

# **2024-25 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data checking tool**

**2026 National Student Survey (NSS) target  
list technical document**

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# Summary

1. This document describes outputs generated by the 2024-25 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data checking tool and the method used to generate the target list of students to be included in the 2026 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 2026 NSS target list output should be used by further education providers to review their 2026 NSS target list and to verify and correct their 2024-25 individualised student data before signing off the final data with the Department for Education (formerly the Education and Skills Funding Agency, ESFA).
3. The 2026 NSS target list output is formed of two files. These are:
  - a. Workbook 'NSS24\_DCT\_XXXXXXXX.xlsx' (where XXXXXXXX is the UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) for the provider).
  - b. Individualised file 'NSS24\_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 '2024-25 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 2022-23'.<sup>2</sup>
  - b. 'Specification of the individualised learner record for 2023-24'.<sup>3</sup>
  - c. 'Specification of the individualised learner record for 2024-25'.<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 [Working with individualised files - Office for Students](#).

<sup>2</sup> See tab 2022-23, [Individualised Learner Record \(ILR\) technical documents, guidance and requirements](#)

<sup>3</sup> See tab 2023-24, [Individualised Learner Record \(ILR\) technical documents, guidance and requirements](#).

<sup>4</sup> See tab 2024-25, [Individualised Learner Record \(ILR\) technical documents, guidance and requirements](#)

<sup>5</sup> See [2024-25 ILR data checking tool - Office for Students](#).

## Changes from the 2025 NSS target list output of the 2023-24 ILR data checking tool

8. This section describes changes to the algorithms since the equivalent were published for the 2023-24 ILR data checking tool ([Data checking tool documentation archive - Office for Students](#), under '2023-24').

### NSSEXCL8

9. MODESTUD 99 has been added to the third clause of the algorithm: (MODESTUD = 3, **99** and NSSTOTFTE ≤ 100).

## 2026 NSS target list workbook

10. The Excel workbook (NSS24\_DCT\_XXXXXXX.xlsx) contains the following worksheets:

**Table 1: Worksheets in the 2026 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 2026 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 2026 NSS target list

## 2026 NSS target list individualised file

11. When working through this document it is necessary to use the individualised file 'NSS24\_DCT\_XXXXXXX\_IND.csv'. The individualised file contains values of all the fields used to generate the workbook 'NSS24\_DCT\_XXXXXXX.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 2024-25 (HESES24)' publication.<sup>6</sup>
12. 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>6</sup> See [Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 2024-25 - Office for Students](#).

# ILR fields used to create the NSS target list

13. 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 <sup>†</sup>	Learning aim sequence number
CONTPREFCODE	Contact preference code
CONTPREFTYPE	Contact preference type
DATEOFBIRTH	Learner date of birth
LEARNACTENDDATE	Learning actual end date
LEARNAIMREF <sup>†</sup>	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 <sup>†</sup>	Provider-specified learning aim data
PROVSPECDELMONOCUR <sup>†</sup>	The occurrence of the provider-specified learning aim data
PROVSPECLEARNMON <sup>†</sup>	Provider-specified learner data
PROVSPECLEARNMONOCUR <sup>†</sup>	The occurrence of the provider-specified learner data
SEX <sup>†</sup>	Sex of the learner
STULOAD	Learner full-time equivalence (FTE)
UKPRN	UK provider reference number
ULN <sup>†</sup>	Unique learner number
YEARSTU	Year of programme of study

\* The individualised file 'NSS24\_DCT\_XXXXXXX\_IND.csv', downloadable from the OfS portal ([Submitting data through the OfS portal - Office for Students](#)).

<sup>†</sup> 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

14. 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 2025	18
CONTPREF_RUI1 CONTPREF_RUI2	“Restricted use indicator” contact preference codes	23
NSSEXCL	Reason(s) for exclusion from the 2026 NSS target list	32
NSSEXCL2 – NSSEXCL256	Reason(s) for a student’s exclusion	24-31
NSSEXPEND	Expected end date	17
NSSHEALTHCARE	Eligibility for NSS healthcare placement questions	19
NSSTOTFTE	Total FTE for course	22
NSSYEARADJ	Year adjustment for a student who has been dormant or has repeated year(s) of study	16
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	35
PROVSPECLEARNMON_A PROVSPECLEARNMON_B	Provider-specified learner data	34
STULOAD22	2022-23 learner FTE	20
STULOAD23	2023-24 learner FTE	21

\* The individualised file ‘NSS24\_DCT\_XXXXXXX\_IND.csv’, downloadable from the OfS portal ([Submitting data through the OfS portal - Office for Students](#)).

† For a full definition of this field please refer to ‘2023-24 ILR data checking tool: Classifying learning aims technical document’ ([Data checking tool documentation archive - Office for Students](#)). The field has been derived as described in the document published for the 2023-24 data checking tool. Information on any changes to the definition of the fields will be published by 1 October 2025.

†† See paragraphs 1-3 of Annex B of ‘Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 2024-25 (HESES24)’ ([Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 2024-25 - Office for Students](#)).

## Linking between years

15. 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 approved amendments will be included in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 data to which the uploaded data is linked.

## NSSYEARADJ

16. 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 2025 – LEARNSTARTDATE) <sup>†</sup> – YEARSTU) or 0, whichever is greater	Year adjustment	YEARSTU ≠ 99, BLANK
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

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

## NSSEXPEND

17. 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

18. This field evaluates the age of the student on 31 July 2025, to ensure that all students in the 2026 NSS population are at least 16 years of age in their final year of study.

## NSSHEALTHCARE

19. 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 HESES24 return, or is studying on a social work course approved by Social Work England.
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

## STULOAD22

20. This field contains the learner FTE (STULOAD) for 2022-23. This is obtained using the linking method described in paragraph 15.

## STULOAD23

21. This field contains the learner FTE (STULOAD) for 2023-24. This is obtained using the linking method described in paragraph 15.

## NSSTOTFTE

22. We use three years of data to estimate the total FTE for four years of the programme of study. This is calculated as  $NSSTOTFTE = STULOAD22 + STULOAD23 + STULOAD + STULOAD$ . For the fourth year we assume that it is the same as the FTE returned on the 2024-25 ILR. If STULOAD is missing, then NSSTOTFTE will be set to 0.

## CONTPREF\_RUI1, CONTPREF\_RUI2

23. These fields contain the values of CONTPREFCODE where CONTPREFTYPE = RUI. If two values were returned for an individual, CONTPREF\_RUI2 contains the second.

## NSSEXCL2

24. 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

25. 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	$LEARNACTENDDATE \leq 31 \text{ January } 2026$ or $NSSEXPEND \leq 31 \text{ January } 2026$ or $NSSEXPEND \geq 1 \text{ February } 2027$
0	Otherwise	Otherwise



## NSSEXCL8

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

Value	Description	Definition
1	Student on short course	LEARNSTARTDATE $\geq$ 1 August 2025 or (LEARNPLANENDDATE – LEARNSTARTDATE) $\leq$ 365 or (MODESTUD = 3, 99 and NSSTOTFTE $\leq$ 100) or OFSQAIM = FDBC, HNC
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

## NSSEXCL16

27. This field indicates whether the student was under 16 years of age on 31 July 2025.

Value	Description	Definition
1	Student under 16 years of age on 31 July 2025	AGE31JUL < 16
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

## NSSEXCL32

28. 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 = CERTED, DET, DTLLS and OFSAWARD = FOUDEG, HN, MISSING, OTHER) or OFSQAIM = CET, CTLLS, 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

29. 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 2025 NSS	UKPRN and LEARNREFNUMBER of student appear in the previous year's NSS list
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

## NSSEXCL128

30. 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 LEARNREF.

## NSSEXCL256

31. 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 CONTPREF_RUI2 = 3, 4, 5
0	Otherwise	Otherwise

## NSSEXCL

32. This field indicates whether the student is included in the 2026 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 2025	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 2025 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

33. NSSEXCL is calculated as  $(2 \times \text{NSSEXCL2}) + (4 \times \text{NSSEXCL4}) + (8 \times \text{NSSEXCL8}) + (16 \times \text{NSSEXCL16}) + (32 \times \text{NSSEXCL32}) + (64 \times \text{NSSEXCL64}) + (128 \times \text{NSSEXCL128}) + (256 \times \text{NSSEXCL256})$ . 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**

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

## **PROVSPECDELMON\_A, PROVSPECDELMON\_B, PROVSPECDELMON\_C, PROVSPECDELMON\_D**

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



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