

ESFA to simplify the way colleges submit their data

ESFA are introducing a new way for colleges to submit their data which is set to help college governors, and the agency, spot signs of declining financial health and ensure [preventative action can be taken at an earlier stage](#).

Historically, providers submitted their financial returns at least twice a year, but from January 2020, returns will be consolidated into a single annual return. Colleges in early intervention or formal intervention; or otherwise in receipt of ESFA loans, will need to submit returns on a more frequent basis.

Colleges will need to submit their finance record for the last time in December with the new simpler model coming into force in the new year.

The model has been created in collaboration with colleges and is designed to meet user needs, giving colleges greater flexibility to cope with variation in how they manage their finances.

Nearly 50 colleges engaged with user research sessions and contributed to the design and build phase, with the Association of Colleges and Sixth Form College Association supporting the ESFA on the model's intent and scope.

A user group of financial directors have been involved in testing and developing the model with input into key decisions such as the model format and when annual collections should take place. This work is set to continue beyond the model coming into force in the new year.

Julian Gravatt, Deputy Chief Executive Association of Colleges said:

Colleges work with a robust set of financial rules developed by ESFA and its predecessors over the last 25 years. The new financial model is a major upgrade and we're pleased at the Association of Colleges that the agency is working closely with college finance directors to put it in place

Eileen Milner, ESFA Chief Executive said:

We are committed to ensuring that we balance the risks of protecting public funds, and preventing colleges going into financial decline with a commitment to ask from the sector for things which are reasonable.

We are recruiting a qualified team to implement the model, which our process of testing with colleagues in the sector, suggests will save colleges a significant amount of time and resources so they

can focus their efforts on delivering high quality education.

The new financial model has been developed to replace the longstanding biannual returns of the finance record in December and the financial plan in July, as well as the Cash Flow Against Debt Servicing (CFADS) and the cash flow template.

The introduction of the new financial model follows on from recent changes to the way colleges submit their financial information with the development of an online submission portal that was first used by colleges in July.

We will announce more details about the release of the financial model on GOV.UK.

Venezuelan applications for Chevening Scholarships open until 5 November 2019

The application period for the Chevening Scholarships programme to study in the UK will be open from 5 August to 5 November 2019. The potential candidates will have to submit their application through www.chevening.org/apply.

Chevening Scholarships are awarded to individuals with demonstrable leadership potential, strong academic backgrounds and a proven capacity for effective networking. The programme offers complete financial support (including tuition fees, flights and a monthly stipend) to study any eligible master's degree at any UK university. Likewise, the scholars can enjoy a wide range of exclusive academic, professional, and cultural experiences in Britain.

Since the creation of the programme in 1983, over 50.000 professionals (including 430 Venezuelans) have had the opportunity to study in the UK through Chevening. For the 2020-2021 academic period, there will be over 1.500 available scholarships worldwide, reaffirming the UK's commitment with the development of future world leaders.

In the case of Venezuela, 11 scholarships were awarded for the 2018-2019 academic period and ten additional scholarships for 2019-2020.

The British Ambassador to Venezuela, Andrew Soper, said:

The British Government is helping promote Venezuela's development and prosperity by investing in the next generation of leaders

through our Chevening Scholarship Programme. These cover all the costs of studying a one-year master's degree at one of Britain's excellent universities. This not only provides a world class education, but also a fantastic opportunity to enjoy all that the UK has to offer.

Chevening Scholars become part of a worldwide alumni network offering support, advice and shared experiences. If you are an ambitious, dedicated young Venezuelan who wants to make a positive difference to your country's future, please take a look at the Chevening programme and submit your application before 5 November.

For the 2020-2021 academic period, human rights (including freedom of expression, gender equality and democratic capacity building), humanitarian affairs, sustainable development, climate change and energy are part of the priority areas for the British Embassy in Caracas.

Chevening scholarships are awarded to individuals with leadership potential and strong academic backgrounds

For more information, please visit www.chevening.org or the social media accounts of the British Embassy in Caracas on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) (@UKinVenezuela).

[Get Ready for Brexit on 31 October](#)



The UK government has launched a [‘Get Ready for Brexit’](#) public information campaign to help ensure the general public and businesses are ready when the UK leaves the EU on 31 October 2019.

Many businesses will be affected by changes as we leave the EU, particularly those who:

- import or export

- deal with data
- employ EU nationals

A new [checker tool](#) will help businesses to identify quickly what they need to do to 'Get Ready for Brexit'.

As part of the campaign, starting from Monday 16 September, there will be 30 'Get Ready for Brexit' events across the country for businesses and organisations. To find out more and book, visit [Brexit Business Readiness Events](#).

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[1.5 million people apply to the EU Settlement Scheme](#)

The government has today (12 September 2019) announced that more than 1.5 million people have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme.

It comes as the Home Office published the latest official statistics on the EU Settlement Scheme up to 31 August 2019, showing that by the end of that month over 1.1 million applicants had been granted status under the scheme.

The figures show that almost 300,000 people applied in the month of August. Over 1.2 million applications had been received from individuals in England, with marked increases also seen in applications from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Complete applications are typically being processed within 1 to 4 days.

The highest number of applications came from Polish nationals, with over 60,000 applications in August – more than double the number received in July.

Minister of State for the Home Office Brandon Lewis said:

We've been crystal clear – EU citizens are our friends and neighbours, and we want them to stay in the UK. I am delighted that over 1.5 million people have already applied.

We are looking for reasons to grant status and this week I visited our hard working Settlement Resolution team in Liverpool to see first-hand how we are supporting EU citizens to protect their rights and get the status they need.

The EU Settlement Scheme is designed to make it straightforward for EU

citizens and their family members to stay after the UK leaves the EU. To apply they only need to complete 3 key steps – prove their identity, show that they live in the UK and declare any criminal convictions.

There is a wide range of support available for EU citizens and their families via phone, email and in person.

More than 1,500 Home Office staff are working on the scheme and there is a dedicated Settlement Resolution Centre, where staff are providing tailored support to guide applicants through the process.

Applicants can call the dedicated helpline on 0300 123 7379 from within the UK or +44 (0)203 080 0010 from outside the UK if they require assistance.

There are also over 300 assisted digital locations supporting those with limited computer access or skills and a network of 57 organisations, funded by the Home Office, helping vulnerable people such as the homeless, disabled and elderly to apply.

Pam Gill, Deputy Chief Executive Officer at The Refugee and Migrant Centre, which has received almost £200,000 of Home Office grant funding, said:

We welcome the EU Settlement Scheme's progress with over 1.5 million people having now applied for the status they need in order to live and work in the UK after Brexit.

At The Refugee and Migrant Centre we support EU citizens and their families in the Black Country and Birmingham to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme and we have already assisted over 3,500 people with this simple and straightforward process.

We want to do more and we encourage all eligible EU citizens and their families to apply so that they too can feel confident about their future in the United Kingdom after Brexit.

Employers are also stepping in to support their own staff to make applications and making use of a Home Office employer's toolkit, designed to give them practical advice to support their staff.

Deal or no deal, EU citizens and their family members will have until at least 31 December 2020 to apply.

The figure of 1.5 million people having applied has been obtained from internal management information and is not part of the published statistics.

UK announces 2-year post-study work visa for international students

The new 'Graduate' immigration route will be open to all international students – including those from China – who have valid UK immigration status as a student and have successfully completed a course of study at undergraduate level or above, at an approved UK Higher Education Provider. The visa will allow eligible students to work, or look for work, at any skill level or subject, giving them valuable work experience at the start of their careers.

This will build on government action to help recruit and retain the best and brightest global talent, but also open up opportunities for future breakthroughs in science, technology and research and other world-leading work that international talent brings to the UK.

It follows recent announcements, such as the creation of a new fast-track visa route for scientists and the removal of the limit on PHD students moving into the skilled work visa route, which collectively aim to cement the UK as a science superpower and a world-leader in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) sector.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The new Graduate Route will mean talented international students, whether in science and maths or technology and engineering, can study in the UK and then gain valuable work experience as they go on to build successful careers.

It demonstrates our global outlook and will ensure that we continue to attract the best and brightest.

Dame Barbara Woodward, the British Ambassador to China said:

This is great news for Chinese students! The new Graduate visa will give students a 2 year opportunity to find work that builds on their degree qualification and gives them valuable international work experience.

The UK is a popular choice for Chinese students because it is home to three of the top ten universities in the world. Last year alone over 100,000 Chinese students came to the UK to study and this number grows each year.

The UK remains open and welcoming for Chinese students, visitors and business people, with over 100 direct flights per week between the UK and China.

Notes

- This follows a shake-up of immigration rules [announced by the Prime Minister](#) in August to encourage the world's top scientists to move to the UK.
- The new route will launch for the 2020/21 intake of students to university. After the two years, they will be able to switch onto the skilled work visa if they find a job which meets the skill requirement of the route.
- The UK has seen a strong increase in Chinese student numbers in recent years. The latest available statistics are [on the Home Office website](#).
- The status of each institution will be shown in the register of licensed sponsors, which is publicly available [on the GOV.UK website](#).