes. No further responses accepted.

Need further information? A step-by-step guide is available under Performance Dimensions, Responsiveness to Learners, Learner Views http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/ffe

* Most learners will be completing the online Survey. Any colleges and providers that have requested alternatives by the deadline will have already received a response 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

Your role in ensuring the successful completion of the Survey will be to [to be added by the quality manager/person responsible for administering the Survey at your institution].

What is the survey for?
The results of the Learner Views Survey, along with a survey of learner destinations, make up the Learner Responsiveness key performance area. The results contribute to the outputs and ratings for your organisation for the Framework for Excellence.

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.

We will provide you with some posters which can be used to give feedback to learners about what they said and what you did. We know learners value this method of feedback and it will allow you to share the results of the Survey with the learners who took part.

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 priority programmes. These are:

- all learners aged 16–18;
- all learners on Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships;
- all learners on Train to Gain programmes;
- all learners on target-bearing Skills for Life programmes;
- all adults on programmes contributing to a full Level 2 or a full Level 3 qualification, as flagged on the ILR; and
- all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (at the discretion of the college or provider).

Can learners enrolled after 14 November 2008 be included?

The Survey is not appropriate for learners starting their learning programme within six weeks of the start of the Survey. We ask that all providers do not include any learners who were not enrolled with you on or before 14 November 2008. Learners at your organisation who have transferred courses recently are eligible to participate in the Survey if they have been enrolled since 14 November 2008.

Can learners who completed their learning in December 2008, but are not studying in January 2009, complete the Learner Views Survey?

Learners enrolled at your organisation after 14 November 2008, but who have finished their course by 2 January 2009 should not be included.

Does the Survey apply to learners not funded by the LSC?

No. The Survey only applies to LSC-funded priority learners. 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 2 January to 13 February 2009 and learners can complete the Survey at any time during that period. This means, for example, that learners who miss a group session and run on can be asked to complete it on another occasion before 13 February 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 required to hand – although 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.

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

They need:

• their UKPRN number – provider code;
• 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 (being trained by your 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.

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 Level 4 or above.
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 simple 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 give you the option to let us know this, in the survey questions.

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 tens 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. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Some providers in the 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/key-performance-areas/responsiveness-learners/learner-views/).

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 allows 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.