



To: All local authorities, service children education providers and school's MI suppliers

Autumn School Census 2024 – Readiness Bulletin Number 2

Purpose

The purpose of this note is to provide school census contacts with important information in readiness for the 2024 autumn school census. All school census contacts should have already received an early warning readiness email (issued 6 September 2024) and the advice offered here should be read in conjunction with that bulletin.

Data collection timetable and key dates

The census date for the 2024 autumn school census is **Thursday 3 October** with the LA Submission deadline for maintained schools being **Friday 4 October**.

DfE strongly encourage schools to submit their census returns to the department as soon as possible so that they can provide additional support where needed. Schools or local authorities should contact us straight away if they anticipate any issues in making a complete census return.

Autumn COLLECT familiarisation blade

The familiarisation blade remains available but will be removed at 4pm on Friday 27 September and cleared out in advance of the start of the live collection.

School census 2024 to 2025 guide

A guide for the 2024-25 academic year is now available [here](#). We would ask that you also look at the section which covers changes since the previous census [here](#).

COLLECT user guides

To assist schools and local authorities with using the COLLECT system to make a successful school census return, we have published COLLECT user guides on the school census website. These can be found at [here](#)

Funding update and COLLECT funding reports

This is a reminder that the data collected via the 2024 autumn school census will be used in the calculation of the schools block, early years block and high needs block of the dedicated schools grant, pupil premium allocations for mainstream and special schools, early years pupil premium allocations and also the universal infant free school meals funding therefore it is vitally important that the census data for your schools' are submitted promptly and accurately. Post 16 data collected via the autumn school census will be used by the education and skills funding agency (ESFA) to calculate post 16 funding allocations for schools with sixth forms.

Reports showing information which will feed into the calculations for the dedicated schools grant, pupil premium, early years pupil premium, the universal infant free school meal and post 16 will be available via the reports section in COLLECT. It is essential that these reports are checked and verified in conjunction with LA Finance Officers in advance of the autumn school census database closing to amendments from schools and local authorities on 27 November. Amendments to the database will not be possible after this date and, consequently, this will be your only opportunity to contest your funding pupil numbers.

To assist with using and interpreting the funding reports, funding report user guides are available [here](#).

16-19 funding reports

The ESFA school census autumn 2024: 16 to 19 reports will be available throughout the live collection, via the 'launch reports' button in COLLECT.

The report suite comprises eight reports: four reporting on student data for the current year and four on student data for the previous year, both of which are used in 16 to 19 funding allocations. They contain information on how your funding may be affected next year.

- ESFA 16-19 maths and English GCSE status by student (current academic year data)
- ESFA 16-19 maths and English GCSE status by student (previous academic year data)
- ESFA funded students summary report (current academic year data)
- ESFA funded students summary report (previous academic year data)
- ESFA student detail report (current academic year data)
- ESFA student detail report (previous academic year data)
- ESFA T-Level students report (current academic year data)
- ESFA T-Level students report (previous academic year data)

DfE have developed the reports to help schools and academies quality assure their post-16 data and make more accurate census returns. Post-16 funding allocations are based

on census data from individual schools and academies, so returning accurate data is a key factor in ensuring the allocation is right.

Information on the reports is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

It gives information about the reports' contents and sets out some of the common data issues.

The complementary school census post-16 interactive tool is available [here] (www.gov.uk/government/publications/interactive-post-16-school-census-tool). The tool is designed to help schools and academies understand how school census data is used to calculate post-16 funding, and how common errors impact on the level of funding. We encourage schools and academies to use the tool so that they can avoid errors in recording:

- GCSE maths and English prior attainment
- valid, up-to-date qualification numbers (QNs)
- transfers and withdrawals
- core aim
- planned hours

There are examples of all these errors and their solutions in the tool.

COLLECT duplicate reports

There are 2 different duplicate reports which are available for schools and local authorities to run in COLLECT and a separate guidance document is available [here](#) for each report. These reports are:

- (i) duplicate report – Same UPN
- (ii) duplicate report – Same Person Different UPN

New reports validation

We have received a number of queries since we announced the introduction of the reports validation checks in the previous readiness bulletin so wanted to clarify the following:

This is not a new requirement; it has always been expected that schools run these reports to check the accuracy of their data. For those schools that have been using these reports to ensure their return is accurate and complete, this query will therefore have no impact.

However, unfortunately, there has been an increase in the number of schools making errors in their census return which has in turn significantly impacted their funding allocations. These errors could have been easily identified if schools had checked these relevant reports and made the necessary changes to their census prior to the database closing.

This query was therefore introduced to highlight to the school and, for maintained schools, the local authority where this has not been done. It will still be a local decision

on whether these reports are run by schools to check the accuracy of the school census returns or whether they are checked via other means (for example, outside of COLLECT). For example, if the local authority (or another third party acting on behalf of the school) check the accuracy on the school's behalf this should be stated in the notepad. In these circumstances, the query will remain, but the Department will still 'authorise' the return.

Known issues

These are issues which have been identified in the XSLT sent to software providers, please note a further XSLT has been issued, however it may be too late for your school software supplier to implement these changes in time for the autumn census.

E1763

The XSLT has the incorrect FSM end date range of 2024-05-16 to 2024-10-03. The correct date range is 2024-05-17 to 2024-10-03, therefore this will not trigger in the MIS for pupil's who have a FSM end date of 2024-05-16. However, the error will trigger correctly when the return is loaded onto COLLECT.

E2002

NC year X has been excluded from this check in the XSLT, however the error will trigger where relevant when loaded onto COLLECT.

4008q

This query did not include learner FAM tuition code 01 for students 16-19. At this late stage we recognise that suppliers may not have been able to implement in their software. Therefore if there are no 16-19 students receiving tuition this query will not trigger in the school's MIS, however it will trigger when the return has been loaded onto COLLECT.

Error 3036

This error will trigger correctly, however it will display an incorrect error message in XSLT which only refers to 2 year olds. The correct error message relating to pupils aged 9 months to 2 year olds will display in COLLECT.

Term-on-term validation

A user guide for the term on term queries which are applied as part of the school census will shortly be available [here](#). This user guide sets out what term-on-term validation checks are carried out, how they are derived and what the thresholds are.

Notepad entries

Where validation queries are raised in COLLECT, an explanation will be required for these queries in the return level notes field within COLLECT. Please note that the department will require sufficient detail in these explanations to allow the queries to be accepted and returns authorised.

A guide is available [here](#) providing examples of what would be regarded as an acceptable notepad entry for queries on each termly census. Within this workbook there are separate tables for school level queries, pupil level queries and term on term queries. Please note that the examples within this document are only provided for illustrative purposes and should not be used as a simple 'copy and paste' into COLLECT – a relevant explanation for an individual school's circumstances should be provided.

Further support

A data collection forum is available for all data collection contacts to access. The purpose of the forum is to provide a facility to allow customers to exchange ideas and good practice relating to specific data collections and related Data Operations systems. To gain access to the forum please complete a service request form [here](#)

As always, if you have any queries about any of the points covered in this note, COLLECT or school census in general, please use the service request form [here](#)

Please use the feedback form [here](#) if you have any comments about the data collection content on the web site, the service offered by the data collection helpdesk, the COLLECT system or any other aspect of our data collection service.

Thank you for your support and cooperation

Kind regards

Data Operations Service Desk