# 2023-24 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data checking tool

## 2025 National Student Survey (NSS) target list technical document

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# Contents

# Summary

1. This document describes outputs generated by the 2023-24 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data checking tool and the method used to generate the target list of students to be included in the 2025 National Student Survey (NSS). **Providers should check the target list for its accuracy and will need to use this to provide contact details to Ipsos for students in the NSS target list** (NSSEXCL = 0). This provisional target list will be reconciled with final ILR data and any discrepancies raised with relevant providers as part of the NSS Additions and Removals process. Throughout the document, fields taken or derived from the ILR are shown in capitals using the names given in Tables 2 and 3 respectively.

2. The 2025 NSS target list output should be used by further education providers to review their 2025 NSS target list and to verify and correct their 2023-24 individualised student data before signing off the final data with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

3. The 2025 NSS target list output is formed of two files. These are:

    a. Workbook 'NSS23_ DCT_XXXXXXXX.xlsx' (where XXXXXXXX is the UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) for the provider).

    b. Individualised file 'NSS23_DCT_XXXXXXXX_IND.csv'.

    Details of how to use individualised files are given on the Office for Students (OfS) website.[1]

4. These files can be accessed from the '2023-24 Data checking tool' area of the OfS portal. Access details will be sent to the appropriate contacts at providers when the data checking tool is available.

5. This document is aimed at readers with in-depth knowledge of the data. Readers are advised to have a copy of the following to hand when using this document:

    a. 'Specification of the individualised learner record for 2021-22'[2]

    b. 'Specification of the individualised learner record for 2022-23'[3]

    c. 'Specification of the individualised learner record for 2023-24'[4]

6. We will record any changes or corrections to the algorithms in this document on our website.[5]

7. Data relating to NSS target lists will be accessed by OfS staff.

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[1] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/supplying-data/working-with-individualised-files/.

[2] See https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/#tab2021-to-2022.

[3] See https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/#tab2022-to-2023.

[4] See https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/#tab2023-to-2024.

[5] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tool/2023-24-ilr-data-checking-tool/ under 'Updates'.

## Changes from the 2024 NSS target list output of the 2022-23 ILR data checking tool

8.  This section describes any changes to the algorithms since the equivalent were published for the 2022-23 ILR data checking tool (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tool/documentation-archive/ under '2022-23').

9.  Any deletions are shown with a ~~strikethrough~~. Any other changes are shown as **bold and underlined**.

### CONTPREF_RUI1, CONTPREF_RUI2

10. These fields have been added to record the "Restricted use indicator" contact preference codes.

### NSSEXCL32

11. The following changes have been made to account for changes to the possible values of OFSAWARD and OFSQAIM.

| Definition |
|---|
| OFSFUNDAIM = 0 or <br> (OFSQAIM = CERTED, DET, DTLLS and <br>     OFSAWARD = ~~BLANK,~~ FOUDEG, HN, **MISSING,** OTHER) or <br> OFSQAIM = CET, CTTLS, FE, HIGHCERT, HIGHER, MASTER, **NA,** ~~OTHER,~~ **OTHHE_CC,** OTHHE_Q, **OTHHE_U,** OTHL4_CC, OTHL4_Q, OTHL4_U, OTHL5_CC, OTHL5_Q, OTHL5_U, OTHL6_CC, OTHL6_Q, OTHL6_U, OTHL7_CC, OTHL7_Q, **OTHL7_U, OTHL8_CC, OTHL8_Q, OTHL8_U,** PGCE, PGCERT, PGDIP, ~~PGOTHER,~~ **PHD,** PTLLS |

### NSSEXCL256

12. NSSEXCL256 has been derived using CONTPREF_RUI1 and CONTPREF_RUI2 to indicate whether a student should not be contacted because they have died or are seriously ill.

## 2025 NSS target list workbook

13. The Excel workbook (NSS23_ DCT_XXXXXXXX.xlsx) contains the following worksheets:

**Table 1: Worksheets in the 2025 NSS target list workbook**

| Worksheet | Title |
|---|---|
| Coversheet | Summary of students in the NSS target list for current and previous year |
| NSS | Students to be included on the 2025 NSS target list. This forms the provisional target list and contact details template for the provider submission to Ipsos |
| Exclusion | Summary of the exclusion reasons for those students not included in the 2025 NSS target list |

# 2025 NSS target list individualised file

14. When working through this document it is necessary to use the individualised file 'NSS23_DCT_XXXXXXXX_IND.csv'. The individualised file contains values of all the fields used to generate the workbook 'NSS23_DCT_XXXXXXXX.xlsx'. These show the assignment of records to categories by our algorithms and, where applicable, provide the data that has been used to determine their exclusion from the relevant population. Please note the ILR is restricted to learning aims described as recognised higher education before generating the target list. Recognised higher education, for OfS funding purposes, is defined in Annex B of the 'Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 2023-24 (HESES23)' publication.[6]

15. The individualised file contains one record per learning outcome per learner in the latest academic year each with a unique combination of UKPRN, LEARNREFNUMBER and AIMSEQNUMBER.

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[6] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses23/.

# ILR fields used to create the NSS target list

16. The ILR fields used to create the NSS target list are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2: List of ILR fields used to create the NSS target list**

| Name | Description |
|---|---|
| AIMSEQNUMBER† | Learning aim sequence number |
| CONTPREFCODE | Contact preference code |
| CONTPREFTYPE | Contact preference type |
| DATEOFBIRTH | Learner date of birth |
| LEARNACTENDDATE | Learning actual end date |
| LEARNAIMREF† | Learning aim reference |
| LEARNPLANENDDATE | Learning planned end date |
| LEARNREFNUMBER | Learner reference number |
| LEARNSTARTDATE | Learning start date |
| MODESTUD | Mode applicable to Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey (HESES) |
| PROGTYPE | Programme type |
| PROVSPECDELMON† | Provider-specified learning aim data |
| PROVSPECDELMONOCCUR† | The occurrence of the provider-specified learning aim data |
| PROVSPECLEARNMON† | Provider-specified learner data |
| PROVSPECLEARNMONOCCUR† | The occurrence of the provider-specified learner data |
| STULOAD | Learner full-time equivalence (FTE) |
| UKPRN | UK provider reference number |
| ULN† | Unique learner number |
| YEARSTU | Year of programme of study |

\* The individualised file 'NSS23_DCT_XXXXXXXX_IND.csv', downloadable from the OfS portal (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/supplying-data/submitting-data-through-the-ofs-portal/).

† These fields are not used to generate the target list but are included in the individualised file to allow easy identification of students.

# Description of derived fields

17. The derived fields used to create the NSS target list are listed in Table 3.

**Table 3: List of derived fields used to create the NSS target list**

| Field name | Description | Paragraph |
|---|---|---|
| AGE31JUL | Learner age on 31 July 2024 | 21 |
| CONTPREF_RUI1 CONTPREF_RUI2 | "Restricted use indicator" contact preference codes | 26 |
| NSSEXCL | Reason(s) for exclusion from the 2025 NSS target list | 35 |
| NSSEXCL2 – NSSEXCL256 | Reason(s) for a student's exclusion | 27-34 |
| NSSEXPEND | Expected end date | 20 |
| NSSHEALTHCARE | Eligibility for NSS healthcare placement questions | 22 |
| NSSTOTFTE | Total FTE for course | 25 |
| NSSYEARADJ | Year adjustment for a student who has been dormant or has repeated year(s) of study | 19 |
| OFSAWARD† | Type of awarding powers | NA |
| OFSFUNDAIM† | Recognition of learning aim for OfS funding purposes†† | NA |
| OFSQAIM† | Broad category of the learning aim | NA |
| PROVSPECDELMON_A PROVSPECDELMON_B PROVSPECDELMON_C PROVSPECDELMON_D | Provider-specified learning aim data | 38 |
| PROVSPECLEARNMON_A PROVSPECLEARNMON_B | Provider-specified learner data | 37 |
| STULOAD21 | 2021-22 learner FTE | 23 |
| STULOAD22 | 2022-23 learner FTE | 24 |

\* The individualised file 'NSS23_DCT_XXXXXXXX_IND.csv', downloadable from the OfS portal (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/supplying-data/submitting-data-through-the-ofs-portal/).

† For a full definition of this field please refer to '2023-24 ILR Classifying learning aims technical document' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tool/2023-24-ilr-data-checking-tool/ under 'Documentation').

†† See paragraphs 1-3 of Annex B of 'Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 2023-24 (HESES23)' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses23/).

## Linking between years

18. We link between years to determine the FTE for the student on a single programme of study in the previous two years. A programme of study is linked over years by UKPRN, LEARNREFNUMBER, and LEARNAIMREF; only student FTE is taken from previous years' ILR data. If we cannot link using a unique combination of these fields then no link is made. All amendments approved up to 23 August 2024 will be included in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 data to which the uploaded data is linked.

## NSSYEARADJ

19. This field evaluates a year adjustment which determines whether the student has been dormant or repeated a year(s) of study.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| ((31 July 2024 – LEARNSTARTDATE)† – YEARSTU) or 0, whichever is greater | Year adjustment | YEARSTU ≠ 99, BLANK |
| 0 | Otherwise | Otherwise |

† Rounded up to the nearest year.

## NSSEXPEND

20. This field evaluates an expected end date for the student, adjusting for years where they were dormant or have repeated a year(s) of study. This is calculated as NSSEXPEND = LEARNPLANENDDATE + NSSYEARADJ years.

## AGE31JUL

21. This field evaluates the age of the student on 31 July 2024, to ensure that all students in the 2025 NSS population are at least 16 years of age in their final year of study.

## NSSHEALTHCARE

22. This field indicates whether the student is studying on a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course, or a social work course approved by Social Work England.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Eligible for NSS healthcare placement questions | Student is either studying on a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course, as recorded in Table 6a (Health full-time) or Table 6c (Health part-time) of the HESES23 return, or |

| | | is studying on a social work course approved by Social Work England. |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | Otherwise | Otherwise |

## STULOAD21

23. This field contains the learner FTE (STULOAD) for 2021-22. This is obtained using the linking method described in paragraph 18.

## STULOAD22

24. This field contains the learner FTE (STULOAD) for 2022-23. This is obtained using the linking method described in paragraph 18.

## NSSTOTFTE

25. We use three years of data to estimate the total FTE for four years of the programme of study. This is calculated as
NSSTOTFTE = STULOAD21 + STULOAD22 + STULOAD + STULOAD. For the fourth year we assume that it is the same as the FTE returned on the 2023-24 ILR. If STULOAD is missing, then NSSTOTFTE will be set to 0.

## CONTPREF_RUI1, CONTPREF_RUI2

26. These fields contain the values of CONTPREFCODE where CONTPREFTYPE = RUI. If two values were returned for an individual, CONTPREF_RUI2 contains the second.

## NSSEXCL2

27. This field indicates whether the student was inactive during the academic year.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Student inactive | STULOAD = 0, BLANK |
| 0 | Otherwise | Otherwise |

## NSSEXCL4

28. This field indicates whether the student is expected to complete during the survey year.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Student left before survey year or expected end date not in survey year | LEARNACTENDDATE ≤ 31 January 2025 or NSSEXPEND ≤ 31 January 2025 or NSSEXPEND ≥ 1 February 2026 |
| 0 | Otherwise | Otherwise |

## NSSEXCL8

29. This field indicates whether the student is on a short course.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Student on short course | LEARNSTARTDATE ≥ 1 August 2024 or (LEARNPLANENDDATE – LEARNSTARTDATE) ≤ 365 or (MODESTUD = 3 and NSSTOTFTE ≤ 100) or OFSQAIM = FDBC, HNC |
| 0 | Otherwise | Otherwise |

## NSSEXCL16

30. This field indicates whether the student was under 16 years of age on 31 July 2024.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Student under 16 years of age on 31 July 2024 | AGE31JUL < 16 |
| 0 | Otherwise | Otherwise |

## NSSEXCL32

31. This field indicates whether the student is on a programme of study that does not lead to an NSS eligible undergraduate qualification.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Programmes of study that do not lead to an NSS eligible undergraduate qualification | OFSFUNDAIM = 0 or<br><br>(OFSQAIM = CERTED, DET, DTLLS and OFSAWARD = FOUDEG, HN, MISSING, OTHER) or<br><br>OFSQAIM = CET, CTTLS, FE, HIGHCERT, HIGHER, MASTER, NA, OTHHE_CC, OTHHE_Q, OTHHE_U, OTHL4_CC, OTHL4_Q, OTHL4_U, OTHL5_CC, OTHL5_Q, OTHL5_U, OTHL6_CC, OTHL6_Q, OTHL6_U, OTHL7_CC, OTHL7_Q, OTHL7_U, OTHL8_CC, OTHL8_Q, OTHL8_U, PGCE, PGCERT, PGDIP, PHD, PTLLS |
| 0 | Otherwise | Otherwise |

## NSSEXCL64

32. This field indicates whether the student was targeted for surveying in the previous NSS year.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Student was targeted for surveying in the 2024 NSS | UKPRN and LEARNREFNUMBER of student appear in the previous year's NSS list |
| 0 | Otherwise | Otherwise |

## NSSEXCL128

33. Student has another record eligible for inclusion in the NSS. Where there is more than one record for a given LEARNREFNUMBER where NSSEXCL2 = 0 and NSSEXCL4 = 0 and NSSEXCL8 = 0 and NSSEXCL16 = 0 and NSSEXCL32 = 0 and NSSEXCL64 = 0 then only one is included in the NSS target population. This selected record will have NSSEXCL128 = 0 and all others NSSEXCL128 = 1. We select records based on whether they are healthcare students (NSSHEALTHCARE = 1), then by highest qualification, earliest start date, highest total FTE and finally lowest LEARNAIMREF.

## NSSEXCL256

34. This field indicates that the student is not to be contacted because they have died or are seriously ill.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Student is not to be contacted – student has died or is seriously ill | CONTPREF_RUI1 = 3, 4, 5 or<br>CONTPREF_RUI2 = 3, 4, 5 |
| 0 | Otherwise | Otherwise |

## NSSEXCL

35. This field indicates whether the student is included in the 2025 NSS population. For students excluded from the population NSSEXCL contains the sum of all applicable values from the table below. Students included in the target list have NSSEXCL = 0.

| Value | Description | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | Student inactive | NSSEXCL2 = 1 |
| 4 | Expected end date is not in survey year | NSSEXCL4 = 1 |
| 8 | Student on a short course | NSSEXCL8 = 1 |
| 16 | Student under 16 years of age on 31 July 2024 | NSSEXCL16 = 1 |
| 32 | Student on a programme that does not lead to an eligible undergraduate qualification | NSSEXCL32 = 1 |
| 64 | Student appeared on the target list for the 2024 NSS | NSSEXCL64 = 1 |
| 128 | Student has another record eligible for inclusion in the NSS | NSSEXCL128 = 1 |
| 256 | Student is not to be contacted because they have died or are seriously ill | NSSEXCL256 = 1 |

36. NSSEXCL is calculated as (2 x NSSEXCL2) + (4 x NSSEXCL4) + (8 x NSSEXCL8) + (16 x NSSEXCL16) + (32 x NSSEXCL32) + (64 x NSSEXCL64) + (128 x NSSEXCL128) + (256 x NSSEXCL256). The reason(s) which contribute to the exclusion of a student from the NSS population can therefore be calculated. For example, if NSSEXCL = 40, by subtracting figures from the above table and starting at the bottom, we see that the student is on a programme that does not lead to an eligible undergraduate qualification (NSSEXCL32 = 1) and is on a short course (NSSEXCL8 = 1).

## PROVSPECLEARNMON_A, PROVSPECLEARNMON_B

37. These fields contain the value of PROVSPECLEARNMON where PROVSPECLEARNMONOCCUR = A or B respectively.

## PROVSPECDELMON_A, PROVSPECDELMON_B, PROVSPECDELMON_C, PROVSPECDELMON_D

38. These fields contain the value of PROVSPECDELMON where PROVSPECDELMONOCCUR = A, B, C or D respectively.