

FEWEEK

Coronavirus FE briefing series

Monday 27 April | 14:00 - 15:30

Have a question?

Please use the comment box to submit your question. Nick will review all incoming questions and try to ask as many as possible during the session.

Briefing agenda

More than 2,500 registered for this webinar

14:00 ESFA provider relief - Nick Linford, FE Week

14:30 In conversation with the Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, Gillian Keegan and the ESFA's Director of Further Education (soon to be director of the Apprenticeship Directorate), Peter Mucklow

14:55 Other recent policy updates / flexibilities - Nick Linford, FE Week

15:20 Final Q&A

15:30 End

Slides and video will be sent after the webcast

FEWEEK

ESFA provider relief scheme (PRS)

Published Friday 24 April

Applications can now be made to [Provider Relief Scheme](#).


To be eligible to receive support from the scheme you must hold a direct contract that was procured as a service under Public Contract Regulations 2015. This applies to apprenticeship contracts for services that commenced in January 2018, for delivery to smaller employers that do not pay the levy (non-levy), and adult education budget contracts for services that commenced in November 2017.


Please note that we are not yet able to confirm our position around providing support for learning funded through European Social Fund (ESF) co-financing contracts. This is not a domestic funding stream and we therefore need to agree our approach with the ESF Managing Authority.


Means for apprenticeships, only allocation based provision eligible


Provision via the Apprenticeship Service Accounts (ASA) excluded (even where non-levy via transfers or transition) so I think poor wording above and in guidance forms.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>


[ESFA post-16 provider relief scheme COVID-19 response: policy document](#)
HTML


[ESFA post-16 provider relief scheme: application guidance](#)
PDF, 398KB, 29 pages
This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)

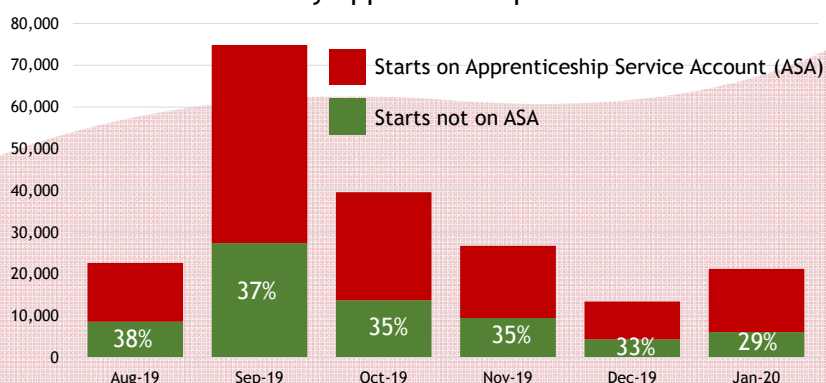

[ESFA post-16 provider relief scheme: application cashflow template](#)
IMS Excel Spreadsheet, 38.1KB
This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)


[ESFA post-16 provider relief scheme: model interim payment terms](#)
PDF, 43.1KB, 5 pages
This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)

FEWEEK

Majority of apprentices ineligible for PSR

Monthly apprenticeship starts



Non-ASA made up 35% of the 198,632 starts in first half of this funding year (see monthly figures).

So, with 65% on ASA, this means approximately two thirds - and rising - of apprenticeship funding is ineligible for the ESFA provider relief scheme.

Source: DfE Further education and skills: March 2020 - Underlying data: apprenticeship starts
Analysis by FE Week

FEWEEK

And the 35% eligible (non-ASA) are mostly at a handful of providers

The ten providers with the highest number of non-ASA starts

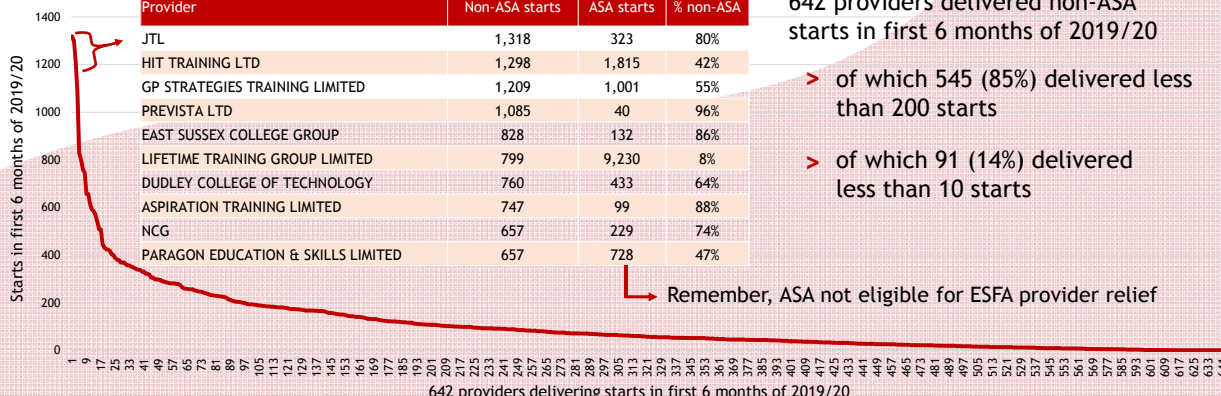
Provider	Non-ASA starts	ASA starts	% non-ASA
JTL	1,318	323	80%
HIT TRAINING LTD	1,298	1,815	42%
GP STRATEGIES TRAINING LIMITED	1,209	1,001	55%
PREVISTA LTD	1,085	40	96%
EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE GROUP	828	132	86%
LIFETIME TRAINING GROUP LIMITED	799	9,230	8%
DUDLEY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY	760	433	64%
ASPIRATION TRAINING LIMITED	747	99	88%
NCG	657	229	74%
PARAGON EDUCATION & SKILLS LIMITED	657	728	47%

642 providers delivered non-ASA starts in first 6 months of 2019/20

> of which 545 (85%) delivered less than 200 starts

> of which 91 (14%) delivered less than 10 starts

Remember, ASA not eligible for ESFA provider relief



Source: DfE Further education and skills: March 2020 - Underlying data: apprenticeship starts
Analysis by FE Week

FEWEEK

PRS provider eligibility

Published Friday 24 April

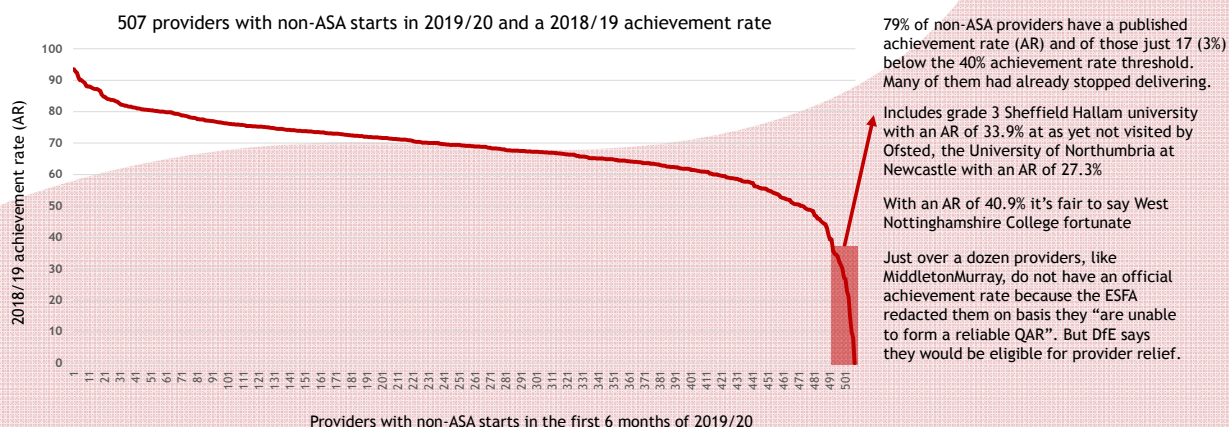
In addition to holding an eligible contract you will be required to meet the following conditions:

- 2018 to 2019 qualification achievement rates which are above 40%. However, providers with rates below that can submit an exceptional case that they are a critical supplier delivering niche provision
- submitted their latest financial accounts to ESFA on time
- not been judged by Ofsted as making insufficient progress as a result of a new provider monitoring visit
- delivered under the contract prior to April 2020
- plan to deliver learning under the contract in May and June 2020
- not furloughed the staff required to deliver the contract (or they intend to bring furloughed staff back into work and can evidence this)
- not received a notice of termination from the ESFA

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>

FEWEEK

Nearly all above the 40% achievement rate



Source 1: DfE Further education and skills: March 2020 - Underlying data: apprenticeship starts
Source 2: DfE National achievement rates tables 2018 to 2019
Analysis by FE Week

FEWEEK

PRS funding cap

Published Friday 24 April

- we will calculate a funding cap for each training provider requesting support from the scheme. The funding cap will be applied to the amount requested by the training provider
- the cap will be based on a 3-month average using the ILR submission for January, February and March 2020. Existing maximum contract values (MCV) continue to apply and the providers funding cap cannot exceed 25% of the MCV even where the average earnings exceed this
- the Relief Scheme will apply to activity undertaken in April, May and June and paid in the subsequent month. Funding through this Relief Scheme will be paid on top of the regular payment claimed via the ILR. The total of the 2 payments will not exceed the provider's funding cap

→ First thing provider should do is calculate their cap.

No harm asking ESFA account manager to verify your calculation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>

FEWEEK

PRS eligible costs

Published Friday 24 April

5.9 For the purposes of the support you are requesting through this Relief Scheme the following costs are deemed to be eligible.

- salary and pension costs which cannot be covered by payments received through the ILR and those staff are directly employed to deliver services required by this Relief Scheme and your contract for services
- interest only on loans (Bank or other commercial debt)
- essential maintenance costs which enable you to deliver support to learners and employers
- utilities, including rent and rates.
- lease costs for vehicles and equipment
- additional costs associated with COVID-19, such as the provision of deep cleaning
- pastoral support for learners

“in cases where training providers have furloughed staff who now need to work, they will be eligible for support from this scheme but must be taken off furlough.”

“We reserve the right to check your records submitted to HMRC and recover any funds for staff costs where those employees have been reported as being furloughed.”

Remember: The HMRC Job Retention Scheme only pays 80% and only up to a maximum of £2,500 per month

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>

FEWEEK

PRS eligible costs table

Published Friday 24 April

Section B – Details of funding required

Question	Guidance notes for completion					
4. Please confirm the amount of eligible costs, above which you have forecast to earn for the months of April, May and June 2020 which you are requesting. These are essential costs which will allow you to maintain a minimum level of operation during this period to support your learners.						
Month	Apr-2020		May-2020		Jun-2020	
Cost Headings	AEB	NL Apps	AEB	NL Apps	AEB	NL Apps
Staff Costs - Teaching						
Staff Costs – Non-Teaching						
Rent and Lease Costs						
Administration Costs						
Operational and Maintenance Costs						
Total						

As I understand it, providers should only include costs relating to:

> The procured part of AEB (even some colleges have this in addition to grant)

> Only apprentices funded via a non-levy allocation (so excluding any non-levy or levy funded from the ASA)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>

FEWEEK

PRS ineligible costs

Published Friday 24 April

5.15 The following costs do not qualify for support under this Relief Scheme and must not be included in the funding you have requested in your application.

- dividend payments
- drawings, including withdrawals and transfers from your business bank account to a personal bank account and payments for a personal cost from your business bank account
- capital Loan Repayments (dependent on bank as to whether interest only repayment would be allowable and then complexity of monitoring / assuring)
- staff Bonuses
- performance related pay
- increase in staff salaries
- a top up for furloughed staff salaries
- goods not ordered or required for future use – such as, stock
- travel and subsistence costs
- costs relating to subcontractors, end point assessing organisations and awarding organisations other than those claimed for delivery through the ILR
- production of new materials
- Tax or VAT liabilities
- repayments of director or intercompany (group) loans
- marketing and publicity
- entertainment
- any costs already deemed 'Ineligible costs' within apprenticeship funding rules where this applies to applicants who hold a non-levy contract
- any profit element
- costs associated with the repayment of funds to the ESFA resulting from investigations and audit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>

FEWEEK

Subcontracting costs and payments

Published Friday 24 April

5.12 Subcontractors and end point assessment organisations delivering services to you on behalf of your organisation are not eligible for support under this Relief Scheme.

5.13 However, a condition of the Relief Scheme requires you to pay subcontractors and end point assessment organisations for delivery earned through the submission of the ILR in line with your contractual obligations.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>

FEWEEK

PRS evidence

Published Friday 24 April

6.1 Evidence of expenditure and the activity that you deliver must be retained for 6 years and you will be required to submit a reconciled summary of costs used within 60 days of the support ending. We will recover funds which were not used for their intended purpose or where the funds were not required.

6.2 You will need to evidence that each of your activities as described by you in your application for support have been delivered. Types of evidence may include the following, although this list is not intended to be exhaustive;

- online records of engagement with learners
- email records
- records of reviews
- Electronic evidence of job search activities that help redundant apprentices identify new employment opportunities
- evidence of regular reviews and contact with your employers including evidence of the revised apprenticeship programmes

It could be that you choose not to claim for salaries and you simply continue to use the furlough option as part of the Job Retention Scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>

FEWEEK

PRS audit during Covid crisis

Published Friday 24 April

6.4 We have confirmed that during the COVID-19 outbreak all planned audits will not take place, however applicants wishing to receive support from this Relief Scheme may be required to provide auditable evidence to support the funds provided whilst any COVID-19 restrictions apply.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>

FEWEEK

PRS deadline is midnight this Thursday

Published Friday 24 April

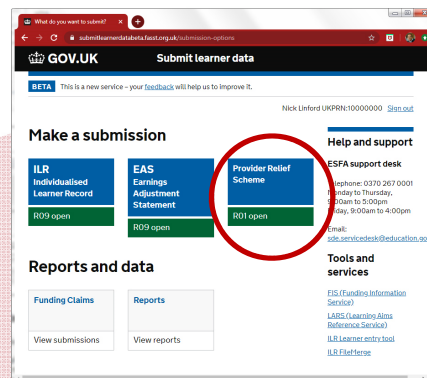
8.1 Eligible organisations can access the application form by signing into [Submit Learner Data](#) using your [IDAMs](#) credentials. You must also upload the financial spreadsheet published with this guidance to make a valid application for support from the Relief Scheme.

8.2 Incomplete applications will be rejected.

8.3 Applicants are not able to re-submit an application or include additional information other than what is required in the application and supporting spreadsheet.

8.4 We are unable to enter into discussions about the information you submit.

8.5 The deadline for submission of completed applications is midnight on Thursday 30 April 2020; applications received after this deadline will not be considered and there is no right of appeal for late submissions.



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>

FEWEEK

Final key ESFA PRS points

PRS covers ESFA procured AEB as well as non-ASA apprenticeships - so where there is an allocation

No PRS for 65%+ of apprenticeship provision as on the ASA (non-levy on the ASA ineligible)

Work out the PRS cap value first

Check PRS cap value against PRS eligible costs (such as staff not still funded from ILR or rent and rates)

Avoid double funding (so for staff, choose HMRC JRS or ESFA PRS (not both))

Complete form on ESFA's Submit Learner Data portal by midnight this Thursday

No news yet on a PRS for ESF outside London or ESFA procured 16-19 study programmes

FEWEEK

Framework switch-off delay?

Published Thursday 23 April

In a webinar hosted by the Association of Colleges, the COO at the IfATE revealed that work on prolonging the switch beyond 31 July is already underway.

“Yes, in a nutshell”, he said when asked whether it would “make sense” to extend the date.

“We have done a bit of work on this. It is interesting across different sectors - some are very well set up, they have left frameworks behind but there are a couple of other sectors where that conversion hasn’t fully happened. There is a discussion to be had and I know there is consideration of what is the best thing to do in that space. That is where it sits at the moment, voices are being heard and it is currently being weighed as an issue.”

A spokesperson for the IfATE later told FE Week any decision “regarding possible change to the turn-off date for frameworks” is “for the Department for Education to make, taking into consideration a wide range of factors”.

<https://feweek.co.uk/2020/04/23/talks-underway-to-extend-apprenticeship-frameworks-cut-off-date/>

FEWEEK

Ofqual consultation

Published Friday 24 April

Three options for exam results:

- > Calculating results - such as functional skills
- > Adapting assessments - such as remote invigilation
- > Delay - such as involving health and safety checks

Requires a “temporary extraordinary regulatory framework”

To summarise, Ofqual leaving it up to the awarding organisation (AO) to decide how best to do this. As they say: “AOs will determine the most appropriate way to deliver calculation or adaptation to make sure results are valid, and that learners receive grades that fairly represent their expected level of attainment.”

Consultation closes at 11:45pm on Friday 8 May 2020

Documents



[Exceptional arrangements for assessment and grading in 2020](#)

Ref: Ofqual/20/6612
PDF, 669KB, 75 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology: [Request an accessible format.](#)



[Consultation summary - exceptional arrangements for assessment and grading in 2020](#)

Ref: Ofqual/20/6612/2
PDF, 367KB, 21 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology: [Request an accessible format.](#)



[VTQ COVID-19 exceptional regulatory framework](#)

Ref: Ofqual/20/6612/1
PDF, 834KB, 32 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology: [Request an accessible format.](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/exceptional-arrangements-for-assessment-and-grading-in-2020>

FEWEEK

IfATE flexible assessment list

Published Friday 24 April

The IfATE published a list of 70 standards given permission for “temporary discretions or flexibilities” agreed with EQA

Webpage for the standard describes the change, such as:

TEAM LEADER / SUPERVISOR

Observation may take place in a simulated environment and will be filmed and submitted to end-point assessment organisation for review
Professional discussion can be completed via video conferencing software.

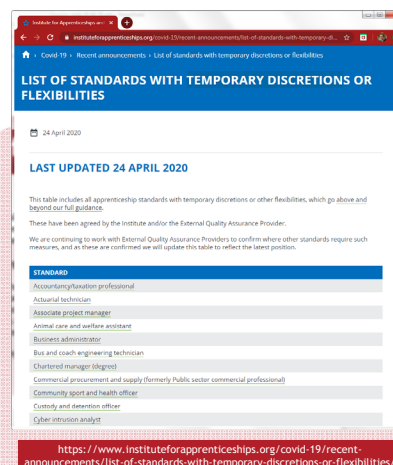
CHARTERED MANAGER (DEGREE)

Interview: Can be conducted remotely subject to identity checks. Can be carried out without sector expert being present.

TEACHER

The lesson observation element of the EPA can be awarded based on assessment of observations during consideration of QTS award. Providers should document clearly how they have concluded that apprentice has passed the observation element (where possible this should be signed by the Head of the employing school) and keep it alongside other EPA documents for audit purposes.

DfE: “These flexibilities have the potential to allow thousands of apprentices to undertake end-point assessment, despite the current operating constraints.”



FEWEEK

Apprenticeship FS suspension

Published Friday 24 April

For level 2 (intermediate) apprenticeships, apprentices must achieve a level 1 in both English and maths functional skills qualifications to complete their apprenticeship. Intermediate apprentices were also required to study towards, and attempt, the functional skills assessments at level 2.

Ofqual have published their approach to assessment for vocational and technical skills in light of COVID-19. This includes confirmation that students due to take functional skills assessments this summer will receive a calculated grade. In light of this guidance, and the fact that scheduled functional skills assessments are not taking place, the rule requiring level 2 apprentices to study towards, and attempt, the functional skills assessments at level 2 is suspended temporarily. This will allow apprentices, employers, providers, and end point assessment organisations, to focus on other key requirements for completion of a level 2 apprenticeship.

Therefore, apprentices who are due to take their end point assessment up until 31 July 2020 should be passed through gateway to sit their EPA without the need to attempt the level 2 functional skills English and maths assessment. Providers should retain evidence if an apprentice did not take the level 2 assessments due to COVID-19. A level 2 apprentice will still require a level 1 functional skills in English and/or maths in order to complete apprenticeship. We will review the position in July 2020 to determine whether the suspension should continue.

Apprentices undertaking a level 3 or higher apprenticeship are still required to hold or achieve an approved level 2 functional skills English and maths qualification, before they can successfully complete their apprenticeship.

So, this funding rule has been suspended

P137.3 Where the apprentice already holds approved level 1 qualifications:

Apprentices must start, continue, or complete take the assessments for a level 2 English and/or maths functional skills level 2 or GCSE. This requirement must be fulfilled before the apprentice takes the end-point assessment or achieves an apprenticeship framework.

“There will be no requirement for those apprentices who are passed through gateway to go back and take the level 2 functional skills test.”

Seems to be a popular decision, but be careful not to claim funding where there was no training

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-apprentices-employers-training-providers-end-point-assessment-organisations-and-external-quality-assurance-pro>

FEWEEK

Emailed signature flexibility

Published Friday 24 April

25. Are the evidence arrangements around obtaining learner signatures being relaxed during COVID-19?

When starting a new apprenticeship, and throughout training, signatures are required to form part of the evidence pack. Examples of where the funding rules ask for evidence of signatures to be retained are:

- the apprenticeship agreement
- the commitment statement
- external audit reports for subcontractors
- evidence linking to additional payments such as additional learning support and the care leavers bursary
- contracts for services
- agreements that an apprentice has passed all gateway requirements

It is expected that where providers already have a digital/electronic signature process, they must continue to utilise their existing processes in accordance with the respective funding rules.

Where a provider has no digital or electronic systems and processes in place to capture a learner or employer signature then, under normal circumstances, a wet signature is required for recruitment and evidence of continuing learning. A wet signature is created when a person physically 'marks' a document.

It is recognised that providers delivering training and/or recruiting learners during the COVID-19 pandemic will experience difficulty in obtaining learner and employer wet signatures. Therefore, where providers do not have systems and processes in place for electronic/digital signatures, during the COVID-19 restrictions **we will allow confirmation/evidence to be obtained through email.**

For the purpose of audit evidence, we expect a record of acknowledgement or adoption of a genuine electronic message or document.

Acceptable alternative evidence includes:

- an email from the learner and/or employer's email address with details of the confirmation and their typed name at the end of the message
- a typed name on an electronic form or document emailed from the learner and/or employer
- a signed scanned document attached to an email from the learner and/or employer
- photo taken on a camera/digital medium of the signed document attached to an email from the learner and/or employer

We are allowing providers to use this type of electronic confirmation during the period of restrictions due to COVID-19, only where no other usable digital or electronic processes exist. **This is not to be used as alternative evidence as part of the provider's business as usual process once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.**

Following the period of COVID-19 restrictions, providers using the above alternative evidence must resume their usual process for obtaining wet signatures on relevant documentation. Providers must ensure that all alternative evidence replacing wet signatures received during the COVID-19 restrictions is genuine and irrefutable, and the evidence is retained for audit purposes.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-apprentices-employers-training-providers-end-point-assessment-organisations-and-external-quality-assurance-pro>

FEWEEK

Extra funds for FE free meals

Published Friday 24 April

The screenshot shows the FEWeek website with a news article titled "Colleges given access to DfE free meal vouchers" by Fraser Whieldon. The article mentions that the government has extended its national food voucher scheme to colleges that are having "practical difficulties" delivering free meals to students during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also notes that colleges will have had to exhaust their 2018/19 and 2019/20 free meals in FE and 16-19 discretionary bursary allocations to be eligible for support.

<https://feweek.co.uk/2020/04/24/colleges-given-access-to-dfe-free-meal-vouchers/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific criteria for free meals in FE

PDF, 80.5KB, 2 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-19) process for submitting business cases for additional funding to support students requiring free meals in FE, and for applying to the national voucher scheme

ODT, 41.6KB

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-for-2019-to-2020>

FEWEEK

FE WEEK

Final Q&A

Have a question?

Please use the comment box to submit your question. Nick will review all incoming questions and try to ask as many as possible during the session.

Expert webinars

- > 5 May 14:00 - 16:30 - Using DSATs to your advantage
- > 11 May - 14:00 - 16:30 - 16-18 achievement rates
- > 12 May - 14:00 - 16:30 - AEB achievement rates
- > 13 May - 14:00 - 16:30 - Apprenticeship achievement rates

Visit www.lsect.com to find out more and register