

Office for  
Students



# **2021-22 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data checking tool**

**2023 National Student Survey (NSS)  
target list technical document**

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# Summary

1. This document describes outputs generated by the 2021-22 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data checking tool and the method used to generate the target list of students to be included in the 2023 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 MORI 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 NSS21 comparison output should be used by further education providers to review their NSS23 target list and to verify and correct their 2021-22 individualised student data before signing off the final data with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
3. The NSS21 comparison is formed of two files. These are:
  - i. NSS21 comparison workbook 'NSS21\_DCT\_XXXXXXXX.xlsx' (where XXXXXXXX is the UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) for the provider).
  - ii. NSS21 comparison individualised file 'NSS21\_DCT\_XXXXXXXX\_IND.csv'.

Details of how to use individualised files are given on the Office for Students (OfS) website<sup>1</sup>.

4. These files can be accessed from the '2021-22 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:
  - i. 'Specification of the individualised learner record for 2019-20'<sup>2</sup>
  - ii. 'Specification of the individualised learner record for 2020-21'<sup>3</sup>
  - iii. 'Specification of the individualised learner record for 2021-22'<sup>4</sup>
6. We will record any changes or corrections to the algorithms in this document on our website<sup>5</sup>.
7. Data relating to NSS target lists will be accessed by OfS staff.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/supplying-data/working-with-individualised-files/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/supplying-data/working-with-individualised-files/).

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ilr-specification-validation-rules-and-appendices-2019-to-2020>.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/#-2020-to-2021>.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/#-2021-to-2022>.

<sup>5</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tool/2021-22-ilr-data-checking-tool/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tool/2021-22-ilr-data-checking-tool/) under 'Updates'.

## Changes from the 2020-21 ILR NSS21 output

8. There have been the following changes in the algorithm used to produce the NSS output since the 2020-21 ILR data checking tool:
- a. The field NUMHUS is no longer in use by OfS. As such,
    - i. the DCT individualised file output will no longer contain this field.
    - ii. linking between years will be achieved solely using UKPRN, LEARNREFNUMBER and LEARNAIMREF (paragraph 14)
    - iii. Students who were in the previous year's NSS population will be identified using only UKPRN and LEARNREFNUMBER (paragraph 27)
  - b. The apprenticeship flag will no longer be derived as questions aimed specifically at apprentices are no longer asked in the NSS.
  - c. The way that healthcare students are captured for the NSS healthcare placement questions has been revised. These students were previously identified using the NHS funding status of the student (MSTUFEE = 31) however it has been agreed that this is no longer a valid approach as it does not capture the full cohort of eligible students. For ILR providers, the pre-registration nursing, midwifery, and allied health profession students eligible to answer these placement questions will now be identified using information submitted by providers as part of the HES21 return in Tables 6a, 6b and 6c<sup>6</sup> and the Courses table<sup>7</sup>.

## NSS21 workbook

9. The NSS21 workbook is the Excel workbook NSS21\_ DCT\_XXXXXXXX.xlsx which contains the following worksheets:

**Table 1: Worksheets in the NSS21 workbook**

Worksheet*	Title
Coversheet	Summary of students in the NSS target list for current and previous year
NSS	Students to be included on the NSS23 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 NSS23 target list

\* This worksheet reference corresponds to the spreadsheet tabs.

<sup>6</sup> See Annex L: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses21/>.

<sup>7</sup> See page 30: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/64770309-674f-43db-972a-33364399aca4/completing-the-heses21-workbook-2021.pdf>.

## ILR individualised file

10. When working through this document it is necessary to use the individualised file 'NSS21DCT\_XXXXXXXXX\_IND.csv'. The individualised file contains values of all the fields used to generate the comparison workbook 'NSS21\_DCT\_XXXXXXXXX.csv'. 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 2021-22 (HESES21) publication<sup>8</sup>.
11. 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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<sup>8</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses21/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses21/).

## ILR fields used to create the NSS target list

12. The ILR fields used to generate the NSS target list are listed in Table 2.

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

Name	Description	Dataset	Column in individualised file*
AIMSEQNUMBER†	Learning aim dataset sequence	ILR	C
DATEOFBIRTH	Learner date of birth	ILR	AI
LEARNACTENDDATE	Learning actual end date	ILR	AC
LEARNAIMREF†	Learning aim reference	ILR	K
LEARNPLANENDDATE	Learning planned end date	ILR	AB
LEARNREFNUMBER	Learner reference number	ILR	B
LEARNSTARTDATE	Learning start date	ILR	AA
MODESTUD	Mode applicable to Higher Education in Further Education Students survey (HEIFES)	ILR	AG
PROGTYPE	Programme type	ILR	AK
PROVSPECDELMON†	Provider-specified learning aim data	ILR	See Table 3
PROVSPECDELMONOCUR†	The occurrence of provider specified learning aim data	ILR	See Table 3
PROVSPECLEARNMON†	Provider-specified learner data	ILR	See Table 3
PROVSPECLEARNMONOCUR†	The occurrence of provider specified learner data	ILR	See Table 3
STULOAD	Learner full-time equivalence (FTE)	ILR	Z
UKPRN	UK provider reference number	ILR	A
ULN†	Unique learner number	ILR	D
YEARSTU	Year of programme of study	ILR	AF

\* The individualised file NSS21\_DCT\_XXXXXXX\_IND.csv, downloadable from the OfS portal ([www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/supplying-data/submitting-data-through-the-ofs-portal/](http://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

13. The derived fields used to generate the NSS target list are listed in Table 3.

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

Field name	Description	Paragraph	Column in individualised file*
NSSEXPEND	Expected end date	16	AD
OFSAWARD <sup>†</sup>	Indicates the type of awarding powers held by the awarding body of a qualification.	26	T
STULOAD19	2019-20 learner FTE	19	Y
STULOAD20	2020-21 learner FTE	20	Z
AGE31JUL	Evaluates learner age as of 31 July 2022	17	AJ
NSSEXCL	Reason for exclusion from 2023 NSS target list	29-30	L
NSSEXCL1 – NSSEXCL128	Reason(s) for a student's exclusion	22-28	M-S
NSSHealthcare	Indicates whether the student is studying a pre-registration Nursing, Midwifery or Allied Health course.	18	AH
OFSSQAIM <sup>†</sup>	Allocates aims to broad categories of higher education	25, 26	U
OFSFUNDAIM <sup>†</sup>	Indicates whether a learning aim meets the definition of recognised higher education for OfS funding purposes <sup>††</sup>	26	V
PROVSPECLEARNMON_A PROVSPECLEARNMON_B	Provider-specified learner data	31	E-F
PROVSPECDELMON_A PROVSPECDELMON_B PROVSPECDELMON_C PROVSPECDELMON_D	Provider-specified learning aim data	32	G-J
NSSTOTFTE	Total FTE for course	21	W
NSSYEARADJ	This field evaluates a year adjustment which determines whether the	15	AE

Field name	Description	Paragraph	Column in individualised file*
	student has been dormant or repeated a year(s) of study		

\* The individualised file NSS21\_DCT\_FXXXXXXXXX\_IND.csv, downloadable from the OfS portal (see [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/supplying-data/submitted-data-through-the-ofs-portal/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/supplying-data/submitted-data-through-the-ofs-portal/)).

† For a full definition of this field please refer to ‘2021-22 ILR data checking tool: Classifying learning aims technical document’ ([www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tool/2021-22-ilr-data-checking-tool/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tool/2021-22-ilr-data-checking-tool/) under ‘Documentation’).

†† See paragraphs 1-2 of Annex B of ‘Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 2021-22 (HESES21)’ (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses21/>).

### Linking between years

14. 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.



## NSSYEARADJ

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

Value	Description	Definition
$(31 \text{ July } 2022 - \text{LEARNSTARTDATE})^{\dagger} - \text{YEARSTU}$	Year adjustment	$\text{YEARSTU} \neq 99, \text{ BLANK}$
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

<sup>†</sup> Rounded up to the nearest year.

## NSSEXPEND (Column AD)

16. 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  $\text{NSSEXPEND} = \text{LEARNPLANENDDATE} + \text{NSSYEARADJ}$  years.

## AGE31JUL (Column AJ)

17. This field has been added to ensure that all students in the NSS 2023 population are at least 16 years of age in their final year of study. It evaluates the age of the student on the 31 July 2022.

## NSSHealthcare (Column AH)

18. This field indicates whether the student is studying on a pre-registration nursing, midwifery, and allied health profession course .

Value	Description	Definition
1	Eligible for NSS healthcare placement questions	Student is studying on a course recorded as being a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession in tables 6a (Health full-time), 6b (Health sandwich) and 6c (Health part-time) of the HESES21 return.
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

### **STULOAD19 (Column Y)**

19. This field contains the learner FTE (STULOAD) for 2019-20. This is obtained using the linking method described in paragraph 14.

### **STULOAD20 (Column Z)**

20. This field contains the learner FTE (STULOAD) for 2020-21. This is obtained using the linking method described in paragraph 14.

### **NSSTOTFTE (Column X)**

21. We use three years' data to estimate the total FTE for four years of the programme of study. This is calculated as

$NSSTOTFTE = STULOAD19 + STULOAD20 + STULOAD + STULOAD$ . For the fourth year we assume the FTE returned on the 2021-22 ILR.

### **NSSEXCL1 (Column M)**

22. This field indicates whether a student was excluded because they were under 16 years of age on 31 July 2022.

Value	Description	Definition
1	Student under 16 years of age on 31 July 2022	AGE31JUL < 16
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

### **NSSEXCL2 (Column N)**

23. This field indicates whether the student was excluded because they were inactive during the academic year.

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

### **NSSEXCL4 (Column O)**

24. This field indicates whether a 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 2023 or NSSEXPEND ≤ 31 January 2023 or NSSEXPEND ≥ 1 February 2024
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

### NSSEXCL8 (Column P)

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

Value	Description	Definition
1	Student on short course	LEARNSTARTDATE ≥ 1 August 2022 or (LEARNPLANENDDATE – LEARNSTARTDATE) ≤ 365 or (MODESTUD = 3, 99 and NSSTOTFTE ≤ 100) or OFSQAIM = HNC, FDBC
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

### NSSEXCL32 (Column Q)

26. 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 (OFSQAIM = DTLLS, CERTED, DET and OFSAWARD = FOUDEG, HN, OTHER, BLANK) or OFSQAIM = CET, CTTLS, FE, HIGHCERT, PTTLS, OTHHE_Q, OTHL4_CC, OTHL4_Q, OTHL4_U, OTHL5_CC, OTHL5_Q, OTHL5_U, OTHL6_CC, OTHL6_Q, OTHL6_U, OTHL7_CC, OTHL7_Q
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

### NSSEXCL64 (Column R)

27. Student was targeted for surveying in the previous NSS year.

Value	Description	Definition
1	Student was targeted for surveying in the 2022 NSS	UKPRN and LEARNREFNUMBER of student appear in the previous year's NSS list
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

### NSSEXCL128 (Column S)

28. Student has another record eligible for inclusion in the NSS. Where there is more than one record for a given LEARNREFNUMBER where NSSEXCL1 = 0 and NSSEXCL2 = 0 and NSSEXCL4 = 0 and NSSEXCL8 = 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 LEARNREFNUMBER.

## NSSEXCL (Column L)

29. This field indicates whether the student is included in the 2023 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
1	Student under 16 years of age on 31 July 2022	NSSEXCL1 = 1
2	Student inactive	NSSEXCL2 = 1
4	Expected end date is not in survey year	NSSEXCL4 = 1
8	Student on a short course	NSSEXCL8 = 1
32	Student on a programme that does not lead to an undergraduate qualification	NSSEXCL32 = 1
64	Student appeared on the target list for the 2022 NSS	NSSEXCL64 = 1
128	Student has another record eligible for inclusion in the NSS	NSSEXCL128 = 1

30. NSSEXCL is calculated as  $(1 \times \text{NSSEXCL1}) + (2 \times \text{NSSEXCL2}) + (4 \times \text{NSSEXCL4}) + (8 \times \text{NSSEXCL8}) + (32 \times \text{NSSEXCL32}) + (64 \times \text{NSSEXCL64}) + (128 \times \text{NSSEXCL128})$ . 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 undergraduate qualification (NSSEXCL32 = 1) and is on a short course (NSSEXCL8 = 1).

## PROVSPECLEARNMON\_A, PROVSPECLEARNMON\_B (Columns E-F)

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

## PROVSPECDELMON\_A, PROVSPECDELMON\_B, PROVSPECDELMON\_C, PROVSPECDELMON\_D (Columns G-J)

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



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