

# Medr

Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil  
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

## Post-16 Funding Framework

This version of the specification is applicable  
for the 2026/27 Academic Year

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg |  
This document is also available in Welsh  
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## Introduction

This guidance sets out the overarching framework for the funding of post 16 education and training delivered by Local Authority maintained school sixth forms, Further Education institutions, and Adult Community Learning providers. It explains the principles, methodologies, and processes that govern how public funding is allocated, used, and accounted for across the post 16 system. The document is intended to support providers, stakeholders, and partners in understanding how funding decisions are made and how they contribute to wider priorities for learners, communities, and the economy. It also provides information on eligibility for funding regarding learners and provision.

Apprenticeships, Welsh for Adults provision and Higher Education programmes have their own funding arrangements and fall outside the scope of this guide.

This document is designed to be a practical reference for leaders, finance and management of information services teams, curriculum planners, and operational staff. It provides a consistent foundation for decision making, while allowing for adaptation and refinement as policy, learner needs, and labour market demands evolve. Further updates will be issued as required, and providers are encouraged to refer to the latest version to ensure continued compliance with funding arrangements.

To simplify the guidance, the term 'provider' will be used instead of repeated references to Local Authority maintained school sixth forms (LAs), Further Education institutions (FEIs) and Adult Community Learning providers (ACL). The individual provider types will be used where the funding guidance applies to a specific type of organisation. Similarly, the term 'learners' will apply to all learners, students and pupils.

## Planning approach

The framework aims to establish a cohesive strategy for planning throughout the post-16 sectors. It aims to direct decisions regarding the creation of post-16 learning programmes and the distribution of funding, ensuring that all Medr-funded providers effectively serve their communities. Additionally, the planning process will be used to assess learner provision in accordance with Medr's strategic priorities.

Medr's first [Strategic Plan](#), approved by the Welsh Government in 2025, sets out our statutory responsibility to analyse tertiary education provision across Wales. This duty is established in the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act and applies to all providers that Medr regulates and funds. As part of the *Terms and Conditions of Grant*, providers are required to supply information that enables Medr to conduct this analysis effectively.

To fulfil these responsibilities, Medr collects data through the annual Planning Templates. This information enables us to:

- Understand tertiary education delivery by analysing historical, current, and planned provision across the sector.
- Identify gaps and areas of duplication to inform the most efficient use of public funding and to steer it towards the areas where it will add the greatest value.
- Improve responsiveness by aligning provision more closely with learner needs, employer demand, and Wales's future skills priorities.

- Strengthen understanding of learner progression to build a clearer picture of how students move through different parts of the tertiary system.
- Develop a robust planning baseline using both part-time and full-time data, supporting transparent, evidence-based decision making.
- Monitor Welsh-medium provision<sup>1</sup> to better understand current delivery, uptake, and future development needs.

This process ensures that planning across the tertiary system is strategic, coherent, and aligned with the priorities set out in Medr's Strategic Plan – supporting high quality learning opportunities for people across Wales.

## Funding approach

This guidance outlines how Medr allocate resources to providers delivering learning to people aged 16 and above. It ensures that public money is distributed transparently, consistently, and in line with national priorities – supporting high-quality provision across school sixth forms, FE colleges, and adult community learning routes.

### A. Allocations methodology

The approach to funding that is employed to determine mainstream allocations for LAs and FEIs is uniform, comprising two primary elements: Headcount and Average Programme Values.

To inform headcount predictions, the allocations for the LAs have been derived using data from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) for the years 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025. In contrast, the allocations for FEIs have been derived using data from the 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 PLASC censuses, in addition to learner number data from Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) for the academic years 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25.

To determine the average programme value, data from the Post-16 Data Collection (P16DC) for the academic year 2023/24 is used for LAs, while for FEIs, the LLWR data for the academic year 2024/25 academic year is taken into account.

The methodology for allocations also includes funding uplifts to address the additional delivery costs in regions experiencing educational deprivation<sup>2</sup>, areas characterised by sparsity<sup>3</sup>, and for Welsh-medium<sup>4</sup> education. Additional uplifts for a centrally retained allowance, Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS) and Maintenance (FE only) are also taken into account. Through this approach, LAs and FEIs receive block allocations that correspond to a consolidation of each of these funding uplifts.

<sup>1</sup> The education or training delivered, either partially or fully, through the medium of Welsh, including teaching, assessment, and learner support.

<sup>2</sup> Educational deprivation is defined as the lack of support, resources, or opportunities for individuals to engage in learning, and/or to achieve learning outcomes.

<sup>3</sup> Sparsity refers to the low density of learners within a provider's recruitment area, which limits the opportunity for economies of scale. This situation can result in diseconomies of scale and may also limit the curriculum offer.

<sup>4</sup> The Welsh-medium uplift is intended to reflect the increased costs of providing the learning activity through the medium of Welsh. This should not be mistaken for programmes aimed at promoting proficiency in the use of the Welsh language, including courses like Welsh for Adults, GCSEs or GCEs in Welsh.

The principles guiding the application of these uplifts are consistent across both sectors, however, the methodology differs to accommodate the unique characteristics of each sectors.

## **B. Programme funding**

A programme based approach to funding focuses on supporting a package of learning designed to enable learners to progress into further or higher education, or employment.

Programmes are the main vehicle for funding, planning, delivery and monitoring under this framework. Each eligible programme is assigned a specific funding value. Medr uses these values to plan the use of funds and track delivery. The funding values are reviewed and updated regularly to account for changes in delivery models or programme requirements, as well as to promote efficient delivery methods.

Medr collaborates with Regional Skills Partnerships and external providers to shape the configuration of provision and programmes in Wales, as well as to strategise the development of that provision to address both current and emerging needs.

The funding values for full-time programmes are determined by the number of contact hours<sup>5</sup> associated with each programme. The funding model apportions the contact hours for a programme against each of its component parts before applying Subject Area Weights (SAWs) to give the total number of weighted hours for each programme. SAWs are incorporated into the funding model to reflect the varied delivery costs<sup>6</sup> associated with each sector subject area (SSA)<sup>7</sup>. To determine the £value for a programme, an hourly rate is then applied to each weighted hour. This hourly rate incorporates factors for retention<sup>8</sup> and attainment<sup>9</sup>, based on historical delivery patterns within the post-16 sector.

Funding for part-time provision is delivered either through a programme (tier banding) approach or via a uniform hourly rate applicable to each sector subject area. Consistent with the methodology used for full-time programmes, the hourly rate for every sector subject area includes SAWs, alongside similar considerations for retention and attainment.

At the end of each academic year, programmes will be subject to audit against a defined set of performance measures, including programme effectiveness, learner retention, attainment and progression outcomes, compliance with approved delivery requirements, and the accuracy of funding claims. The audit will assess whether programme objectives and intended outcomes have been achieved, whether content and delivery methods meet agreed specifications, and whether funding allocations accurately reflect delivery. This

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<sup>5</sup> The total number of teaching, instructional or assessment contact hours for all learning activities that form the programme of study.

<sup>6</sup> These can be related and/or apportioned to activities such as premises maintenance costs; materials; equipment; group size restrictions due to health and safety requirements or support needs for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or basic skills needs; and learner to staff ratio.

<sup>7</sup> All regulated qualifications are assigned a Sector Subject Area (SSA) code by the issuing awarding organisation.

<sup>8</sup> A performance measure that assesses the proportion of learners who stay enrolled for the duration of their course at a provider throughout the academic year.

<sup>9</sup> A performance measure that evaluates how well learners who have finished their course, achieve the expected learning outcomes of specific qualifications.

process will identify programmes that are not meeting expected performance thresholds and will also highlight gaps in provision or areas of sustained or emerging learner demand.

Where a programme needs amending or there is a requirement for the introduction of a new programme, providers must submit a [Post-16 Funding – New Programme Request](#) to Medr. Requests may be submitted at any point throughout the year. Providers should note that any programme amendments must be countersigned by the Head of Institution (Further Education Institutions) or Director of Education (Local Authorities' school sixth forms). Where appropriate, Medr will encourage sector wide proposals.

### **C. Programmes directory**

A Programmes Directory<sup>10</sup> has been created to consolidate all essential aspects of eligible programmes into a single document. The directory sets out the typology and hierarchy of programmes and provides a unique programme code for each eligible programme. It will be updated as new programmes are introduced, or as programme requirements, funding values, and associated qualifications evolve.

### **D. Components of a full-time learning programme**

Full-time programmes consist of four elements: Main Qualification(s); Core; Community Learner Industry Focus (CLIF); and Work-Related Experience (WRE).

#### **I. Main Qualification(s)**

Main qualifications within learning programmes must be selected from those listed on the [Qualifications in Wales \(QiW\)](#) database<sup>11</sup> within the Approved or Designated categories of qualifications and must relate to the learning area of the programme. The only exceptions are the various pathways within the Access to Higher Education Diploma suite which are regulated by QAA.

Main qualifications must account for over 50 percent of the overall contact hours for the programme, with an optimal goal of 70 percent. The guided contact hours for the regulated qualification(s) are taken into account when determining these percentages.

#### **II. Core**

All learners should be supported to make progress in their numeracy and literacy skills throughout their programme of learning. Learners can progress their skills through:

- undertaking the Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) for level 1 and 2 programmes or the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales (AdvSBW) for level 3 programmes;<sup>12</sup> and

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<sup>10</sup> The Programmes Directory is available [online](#). This online version will be kept up to date throughout the year with any updates or newly agreed programmes.

<sup>11</sup> The QiW database serves as the primary point of reference for all regulated qualifications that qualify for post-16 funding in Wales, including qualifications that are targeted at learners who are under 19 years of age.

<sup>12</sup> Where a learner is not undertaking the SCC or the AdvSBW, they are required to undertake, as a minimum, two or three Essential Skills Wales qualifications at the relevant level based on the outcome of the provider's toolkit assessment, together with tutorial time and work-related experience.

- GCSE Resits<sup>13</sup> or a minimum of 2-3 Essential Skills Wales qualifications<sup>14</sup>, in line with the provider's toolkit assessment result; and
- tutorial time.

The SCC is a standalone, graded qualification, valued as a GCSE. It focuses on the essential and employability skills young people need for their future lives. These skills are developed and assessed through the 4 components which are as follows:

- Individual Project
- Enterprise and Employability Challenge
- Global Citizenship Challenge
- Community Challenge

From 2027 the SCC will be replaced by the Skills Suite, which forms part of the [full 14 to 16 qualifications offer](#).

The Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales (AdvSBW) is a standalone skills-based Level 3 qualification. It is equivalent in size and demand to an A level. The AdvSBW supports learners to become effective, responsible, and active citizens ready to take their place in a sustainable global society and in the workplace. It promotes learning inside and outside of the classroom with learners encouraged to choose areas of study which are of personal interest and linked to their future studies and careers.

The AdvSBW qualification has 3 units:

- the Global Community Project
- the Future Destination Project
- the Individual Project

Neither the SCC nor the AdvSBW are statutory at post-16, however Welsh Government policy encourages all sixth forms and further education colleges to offer it as part of the full-time learning programmes<sup>15</sup>.

Learners who are working towards a C grade in GCSE Maths, English or Welsh Language as part of their programme of study, are not required to undertake separate Essential Skills in Application of Number and Communication alongside each GCSE.

The level of Essential Skills may be different to the main qualification(s) based on the outcomes of initial/diagnostic assessment for each learner. Essential Skills units may be at the same level or one level above or below, but learners should develop the level of skills required to achieve the main qualification.

There may be specific circumstances where separate Essential Skills are required, e.g. in order to achieve a main qualification or to facilitate progression to an apprenticeship or higher apprenticeship.

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<sup>13</sup> For FEIs, the GCSEs in English/Welsh and Maths are submitted individually via the part-time GCSE Resits funding methodology. For LAs, the Learning Wellbeing Fund will be used.

<sup>14</sup> Medr encourages providers to adopt a strategic approach when selecting learners for GCSEs, emphasizing those who are most likely to achieve these qualifications. Other learners should be motivated to pursue ESWs.

<sup>15</sup> [The Welsh Baccalaureate, Skills Challenge Certificate and Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales](#)

### III. Community Learner Industry Focus (CLIF)

This component of the programme should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the learner and local and specific employer needs. Qualifications delivered under the CLIF should add value to a programme by developing wider skills or by developing skills to a higher level to aid progression to employment or further study. CLIF is met through delivering Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) units or equivalent recognised learning listed on QiW and may be delivered at a lower or higher level than the main qualification.

Not all learners will need to undertake the CLIF as this may not be required where the main qualification has addressed the learner requirements fully. Providers have the flexibility to tailor the CLIF to provide additional support for individual learners to develop literacy and numeracy skills or personal and social skills.

### IV. Work Related Experience (WRE)

This component of a programme allows for any work experience necessary for the vocational programmes. This includes time allocated to learners to develop and refine their practical skills, which should help them progress to employment or further learning.

The provision of WRE will vary across programmes to include activities that are part of the assessed component of a qualification in the vocational area. A recommended number of WRE hours for each programme is provided within the Programmes Directory.

The planned work-based hours (LP70) for the duration of the learning programme should be estimated as accurately as possible at the start of a learner's learning programme and confirmed at the end within field LP72 (Actual Work Based Hours).

## **Full-time programme aims**

Each programme is designed with a defined aim that recognises that individual learners may have different purposes for learning. Providers must ensure that learners are placed at the most appropriate level to avoid repetition of learning and to make the most effective use of public funding.

### **A. Entry Level Programmes**

The aim of an Entry Level programme is to introduce and engage learners in further education, in order to develop and apply basic essential and practical vocational skills, and to prepare them for progression to level 1 studies.

### **B. Level 1 Programmes**

Level 1 programmes recognise basic knowledge and skills. Their aim is to engage learners at foundation level and further develop essential and practical vocational skills with the view of progressing to Level 2 study within a chosen vocational area, a Foundation Apprenticeship or employment.

### **C. Level 1-2 Accelerated Learning Programmes**

Level 1-2 accelerated learning programmes increase the standard number of hours of learning for learners identified as having the ability to complete a level 2 qualification but may require some level 1 development in the vocational area before they are fully ready.

Level 1 learning planned en-route to gaining the level 2 should be clearly identified in the learner's individual learning plan. As part of the monitoring process, the activities delivered as part of the programme will be reviewed to help identify the additional learning that the learner has undertaken.

Learners are ineligible for this programme where they have already undertaken a level 1 in the same Sector Subject Area.

Learners on a level 1-2 accelerated learning programme will be subject to the same performance measures as a level 2 learner.

### **D. Level 2 Programmes**

Level 2 programmes recognise a proficient level of knowledge and understanding about a particular area. The skills and knowledge gained at this level should prepare the learner for progression to further study at level 3 within Further Education, employment or an apprenticeship.

For construction programmes, the level 2 is separated into:

- Foundation: a Level 2 programme that recognises a broad level of knowledge and understanding of the wider sector area, providing learners with the opportunity to progress to more specific level 2 study or progression onto a level 3 apprenticeship within a chosen vocational area.
- Progression: a Level 2 programme that recognises a proficient level of knowledge and understanding of a particular area. The purpose of the programme is to build on the practical vocational skills of a learner's chosen pathway, with the view to progress to level 3 study within the chosen vocational area or an apprenticeship.

### **E. Level 2-3 Accelerated Learning Programmes**

Level 2-3 accelerated learning programmes increase the standard number of hours of learning for learners identified as having the ability to achieve a level 3 qualification but may require some additional level 2 learning to achieve this in two years.

The additional level 2 learning should be clearly identified in the learner's individual learning plan and undertaken in the first year of the programme, alongside the level 3 learning equivalent to a full year.

In the second year, learners will continue towards completing the full level 3 programme. For funding and monitoring purposes, the relevant sub-Sector Subject Area (sub-SSA) programme code, carrying the extension '22', should be used.

Learners who have already undertaken a level 2 in the same Sector Subject Area are not eligible for this programme.

Learners on a level 2-3 accelerated learning programme will be subject to the same performance measures as a level 3 learner.

### **F. Level 3 Programmes**

Level 3 programmes are typically delivered over two years and develop the breadth and depth of essential and employability skills, recognising the ability to gain and use a range of knowledge and skills. Through undertaking a level 3 programme, learners will be prepared for either further study at level 4 within FE or HE, for employment or for a higher apprenticeship.

For planning, funding and monitoring purposes, extension codes should be used in addition to the standard programme code to identify whether learners are on year 1 or year 2 of a two-year programme.

### **G. Level 4 Programmes**

Level 4 Programmes are higher education courses that develop specialist knowledge in a chosen subject area. The expected outcome of level 4 programmes is further study at university to complete a full degree, employment or a higher apprenticeship.

### **H. Futures Programme**

The Futures Programme is a one-year programme of study, which has been developed for Level 1 learners and those most at risk of becoming NEET. The programme allows learners to experience a range of vocational areas by increasing exposure to different progression pathways, whilst building resilience, employability skills and wellbeing strategies through an intensive tutorial and support programme.

The programme has its own distinct specification, which can be accessed [online](#).

### **I. Access to Further Education (AFE) Programmes**

AFE are Level 1 or Level 2 programmes designed for learners who may have enrolled later in the academic year and/or are uncertain of their chosen pathway and allow for vocational tasters. The purpose of the AFE programme is to enable the learner to develop essential and practical vocational skills, and to confirm a chosen route.

### **J. Access to Higher Education (AHE) Programmes**

AHE programmes are aimed at learners with life experience outside of education, who wish to access University provision, but may not have the necessary qualifications to do so. They are available in a range of pathways and should aim to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to prepare a learner for progressing onto university study in their chosen route.

### **K. Enhanced Programmes**

Enhanced programmes are available at either levels 2 or 3 in the following areas:

- AS Levels (3 or 4 subjects with or without the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales element)

- Digital and Future Media
- Engineering
- ICT and Engineering Hybrid
- Information Technology

Enhanced programmes increase the standard number of hours of learning delivered by providers from a minimum of 16 hours per week up to a maximum of 30 hours per week, to cover a set curriculum that meets the needs of employers, delivers qualifications to learners that will fulfil identified employer needs within the region and utilises direct employer engagement through the work placement element of the learning programmes.

Each of the Enhanced programmes has their own distinct specification, which can be accessed [online](#).

## **L. Increased Workplace Learning Programmes**

Increased workplace learning programmes are Level 2 and Level 3 programmes which provide an increase in the standard hours of learning. This adjustment aims to boost the amount of workplace learning within a programme, ultimately preparing more learners for the workforce. The programmes must provide consistent contact for the learner with an employer for the duration of their learning.

## **M. Junior Apprenticeships**

Junior Apprenticeships offer Year 10 and 11 pupils the opportunity to study full-time for a future career in a college setting, from the age of 14. The programme offers a two-year programme of work-related education, with work experience built in alongside a Level 1 or Level 2 course in a range of vocational pathways. This can be equivalent to as many as four or five GCSEs.

In line with the 14–16 Learning Guidance, each junior apprentice should also study a ‘challenging, ambitious and stretching’ qualification in Mathematics and English. For some junior apprenticeship learners, this might be the new, made-for-Wales GCSEs; this includes a single, integrated English Language and Literature award for learners who may benefit from undertaking a smaller qualification. For other junior apprenticeship learners, the Level 1 and Level 2 Essential Skills Wales qualifications (which are currently designated and remain available for pre-16 learners) may be more suitable.

In addition to the provision outlined above, each Junior Apprentice should also have access to learning support, assistance with behaviour management, and a designated Welfare Officer to support day-to-day issues and provide pastoral care. The aim of the Junior Apprenticeship is to ensure that learners are employable, or ready to progress to a higher-level vocational course or apprenticeship, at the age of 16.

The Junior Apprenticeship programme is primarily funded by the Local Authority and therefore it is essential that agreement is reached between the LA and the FEI before this provision is agreed.

Delivery should be in line with the [Junior Apprenticeships guidance](#).

## Programme code requirements

Programme codes are made up of 8 characters denoting the subject sector area, sub-sector, programme level and type of programme (e.g. full time or part time). They are not only used for funding and planning purposes but also for monitoring and reporting purposes within Medr.

### A. The 2-character extensions to programme codes (FE only)

These are used for 2-year programmes to denote whether the learner is undertaking the first or second year.

For learners undertaking the first year of a 2-year programme, the extension '12' should be used, and for a learner undertaking the second year of a 2-year programme, the extension '22' should be used.

For example, a learner undertaking the first year of an Animal Care programme at Level 3 should be registered with the following programme code:

- 0303B03B**12** This is year 1 of a 2-year programme.

While a learner undertaking the second year of a Business Administration programme at Level 3 should be registered with the following programme code:

- 1502A03B**22** This is year 2 of a 2-year programme.

### B. Mixing of AS/A2 and general vocational qualifications

Where a learner is undertaking a mixture of general education and/or vocational qualifications, the following general rules must be applied:

- mixture of A2 and AS subjects:
  - make it an A2 equivalent if the learner is undertaking the same number or more A2 subjects; for example, one A2 subject, one AS subject, and the AdvSBW would require the 0023D03B (2 A2 equivalent plus AdvSBW) programme code to be used
  - make it an AS equivalent if the learner is undertaking more AS than A2 subjects; for example, two AS subjects, one A2 subject, and the AdvSBW would require the 0014D03B (3 AS equivalent plus AdvSBW) programme code to be used
- mixture of A2 and equivalent BTEC qualifications (as per the table below):
  - make it an A2 equivalent if the number of A2 subjects undertaken by the learner is higher than, or equal to, the equivalent size of BTEC qualifications; for example, two A2 subjects, one BTEC Diploma, and the AdvSBW would require the 0024B03B (4+ A2 equivalent plus AdvSBW) programme code to be used
  - make it an SSA-relevant vocational programme if the BTEC qualification(s) undertaken by the learner are larger in typical size than the A2 learning; for example, one BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Business, one A2 subject, and the AdvSBW would require the 1503B03B (Business Studies Level 3) programme code to be used
- mixture of AS and equivalent BTEC qualifications (as per the table below):

- make it an AS equivalent if the number of AS subjects undertaken by the learner is higher than, or equal to, the equivalent size of BTEC qualifications; for example, two AS subjects, two BTEC Certificates, and the AdvSBW would require the 0015D03B (4+ AS equivalent plus AdvSBW) programme code to be used
- make it an SSA-relevant vocational programme if the typical size of the BTEC qualification(s) undertaken by the learner is larger than the AS learning; for example, one BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Engineering, one AS subject, and the AdvSBW would require the 0401A03B (Manufacturing and Engineering Level 3) programme code to be used

BTEC Level 3 National	Typical Size (as GLH) <sup>16</sup>	AS/A Level Equivalence
Extended Diploma	Very Large (1080 GLH)	3 GCE A Levels
Diploma	Large (720 GLH)	2 GCE A Levels
Foundation Diploma	Medium (510 GLH)	1.5 GCE A Levels
Extended Certificate	Small (360 GLH)	1 GCE A Level
Certificate	Very small (180 GLH)	1 GCE AS Level

Please note that where GCSEs<sup>17</sup> are being undertaken as a component of an AS/A level or equivalent programme of study, it is expected that these GCSEs will be delivered as part of the CLIF element of the learning programme and recorded as such for data submissions.

## Part-time provision

Part-time study is available across all subject sector areas and levels and is based around learning activities rather than full programmes of learning. It should generally focus on skills development or training / retraining needs.

Part time study is not fundable alongside full-time programmes of learning (other than GCSE Resits). For any additional learning that a full-time learner would wish to undertake, it would be expected that the CLIF element of the full-time programme is used.

### A. Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Preparation for Life and Work (PREP) (FE and ACL)

ABE programmes aim to build core academic skills, increase employability, support progression into further education, and improve adults' ability to participate fully in work, family, and community life.

PREP programmes aim to prepare learners for adulthood by developing independence, employability, personal wellbeing, and active participation in community life, with highly personalised learning targets.

Together, ABE and PREP programmes have complementary goals:

- ABE focuses primarily on core academic and functional skills that promote employability and further learning.

<sup>16</sup> See [Pearson BTEC Level 3 Qualifications Funding Guide - Wales](#)

<sup>17</sup> For FE, this does not include GCSEs in English/Welsh and Maths, which are recorded separately through the part-time GCSEs Resits funding methodology.

- PREP focuses on holistic preparation for adulthood, including independence, community engagement, and work-related readiness.

Both contribute to widening access, supporting progression, and helping learners develop the basic educational skills required for employment, further study, and independent living.

## **B. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (FE and ACL)**

ESOL programmes are designed to provide young people and adults who may be multilingual but are not fluent English speakers – including refugees, asylum-seeking young people, and migrants transitioning from compulsory education – with the English-language skills needed to access education, secure employment, and participate fully in society.

Across ESOL provision, the central educational purpose is to teach English in all four domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) which are essential for academic progress, professional communication, and everyday life. ESOL education supports learners in acquiring both social language and the academic English needed to succeed in further education settings.

ESOL programmes promote wider inclusion by helping learners communicate confidently with peers, teachers, employers, and community members. ESOL aims to reduce social exclusion and enable people building a new life in Wales to develop the necessary knowledge for day-to-day interactions, while also progressing toward higher-level language needed for long-term success.

## **C. GCSE Resits (GCSE-R) (FE and ACL)**

GCSE-R refers to the GCSE English / Welsh and Maths, which are recognised as critical qualifications for learners' future educational and employment opportunities. The intention of resit programmes is therefore to ensure that young people who did not achieve a Grade C at age 16 can continue developing their literacy and numeracy until they meet a standard required for entry to further study, apprenticeships, and skilled employment.

GCSE resit provision supports the learner acquire the necessary practical skills and give them the opportunity to continue improving foundational educational attainment, which in turn supports access to further education and future labour market participation.

## **D. Occupational Qualifications (OccQs) (FE only)**

This is a direct replacement for the previous 'NVQs Delivered in the Workplace' funding methodology.

These programmes aim to enable learners to gain occupational competence through structured workplace learning and assessment. Occupational Qualifications (OccQs) support career progression by building structured, industry recognised competence enabling learners to move into roles with greater responsibility, better pay, and increased specialisation. They facilitate the development of transferable and industry-specific skills essential for a dynamic economy.

The primary target group for OccQs is employees developing role specific skills that are aligned to employer needs and national occupational standards. This ensures that learning is relevant, high quality, and directly supports workforce development and productivity.

### **E. Other Local Priorities (OLP) (FE and ACL)**

OLP programmes aim to respond to local workforce demand, ensuring learners gain skills aligned to their region's economic priorities. This means institutions can offer part-time learning that directly addresses skills shortages, local employment gaps, or sector growth areas identified regionally.

OLP should allow colleges and local authorities to:

- create flexible, targeted part-time provision that fills gaps where learners or employers lack access to suitable training
- to encourage coordinated local action so that providers work together to address local strategic priorities in a coherent and efficient way
- give institutions the ability to innovate and develop new part-time provision where local evidence shows a need for new forms of learning

### **F. Personal Learning Account (PLA) (FE only)**

The PLA programme is fundable via a 26 Tier banding system, within which the approved qualifications are mapped.

The primary aim of the PLA programme is to enable individuals who are in work to upskill and reskill in priority sectors, to improve their career and earnings potential, and to help raise the median income in Wales.

Qualifications eligible for delivery through the PLA programme are published on the LLWR Inform platform<sup>18</sup> and made available through [Careers Wales](#). Provision has been aligned to national priorities to ensure that the programme meets economic needs and addresses skill shortages across all Wales. The range of approved delivery includes qualifications regulated by Qualifications Wales and also unregulated / non-regulated qualifications<sup>19</sup>.

The PLA programme has its own distinct specification, which can be accessed [online](#).

### **G. Work Experience Placements (WEP) (FE only)**

WEP programmes are intended to give learners meaningful exposure to real work environments, helping them understand workplace expectations, routines, and behaviours. They are designed to support young people and adults in becoming work-ready.

WEP allow learners to immerse themselves in a professional setting, gaining insight into industries of interest, building confidence, and developing practical employability skills valued by employers.

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<sup>18</sup> See [LLWR-Inform - LLWR LA06/AW08 Lookup](#)

<sup>19</sup> These qualifications are not overseen by official regulatory bodies like Qualifications Wales, Ofqual (in England), or the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). They are usually created and awarded by private organisations, companies, or training providers.

A primary intention is to ensure learners can develop key employability skills, including teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and independence. These programmes help learners acquire skills and behaviours needed for progression into work, apprenticeships, or further vocational/academic study.

WEP help learners explore potential future pathways, clarify career interests, and make informed decisions about post education destinations. Exposure to real roles and professional contacts helps them understand job requirements and evaluate whether an industry suits their skills and aspirations.

The following programmes are approved for part-time delivery:

- Placement Enhanced Programmes
- Priority Sector Skills Academies

Each of the WEP programmes above has its own distinct specification, which can be accessed [online](#).

## Programme amendments

Providers have a responsibility for ensuring the data they have submitted to either the P16DC or the LLWR is accurate and is not amended or deleted after learning has been completed / terminated. Under no circumstances should data be amended or deleted to show learner outcomes in a more positive light.

### A. Withdrawals

A learner is considered to have withdrawn from a study programme where they are known to have made a decision to withdraw from the study programme, or to move from a full-time to a part-time study programme. Either the learner or the learner's tutor should have confirmed this in writing.

In addition, for full-time programmes and part-time programmes of more than 24 weeks in duration that are not distance learning programmes, a learner must be considered to have withdrawn where they have not attended classes for at least 4 continuous weeks, excluding holidays. This is unless there is auditable evidence of an intention to return. Compliance evidence includes a learner's or employer's letter or formal internal notes such as tutorial reports, contracts of behaviour or personal action plans.

For distance learning provision, a withdrawn learner would be one failing to meet the following guidance on participation or contact:

- a) attendance at a centre or log-on to learning materials
- b) receipt of work or projects by the tutor (electronic or hard copy)
- c) communication with the tutor that indicated that the student was still active on their learning aim, including planned contacts

Providers must ensure that learners are withdrawn from a programme where they have not attended classes for 4 continuous weeks, excluding holidays. Withdrawals must be actioned in a timely manner, and where a learner has not been withdrawn but has been absent for more than 4 weeks, there must be auditable evidence of an intention to return.

Where a learner has not been in attendance during a programme, and is deemed to have withdrawn, then the provider must adjust the record to reflect that the learner has withdrawn. Providers must record withdrawal dates promptly and accurately in order to reflect the last date of actual recorded attendance.

In all circumstances, the date of a learner's withdrawal must be the last date of their actual attendance, not the date on which the student's record was flagged as withdrawn. While learners may not be classified as withdrawn until 4 weeks have elapsed since their last attendance, or for open and distance learning since the missed contact, the date of withdrawal must still be recorded as the date of last actual participation.

When checking the withdrawal mechanism, providers must have robust systems in place to ensure that learners with erratic attendance due to illness or other legitimate circumstances are identified. Where warranted reasons for erratic attendance, providers must retain evidence of assessment and/or notification from the learner, parent, advocate or medical adviser that there is a strong intention to return. In these exceptional cases, the learners do not have to be entered as withdrawn within the usual timescales. If the learner fails to return, the withdrawal date must be the last date of attendance.

Withdrawn learners must not be recorded as having completed their programme. Achievement records must reflect only those learning activities that were successfully completed before withdrawal.

## **B. Transfers**

Providers may transfer learners to more suitable activities / programmes of study during their education, but only if it serves the learners' best interest. However, transfers should not be recorded:

- if the learner is moving from assessable to non-assessable learning; or
- after the learner has finished the learning, to indicate achievement at a lower level or of a 'smaller' qualification than initially planned; or
- to present learner outcomes in a more favourable manner.

Amendments to learning status will be permitted across various programmes of study and types of education, including changes between LA/FE, Apprenticeships, and ACL. However, the following revisions can only be recorded as transfers within the first 56 days of the initial learning programme:

- from a full-time programme to a part-time programme or to a lower-level full-time programme; or
- to a main qualification(s) at a lower level or smaller qualification(s); or
- from one part-time programme to another at a lower level or smaller.

The schedule for processing transfers is outlined below:

- in cases where the transfer is to a different programme or learning activity within the same provider, a maximum gap in attendance of 7 calendar days is permitted.
- for transfers that involve a different provider, a maximum gap in attendance of 21 calendar days is permitted.

If the change in learning surpasses the above designated timeline, it will no longer be regarded as a transfer and should be recorded as a withdrawal.

In all instances, the recording of transfers must accurately reflect genuine changes occurring in learner's education and cannot be retroactively applied to indicate the achievement of a lesser qualification or at a lower level after the learner has finished their learning.

## Programme hours and timetable evidence

The Programmes Directory outlines the number of hours that are funded for each programme of learning. It is not expected that providers deliver the exact number of hours for each area but presents a general guide. It is however expected that total delivery hours are within a reasonable tolerance of the funded hours; for audit purposes this reasonable tolerance is considered 10%.<sup>20</sup>

For the purposes of audit, providers need to be able to show in a simple format that they are recording planned hours in accordance with the hours on the timetable, learning agreement or similar document.

## Type of provision and further implications

Each type of provision has its own set of criteria and processes for determining eligibility, reflecting the specific needs and circumstances of the individuals they aim to support.

### A. Full-time provision

Full-time education can significantly impact the eligibility for various benefits in the UK. Individuals may be able to get Universal Credit if they're studying full-time and any of the following apply:

- they are aged 21 or under, in full-time non-advanced education<sup>21</sup> and do not have parental support<sup>22</sup>
- they are responsible for a child<sup>23</sup>
- they live with their partner who is eligible for Universal Credit
- they have reached the qualifying age for Pension Credit and live with a partner who is under that age
- they have received a Migration Notice telling them to move to Universal Credit
- they are disabled, were assessed as having limited capability for work before starting their course, and are getting:

<sup>20</sup> This is to ensure that learners have sufficient contact time allocated to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes of the provision, and that public funding is used effectively.

<sup>21</sup> Non-advanced education is any course up to A Level, or equivalent. Full-time courses include AS Levels; A Levels; BTEC Levels and BTEC Extended Diploma, up to Level 3; entry level skills courses; GCSEs; National 5s (N5s); National Qualification Framework level 3 or the Scottish Qualification framework level 6 National Certificate or Diploma; NVQs, Awards, Certificates or Diplomas, up to Level 3.

<sup>22</sup> This includes if they have left care provided by the local council or they are without parental support. They may be eligible for Universal Credit if:

- on a full-time course of non-advanced education or training that started before reaching age 21
- they reach age 21 while on the course

They can continue to get Universal Credit until:

- the end of the academic year in which they reach age 21
- the end of the course if it ends before they reach age 21

<sup>23</sup> The child may be adopted or a foster child.

- Personal Independence Payment
- Disability Living Allowance
- Child Disability Payment in Scotland
- Attendance Allowance
- Armed Forces Independence Payment

Individuals may also be able to get Universal Credit if they are studying in full-time non advanced education, they do not get a student loan or maintenance grant and they're available for work. If the course is more than 12 hours a week, this only applies from 1 September following their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is because their parents can claim benefits for them before that date.

### **B. Part-time provision**

Individuals may be able to get Universal Credit if they're studying part-time and they're available for work. If the course is more than 12 hours a week non-advanced education, this only applies from 1 September following their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is because their parents can claim benefits for them before that date.

### **C. Ineligible provision**

The following provision is not eligible for Medr post-16 funding:

- a) any programmes that fall outside the Programmes Directory
- b) qualifications not designated on the Qualifications in Wales database that relate to obtaining membership of professional bodies
- c) qualifications falling out of approval: course delivery must commence before 'approval final start date' on the QiW database; providers are reminded that they are responsible for checking qualification availability, final registration and certification end dates with both QiW and the relevant awarding body
- d) prescribed higher education (HE) courses<sup>24</sup> including:
  - i. qualifications for the further training of teachers or youth or community workers
  - ii. certificates and diplomas of higher education (CertHE and DipHE)
  - iii. higher national certificates and diplomas (HNC and HND)
  - iv. foundation degrees
  - v. first degrees
  - vi. postgraduate qualifications
  - vii. any other level 4 and above qualifications awarded by a HE institution
- e) vendor-certified courses, unless they are approved qualifications under Personal Learning Accounts provision or are embedded within and contribute directly towards the learning required to achieve an approved qualification
- f) primary and advanced driving skills courses, unless they are approved qualifications under Personal Learning Accounts provision

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<sup>24</sup> Prescribed higher education courses are ineligible for public further education funding because they fall within the higher education system and are supported through separate statutory, funding, and regulatory arrangements. This separation ensures appropriate accountability and avoids double funding.

- g) training for employed learners aged 19 and over, commissioned by an employer and delivered over a period of 5 days or less, which either:
  - i. employers need to provide to ensure their workforce complies with statutory requirements; or
  - ii. individuals are required by law to undertake to be able to do their job
- h) courses aimed at employed learners that fall within the scope of Workplace Safety Training<sup>25</sup> (as defined in Annex D)
- i) any other learning activities that are funded from other sources, including all full-cost recovery provision.

## Learner eligibility

### A. Introduction

1. This section sets out the rules on learner eligibility for Post-16 Funding Framework in Wales, together with guidance on evidencing learner eligibility to assist providers in their enrolment processes.
2. Most people, aged 16 and over, legally residing in Wales will be eligible for post-16 funding and the exceptions to this are set out in paragraphs 33 to 37. The advice in paragraphs 11 to 14 provides further information on the detailed eligibility requirements. To assist Medr-funded providers in keeping the learner eligibility administration burden to a minimum, most learners will simply need to confirm on their enrolment form that they have legally lived in the UK for the 3 previous years. For the small number of eligible learners who do not meet this test, providers should take steps to satisfy themselves that the learner is legally resident in the UK. To assist providers and funding auditors, further advice on compliance evidence of learner eligibility is set out in paragraphs 38 to 46.

### B. EU and European Economic Area (EEA) learners

3. The UK has left the EU and free movement between the UK and the EU has ended. The UK's [points based immigration system](#) applies and treats EU (other than Irish citizens) and non-EU citizens equally. Learners who are citizens of EU (or EEA) countries (other than Irish citizens) who entered the UK after 31 December 2020 are not automatically eligible for funding and must be able to demonstrate that they are legally resident in the UK to be funded.
4. Learners who are citizens of EU (or EEA) countries or children of Turkish workers who are living in the UK and have started their programme on or before 31 December 2020 must be treated equally to UK residents. Once enrolled they will be eligible for funding for the full duration of their study programme. All Irish citizens continue to be automatically eligible for funding under immigration concessions agreed with the Irish Government before the UK was a member of the EU. Those who have already obtained the Home Office pre-settled and settled status will be eligible under

<sup>25</sup> The term Workplace Safety Training is used to encompass training which is primarily aimed at supporting safety in the workplace.

paragraph 12 while those still completing this process should be assessed under paragraph 13.

### **C. Residency eligibility**

5. The following paragraphs set out the post-16 funding eligibility criteria for study programmes. Learners only need to be eligible under any one point or sub-paragraph of the individual points or sub-paragraphs in paragraphs 11 to 14. All learners eligible to start their study programme are eligible for the full duration of their study programme. Paragraphs 33 to 37 explain the main exceptions covering ineligible learners for funding purposes.
6. For funding purposes, providers must establish a learner's eligibility at the start of their programme. Providers must seek advice from Medr regarding any case where they are having difficulty assessing learner eligibility.
7. To be eligible for funding the learner must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the start of their study programme. A person subject to a Home Office deportation order will ordinarily be ineligible for funding until their situation has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Home Office. Learners whose immigration permission to enter the UK is as a 'Visitor' (also commonly known as a 'Tourist') are also ineligible for 16 to 18 full-time funding.
8. In determining learner eligibility, providers must also satisfy themselves that there is a reasonable likelihood that the learner will be able to complete their study programme before seeking funding for the learner. This should include the practicality of providing a place for a learner who may be unable to complete their programme if they are likely to leave the country permanently during their study programme. When a learner applies for a study programme where their current legal permission to remain in the UK expires six months or more after they start, then providers may allow them to enrol. Medr considers it sufficient for providers to rely on confirmation from the learner (and/or family) that they intend to apply for the necessary extension to their permission to remain for the duration of their study programme. For the purposes of this paragraph, providers must assume that all EEA learners resident in the UK before 1 January 2021 have the legal right to remain in the UK for the duration of their study programme. Once a learner is enrolled, the provider is expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the learner can complete their programme.
9. Learners who are attending programmes of more than one term's duration and are eligible for funding at the start of their programme, will usually be eligible for funding for the whole duration of their study programme as well as subsequent funded study programmes studied immediately end-on to their initial funded programme. This includes learners studying consecutive study programmes with no break in their studies other than normal holiday periods. Similarly, learners who are not eligible for funding at the start of their study programme are very unlikely to become eligible for funding during the period of their study programme.

### **D. Definition of ordinarily resident**

10. For funding purposes, Medr regards as ordinarily resident in a given country any person who habitually, normally and lawfully resides from choice and for a settled

purpose in that country. Temporary absences from the relevant area should be ignored. Someone who has not been ordinarily resident because he or she or the person's parent or spouse or civil partner was working temporarily abroad will be treated as if they have been ordinarily resident in the relevant area.

## E. Learners eligible for funding

11. The following persons will be eligible for funding (these groups correspond to some of the groups in [The Education \(Learner Fees, Awards and Support\) \(Amendment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2021](#)):

- a) a person on the 'relevant date'<sup>26</sup>, who is 'settled' in the UK, and who has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (that is including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) for the 3 years preceding the 'relevant date'. 'Settled' means a person who is settled in the UK within the meaning of section 33(2A) of the Immigration Act 1971; in other words, having either indefinite leave to enter (ILE) or indefinite leave to remain (ILR)<sup>27</sup>, being an Irish citizen or having the right of abode in the UK. Learners who are eligible for funding include:
- i. A person who is a UK national or other person with right of abode<sup>28</sup> in the UK who has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands or the British Overseas Territories, or their family members
  - ii. Irish citizens
  - iii. EU citizens or family members<sup>29</sup> of EEA and Swiss workers<sup>30</sup> (resident in the UK before 1 January 2021) with settled or pre-settled status<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> The term 'relevant date' refers to 'the first day of the first academic (or teaching) year of the course' and this is defined as 1 September if the academic year starts on 1 August.

<sup>27</sup> Indefinite leave to enter or remain is permission to enter or remain in the UK without any time restrictions on the length of stay.

<sup>28</sup> Right of abode is the right to live and work in the UK. Those with right of abode include:

- Individuals who possess a Certificate of Entitlement to the Right of Abode
- Those whose passports have been endorsed to show they have the right of abode in the UK
- British citizens (including those with a certificate of naturalisation or registration as a British citizen)
- British Dependent Territory Citizens (now known as British Overseas Territory Citizens)
- Irish nationals
- EU or EEA nationals with settled status
- Family members of EEA or Swiss workers with settled status

<sup>29</sup> A family member of an EU national or EEA worker is a spouse or civil partner, a child or grandchild, or a dependant parent or grandparent of that person.

<sup>30</sup> A Swiss worker is a Swiss national who is a worker, other than a Swiss frontier worker, in the UK. In addition, there are certain categories of people, including Swiss frontier workers, Swiss frontier self-employed persons, or Swiss self-employed persons, who may be eligible for post-16 funding. Further information on these categories can be found in the Schedule to the [Education \(Fees and Award\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2007](#).

<sup>31</sup> Settled Status - EU Settlement Scheme refers to EU, EEA and Swiss nationals and their respective family members who were living in the UK before the end of the transition period (31 December 2020) and who continued to live in the UK after this date have citizens' rights under the EU Withdrawal Agreement, the EEA EFTA Separation Agreement and the Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement ("the Withdrawal Agreements"). Those who meet the conditions of the Withdrawal Agreements can continue to legally reside in the UK and enjoy associated rights. The rights of those who move to the UK after the end of the transition period (unless they have citizens' rights as a family member of a person already in the UK) are subject to the new Home Office visa arrangements. Those who have citizens' rights can apply of settles status via the Home Office's EUSS. They will be awarded:

- Settled status (i.e. indefinite leave to remain if they have the requisite minimum of five years of continuous lawful residence in the UK), or

- iv. Learners who are children of Turkish workers<sup>32</sup> where the Turkish worker has been lawfully employed and resident in the UK before 1 January 2021
- v. British Dependent Territory Citizens (now known as British Overseas Territory Citizens)
- vi. those whose passports have been endorsed to show they have right of abode in the UK
- vii. those who have a certificate of naturalisation or registration as a British Citizen
- viii. those with Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) visa<sup>33</sup>
- ix. EEA and Swiss workers with pre-settled or settled status who have been ordinarily resident in the UK, the EEA or Gibraltar, or their family members
- x. UK nationals living in the EEA before 1 January 2021 who have been ordinarily resident in the EEA, Gibraltar or the UK for three years preceding the relevant date and who have lived continuously in the EEA or the UK between 31 December 2020 and the relevant date, or their family members
- xi. Persons granted leave to remain<sup>34</sup> as a protected person or their family members, including those granted stateless leave<sup>35</sup> or a person with section 67<sup>36</sup> leave to remain
- xii. Those with Calais leave to remain<sup>37</sup>
- xiii. Persons granted leave to remain as a protected partner or their children

12. In addition to the groups outlined above, Medr will also consider the following groups of learners (including those who may not have lived in the UK for the last 3 years) to be eligible for funding:

- 
- Pre-settled status (i.e. limited leave to remain) if they have a shorter period of UK residence (any period of residence of less than five continuous years). After five years of continuous lawful residence in the UK they can apply to change this status to settled status and should do so before their pre-settled status expires.

<sup>32</sup> A Turkish worker is a Turkish national who is a worker in the UK.

<sup>33</sup> The period that a person has lived in Hong Kong before entering the UK may be counted towards the 3 years qualifying period.

<sup>34</sup> A person with leave to enter or remain is a person who has been informed by the Home Office that, although they do not qualify for recognition as a refugee, they have been allowed to stay in the UK. Such a person is normally granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave.

<sup>35</sup> A person with stateless leave is someone entering the UK who has been granted leave to remain as a Stateless Person in accordance with paragraph 405 of the Immigration Rules.

<sup>36</sup> Section 67 leave is a person granted leave to remain under section 67 of the [Immigration Act 2016](#). This is also known as leave under the “Dubs” amendment.

<sup>37</sup> Calais leave is a form of leave granted to those brought over as part of the “Calais clearance exercise” between October 2016 and July 2017, who were under the age of 18 at this time, and who had recognised family ties in the UK.

- a) people with (or their spouses, civil partners and children<sup>38</sup> with) refugee status (RS)<sup>39</sup>, humanitarian protection (HP)<sup>40</sup>, discretionary leave (DL)<sup>41</sup>, exceptional leave to enter (ELE) or exceptional leave to remain (ELR)<sup>42</sup>
- b) people with recently settled status (this means those having been granted ILE or ILR, right of abode or British citizenship within the 3 years immediately preceding the start of the course)
- c) people granted pre-settled status following our exit from EU
- d) the spouse or civil partner of a person with settled status residing legally in the UK
- e) those with leave outside the rules<sup>43</sup>
- f) Ukrainian nationals supported through the Ukraine Family Scheme<sup>44</sup>, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme<sup>45</sup> or the immediate family members<sup>46</sup> of such a person, Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> They must have been the family member on the date which the person made their application for asylum.

<sup>39</sup> A refugee is a person who is recognised by the Home Office as a refugee as described in the 1951 Geneva Convention. A person given refugee status is normally granted leave to remain in the UK for five years, and at the end of that period can apply for indefinite leave to remain. A family member of a refugee is a person who is the spouse, civil partner, or child of a person with refugee status; or the child of the spouse or civil partner of a refugee. The family member of a refugee must have been the family member on the date on which the refugee made their application for asylum.

<sup>40</sup> Humanitarian Protection was introduced in April 2003 to replace the policy on Exceptional leave to enter or remain and is designed to provide protection to individuals who do not qualify for protection under the Refugee Convention. The Home Office may give humanitarian protection to someone who they believe does not qualify for asylum but is nevertheless at risk of serious harm if they return to their country of origin.

<sup>41</sup> Discretionary leave to remain is permission to stay in the UK for reasons that are exceptional. This is sometimes given to a person who does not qualify for asylum but whom the Home Office believes should be allowed to stay for other reasons.

<sup>42</sup> Exceptional leave to enter or remain was a form of immigration status in use before April 2003. It was granted to asylum seekers who the Home Office decided did not meet the definition of a refugee as defined in the Refugee Convention, but who it decided should be allowed to remain in the UK for other reasons.

<sup>43</sup> Leave outside the rules covers those granted leave to enter or remain for exceptional and/or compassionate reasons which fall outside of the UK Immigration Rules.

<sup>44</sup> The Ukraine Family Scheme allowed applicants to join family members or extend their stay in the UK. The scheme closed to applications on 19 February 2024.

<sup>45</sup> The Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme allows Ukrainian national and their family members to come to the UK if they have a named sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme everyone must make a separate application, even children travelling with a family member.

<sup>46</sup> In relation to the Ukraine Family Scheme or Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme an immediate family member includes:

- A spouse or civil partner
- An unmarried partner (living together in a relationship for at least two years)
- A child who is under 18
- A parent (for those who are under 18)
- A fiancée or proposed civil partner

<sup>47</sup> The Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme launched on 4 February 2025. Existing Ukraine scheme visa holders can apply for permission to remain in the UK for an additional 18 months, with the same entitlements as the existing Ukraine schemes. Individuals need to apply online when their current permission has 28 days or less remaining until it expires. Applications must be made before current visa permission expires.

g) asylum seekers<sup>48</sup>, including those with an inadmissible claim.<sup>49</sup>

13. In addition to the groups above, Medr will also consider the following groups of learners (including those who may not have lived in the UK for the last 3 years) to be eligible for funding:
- a) those who are accompanying or joining parents or spouses or civil partners<sup>50</sup> who have the right of abode or leave to enter or remain in the UK (or accompanying or joining relevant family members, usually parents, who are UK or Irish citizens), or those who are children of diplomats
  - b) those who are dependants of teachers coming to the UK on a teacher exchange scheme
  - c) those who are residing legally in the UK (including those entering the UK in the last 3 years who are or were not accompanied by their parents) who are British (or Irish) citizens or those whose passports have been endorsed (or as part of move to digital immigration systems, either a biometric residency permit, or an equivalent digital status and/or an endorsement letter) to either show they have the right of abode in this country or to show that they have no restrictions on working in the UK
  - d) those who are dependants of adults residing legally in the UK who have been given immigration rights as workers to reside in the UK
  - e) those who are dependants of foreign learners where the accompanying parent or legal guardian has a learner visa (the accompanying parent or legal guardian is excluded from funding as set out in paragraph 35)
  - f) asylum seekers
  - g) those having been granted leave under [section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016](#) (the 'Dubs' amendment)
  - h) those having been granted Calais leave to remain
  - i) those who are (including unaccompanied asylum seekers) placed in the care of social services or those receiving section 4 support
14. In addition to considering learners in the categories listed in the 3 paragraphs above, Medr will consider other exceptional circumstances. When a provider believes that a learner should be considered for post-16 funding under exceptional circumstances, it must contact Medr for guidance before claiming funding.

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<sup>48</sup> An asylum seeker is defined as those who have submitted an application for asylum in the UK which is currently being considered or has been determined to be inadmissible by the Home Office. Asylum seekers and their dependants will be eligible for post-16 funding, providing they are in receipt of support under any of the following:

- The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Children Act 1989
- The National Assistance Act 1498

<sup>49</sup> Asylum seekers refused asylum but eligible and granted support under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 will also be eligible for post-16 funding. Medr considers all 16-18 year old asylum seekers as eligible for funding including any unaccompanied asylum seekers aged 16-18 years old and those who are placed in the care of the local authority.

<sup>50</sup> All eligibility references to a spouse should now be read to include a person who has participated in either a formal state-recognised marriage or a state-recognised civil partnership ceremony.

## **F. EEA, Switzerland and the overseas territories**

15. For funding eligibility purposes only, we have defined the EEA on 31 December 2020 as including Switzerland, as well as all members of the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway and each of their overseas territories as listed in Annex B. Learners who are citizens of certain British Overseas Territories are eligible for funding. Certain European Overseas Territories citizens will also be eligible for funding but only if they moved to the UK before 1 January 2021. Qualifying territories are listed in Annex B.

## **G. No recourse to public funds**

16. Someone who has 'no recourse to public funds' included in their passport stamp would not be in breach of their immigration conditions if they had access to state-funded education in the UK. 'Public funds' are defined in the immigration rules, and the benefits and services listed do not include education or any education funding. This condition in a passport therefore makes no difference to a learner's eligibility, which must be determined under the normal eligibility criteria described in the paragraphs above.

## **H. Age**

17. A 16 year old learner is a learner who is aged 16 on 31 August in that particular academic year. Such learners are normally eligible for Medr post-16 funding, subject to other regulations in this guidance.
18. To maintain eligibility for funding for individual learners during a learning programme, a wider definition is used by the funding bodies. A learner who was aged 16 on 31 August at the start of the funding year when they began a learning programme, as recorded on their learning agreement, continues to be funded until their learning programme ends.
19. A learning programme comprises all of a learner's activities that lead to a set of outcomes agreed with the learner as part of their information, advice and guidance (IAG) process. A learning programme may be composed of one or more learning aims and may span more than one funding year.

## **I. Learners under 16**

20. In Wales, a learner can legally leave school on the last Friday in June, as long as they'll be 16 by the end of that school year's summer holidays. For the purposes of funding, 'under 16' means aged under 16 on 31 August in that particular academic year.
21. Medr advises providers to involve the school and LA in discussions when parents seek to enrol a young person of compulsory school age on a post-16 programme, and that young person has previously been in provision funded by a LA (a maintained school, alternative provision or 'education otherwise') or in an academy or free school. In most cases, a provider wishing to enrol a learner aged under 16 on 31 August should seek funding from the LA, school or academy if appropriate.

22. Medr will only fund provision for learners of compulsory school age via post-16 funding when:
- i. the learner is engaged in a Junior Apprenticeship; and
  - ii. provision and facilities (both teaching and non-teaching) must be compatible with the learner's age, ability and aptitude; and
  - iii. the enrolment is with the knowledge and agreement of the learner's parent/guardian and the LA.
23. Where all of the above circumstances are present, FEIs do not need to contact Medr to obtain written approval for funding prior to a commitment being given.
24. Where a learner of compulsory school age attends a course of study outside school hours, for example enrolling on an evening class with an FE college or adult learning provider, this will not be eligible for post-16 funding.
25. Medr will not fund FE institutions directly for learners who are enrolled full-time in any school and who wish to follow part of their programme at a FE institution during school hours. In such circumstances, whatever the age of the learner, this provision should be treated as collaborative or link provision, and the school is expected to meet the costs of this provision.

#### **J. Learners from England, Scotland or Northern Ireland**

26. England, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own funding arrangements. There may be exceptional circumstances where, on occasion, individual Scottish or English learners wish to travel to or reside in Wales to study when specialist provision is not offered locally.
27. Learners who come across the border from England to attend nearby Local Authority school sixth forms or Further Education institutions are eligible for post-16 funding, in accordance with informal reciprocal agreements with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Providers must not, however, actively market their provision to learners domiciled in England.
28. Learners of all nationalities who are dependants of serving members of the British Armed Forces and studying in Wales must be considered eligible for funding throughout their period of service on the same basis as other learner legally living in Wales where they attend funded providers.

#### **K. Higher Education (HE) learners**

29. Medr does not fund FE qualifications or other programmes for individuals or groups of HE learners. If, in order to gain a HE qualifications, a group of learners requires, for example, key skills, additional tuition in mathematics or sports coaching awards, then this would normally be funded out of the resources provided for the HE programmes.

#### **L. Enrolment at more than one Medr-funded provider**

30. While Medr recognises that learners may occasionally enrol at more than one provider, groups of learners enrolled on a full-time programme at one provider must

not be enrolled for funding purposes on any programmes with other providers, including through subcontracted provision.

#### **M. Parents-to-be**

31. Learners who are expecting to be unavoidably absent from learning for a period of time, such as for maternity or paternity leave, should not be discouraged from entering into a learning agreement. Providers should ensure that the planned start and end dates for the learner's programme, as agreed at the commencement of the programme, reflect the overall planned duration of study.

#### **N. Provision for offenders**

32. FE institutions delivering Personal Learning Account programme to learners detained in Welsh prisons may treat detainees as learners eligible for Medr mainstream funding as long as the programme guidance / specification is met in full.

#### **O. Learners not eligible for Medr funding**

33. Learners are usually only eligible for one Medr post-16 full-time programme at a time as the funding provided is intended to cover the whole of their learning programme. For example, a school sixth form learner will be ineligible for other Medr funding; all and any additional educational programmes that are appropriate for individual learners should be claimed through their full-time provider. All learners attending private fee paying providers are ineligible for post-16 funding at all Medr-funded providers and any of their subcontractors.
34. Learners undertaking full-time HE programmes are ineligible for post-16 funding.
35. All learners who require a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies in order to obtain a Home Office Learner visa to study in the UK are ineligible for Medr funding. Learners from overseas whose main reason for residence in Wales has been attendance at a fee-paying school or non-maintained school are not usually eligible for funding. Periods spent in the UK as overseas fee-paying learners in either public or private education do not count towards the 3 year period of legal residency in the UK that is usually required from all overseas learners to be eligible for Medr funding.
36. For funding purposes, an 'overseas' learner will be defined as one who does not meet the criteria defining a 'home' learner as set out in paragraphs 11 to 14. Overseas learners are not eligible for funding and providers can charge these learners full-cost tuition fees.
37. All learners living in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man are ineligible for Medr funding as the funding responsibility for their programmes remains with their own independent governments.

#### **P. Compliance evidence of learner eligibility**

38. Medr recognises that different procedures and emphasis will be appropriate to different types of learner. It is for providers to decide what procedures to conduct to ensure that learners are eligible for funding. Providers that choose not to conduct any

procedures will put their programme funding at risk. Therefore, providers must have auditable evidence of:

- a) the process used for the enrolment
- b) the record of teaching or support activity for each learner
- c) evidence of the learner's age to support the safeguarding of all learners attending the provider

39. Providers must scrutinise applications for study by all learners to ensure that they are eligible for Medr funding according to all advice in this section and to support the learner's case for consideration as ordinarily resident in Wales.
40. In line with the GDPR, we advise providers to record documentation, rather than take copies to prove eligibility. This includes relevant documentary evidence to support individual learner eligibility granted for learners who have not been ordinarily resident for 3 years. When providers record that they have seen documentation, they must be fully aware of the implications of the documents they are approving. Medr advises providers that they do not need to copy passports and should record passport numbers or references only where necessary.
41. Foreign nationals will have Home Office documentation that outlines their status, for example, RS, HP, DL or ELE/ELR in the UK. Asylum seekers will be able to produce an application registration card which is issued on or close to the date of their asylum claim. The date of issue will be recorded on the application registration card. EU, EEA or Swiss learners can use an [online service](#) to prove their immigration status. Providers can continue to accept EU citizens' passports and identity cards as evidence of their immigration status until 30 June 2021.
42. Providers' relevant departments must check enrolment forms to see if evidence has been gathered on the residency status and eligibility of the learner.

#### **Q. Learning agreement and enrolment forms**

43. Medr considers it essential that learners have access to clear and full information on any charges for their programme before enrolment and that they are provided with initial advice and guidance. The successful outcome of initial advice and guidance is a learning agreement or enrolment form signed by the learner and the provider. While recognising that different types of learner may require different approaches to advice and guidance, the learning agreement/enrolment form (either as separate or combined forms) must provide confirmation that the following broad areas have been covered:
  - a) the choice of learning programme
  - b) entry requirements for each learning aim within the learning programme
  - c) an assessment of the suitability of the learning programme
  - d) support for the learner, and
  - e) the nature of the procedures involved in the process of providing advice and guidance.
44. A provider must retain a learning agreement and/or enrolment form signed on behalf of the provider and by the learner as compliance evidence to support full-time programmes funding claims. While all learners funded by Medr must have a learning

agreement, the detail should be proportionate to the length of the learning programme. Medr is aware that providers may have invested in electronic signature recording systems and these are acceptable where the learner has made an electronic or digital signature and the document has also been appropriately signed by a member of staff of the provider. In such cases the learners must be given either an electronic or paper copy of the document they have signed. We have included our standard advice on how to evidence electronic signatures in Annex C.

45. Providers must ensure they are not recruiting learners already enrolled on study programmes with other Medr-funded providers or act in any way to entice learners away from any existing study programmes.
46. The learning agreement and/or enrolment form must include the following key details:
  - a) the learner's name, address (including the postcode and time spent at that address), age and residency status, which will indicate whether the learner is a home or overseas learner. For learners not resident in the UK for the 3 years prior to the commencement of their programme, providers must be able to evidence alternative learner eligibility as set out in paragraphs 12 to 14
  - b) the learning programme and expected learner outcomes, including start and end dates for all learning aims
  - c) the number of planned hours or other planned funded activities in each year of the programme
  - d) where provision, including IAG for the learner, is delivered by a subcontractor the Medr-funded provider should make sure that IAG of an equivalent quality is being delivered to these learners
  - e) evidence of the assessment and guidance process by which the learning agreement was reached must be recorded
  - f) all learners must have seen the Welsh Government privacy notice (formerly the data protection statement) during their enrolment process
  - g) confirmation that part-time learners are not enrolled on any full-time funded study programmes at other providers must be included within these documents. Providers must use the Learner Record Service to verify that such learners are only attending their own organisation
47. All providers must make sure that they and all of their subcontractors fully understand the rules on learner eligibility.

## Contact details

For any queries relating to the content of this document, please contact Medr at [InvestmentandMonitoring@medr.cymru](mailto:InvestmentandMonitoring@medr.cymru).

## Annex A: Planning and funding cycle

August 2025: Medr receives PLASC data from Welsh Government and begins work on the allocation process for 2026/2027

September 2025: Funding LLWR Data Freeze snapshot takes place – used for 2025/2026 funding year audit, monitoring, and reclaim exercises

November 2025: Medr receives indicative 2026-2027 budget from Welsh Government and indicative allocations are presented to Medr board

December 2025: Performance measures LLWR Data Freeze – used to produce 2025/2026 learners' outcomes, destination, statistical releases and consistent measure reports

January 2026: Medr receives the official funding letter from Welsh Government and informs providers of indicative allocations

January / February / March 2026: Planning Templates are distributed to providers for completion

February / March / April 2026: Completed templates are returned to Medr

March 2026: Final budget paper is submitted to Medr board by the Director Development, Investment and Performance; investment then communicated with LAs and FEIs

March 2026: Medr publishes learner outcome data for 2024/25

April 2026: The 2026/27 *Funding Publication, Programmes Directory, Post-16 Funding Framework: Guidance* and other relevant specification documents are made available on the Medr website

May 2026: The 2026/27 *Terms and Conditions of Grant* are shared with providers

May / June 2026: Medr commence planning meetings with providers

August 2026: Providers start to receive the first of 12 payments for the academic year – payments are made monthly (20th of each month) until end of academic year (July 2027)

September 2026: LLWR Data Freeze snapshot takes place – used for 2025/2026 academic year audit, monitoring, and reclaim exercises

December 2026: 2026/2027 initial funding monitoring snapshot – used to check for increased participation

December 2026: Performance measures LLWR Data Freeze – used to produce 2025/2026 learner outcomes, destination, statistical releases and consistent measure reports

March 2027: Medr publishes learner outcome data for 2025/26

## **Annex B: Defining EU, EEA and eligible overseas dependent territories as at 31 December 2020**

This annex lists the qualifying countries and/or areas that establish learner eligibility for Medr's Post-16 Funding.

### **A. Member States of the EU**

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden

### **B. Notes on certain territories that fall within the EU**

The following notes provide further guidance as to those territories which are regarded as part of the EU for the purposes of funding eligibility for those who moved to the UK before the 1 January 2021:

- a) Finland: includes Aland Islands
- b) France: the French Overseas Department (DOMS) (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana (Guyana), Reunion and Saint-Pierre et Miquelon) is part of metropolitan France and is part of the EU
- c) Germany: includes territory of the former German Democratic Republic prior to German unification. The tax-free port of Heligoland is included within the EU
- d) Portugal: Madeira and the Azores are part of the EU. Macao is not included
- e) Spain: the Balearic Islands, the Canaries, Ceuta and Melilla are part of the EU

- f) Other territories: Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican are not part of the EU

### **C. Member states of the EEA**

This includes all the EU countries and territories listed above, together with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. For simplicity, for providers that have to assess learners for eligibility for Medr funding, Switzerland is treated as within the EEA. In law, Switzerland is not part of the formally recognised EEA, but its citizens are similarly eligible under various international treaties signed by the UK and Swiss governments.

### **D. Eligible overseas territories**

These will be either UK or EU overseas territories for which Medr will allow providers to claim funding (please refer to paragraph 15 in the main guidance).

#### Eligible British Overseas Territories

- Anguilla
- Bermuda
- British Antarctic territory
- British Indian Ocean territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman Islands
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Montserrat
- Pitcairn, Ducie and Oeno Islands
- Henderson Island
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich
- St Helena and its Dependencies
- Turks and Caicos

#### Eligible overseas territories of other EU member states (for those who moved to UK before 1 January 2021)

- a) Denmark
  - Greenland and Faroe Islands
- b) France
  - New Caledonia and dependencies
  - French Polynesia
  - Wallis and Fortuna
  - Mayotte
  - French Southern and Antarctic Territories
  - St Barthélemy
- c) Netherlands
  - Antilles (Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten) and Aruba

## Annex C: Electronic signatures

### A. Evidencing electronic signatures

We accept electronic evidence, including electronic/digital signatures. Where evidence is electronic, you must have wider systems and processes in place to assure you that learners exist and are eligible for funding.

Both electronic and digital signatures are acceptable, we do not specify which should be used, only that a secure process to obtain and store signatures is followed.

An electronic signature is defined as any electronic symbol or process that is associated with any record or document where there is an intention to sign the document by any party involved. An electronic signature can be anything from a check box to a signature.

A digital signature is where a document with an electronic signature is secured by a process making it non-refutable. It's a digital fingerprint which captures the act of signing by applying security to a document. Usually documents which have a digital signature embedded are extremely secure and cannot be accessed or amended easily.

Where an electronic or digital signature is being held, from any party for any reason, you must ensure it is non-refutable, this includes the definitions of both wet and dry signatures. Systems and processes must be in place to assure to us the original signature has not been altered. Where any document needs to be renewed, and a new signature taken, it must be clear from when the new document takes effect, and both must be held.

### B. Alternative evidence for electronic or digital signatures

A wet signature is created when a person physically 'marks' a document. 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.

Medr recognises that providers delivering training and/or recruiting learners may for a small number of disadvantaged learners experience difficulty in obtaining learner and employer wet signatures. Where providers do not have systems and processes in place for electronic/digital signatures, we will allow confirmation/evidence to be obtained through email as detailed below.

We expect for funding compliance purposes a record of acknowledgement or adoption of a genuine electronic message or document. Acceptable alternative evidence includes:

- an email from the learner (or for work experience employer 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
- a signed scanned document attached to an email from the learner; or
- a photo taken on a camera/digital medium of the signed document attached to an email from the learner

We are allowing providers to use this type of electronic confirmation (as detailed above) only where no other useable digital or electronic processes exist. This advice recognises that some disadvantaged learners may have difficulties meeting the usual requirements.

This is not to be used as alternative evidence as a general part of the institution's business as usual processes. Providers must ensure that all alternative evidence replacing wet signatures received is genuine and irrefutable, and the evidence is retained for funding compliance and audit purposes.

#### **Annex D: List of common workplace safety training provision**

The following list is non-exhaustive. Any qualifications or training not specifically listed that are primarily intended to support workplace health and safety should also be considered within this category and are therefore not eligible for Medr funding.

- Working at Heights
- Asbestos Awareness
- Abrasive Wheels
- COSHH / Principles of COSHH
- Emergency First Aid / First Aid at Work
- Manual Handling
- Food Safety / Food Hygiene
- Risk Assessment
- Supervising Teams Safely
- Fire Safety / Fire Risk Assessment
- Ladder Safety
- DSE Assessor
- Hand Arm Vibration
- Legionella Awareness
- Scaffolding Safety
- Site Safety
- Confined Spaces
- Client Contractor National Safety Group (CCNSG) Safety Passport
- CompEx qualifications
- Personal Protective Equipment
- PASMA Towers / Access
- IOSH Working / Managing Safely
- NEBOSH Health and Safety suite of qualifications
- Job Cards schemes where a Health, Safety and Environment Test is a must have requirement

# Medr

Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil  
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

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