Competency Inbound Interface - FAQ

Introduction

The Electronic Staff Record is part of the Workforce Services Directorate within the NHS Business Services Authority. ESR is managed by the NHS ESR Central Team and offers the provision of an integrated hire to retire workforce management solution for the NHS in England and Wales.

With increasing pressure on NHS budgets, the ESR solution is supporting organisations to reduce costs, improve workforce planning and management and empower NHS managers and employees to take ownership of their data.

NHS England have developed the Enabling Staff Movement Programme which “aims to improve the pre-employment experience of doctors in training by enabling staff to move seamlessly between NHS organisations. It seeks to break down unnecessary bureaucracy, promote standardisation of policies, processes and systems, and reduce burden on HR teams.” Ultimately, the programme seeks to improve the movement of NHS staff within and around the Service by reducing duplication of training and induction admin.

One of the key areas identified to improve was the portability of mandatory training records. The NHS ESR Programme has developed the Competency Inbound interface (previously known as the CSTF interface) which has been tested with Learning Management Systems (LMS) via the Proof of Concept and Pilot implementations, allowing data to be shared with ESR. This supports the use of the ESR IAT with NHS Movers, facilitating the movement of this data alongside the individual and reducing unnecessary repeated training.

Document Purpose

This FAQ document has been developed to assist existing and prospective users with some common questions and to provide a brief overview of the interface functionality, as well as lending insight to key business process considerations and troubleshooting.

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FAQs

1. About the interface

What is the purpose of the interface?

NHS Organisations may use third party learning systems to record learning completions for Subjects identified in the UK Core Skills Training Framework (CSTF) Statutory/Mandatory Subject Guide. The CSTF Framework allows employers to recognise the associated training to a national standard, trust the information and reduce duplication of training. Further information can be found on the Skills for Health website which is provided in the Appendix.

A new ESR Interface has been developed to facilitate the transfer of specified learning completions (including refresher training), from third party learning management systems (LMS) into ESR. This will then ensure that relevant training records are transferred between NHS Organisations via the Inter Authority Transfer process (IAT) within ESR as staff rotate between organisations. This removes the need for unnecessary repeated training and the provision of evidence from previous organisations will also no longer be needed due to the electronic transfer.

Who is championing the interface?

The NHS ESR Programme has developed and delivered the solution to achieve one of the six principles identified in NHS England's Enabling Staff Movement Programme, with a view to create efficiencies and remove duplication of effort and repetition of training. By their nature, doctors in rotations work across various NHS Organisations and would therefore benefit the most from this offering; however, this will also benefit other staff groups that move around within the NHS.

What is in scope for this interface?

For employing organisations that do not use or intend to use ESR for Learning Management, a Competency Inbound Interface is available to operate between ESR and Third Party Learning Management Systems (LMS). The interface was developed to provide a method by which the Subjects identified in the UK Core Skills Training Framework (CSTF) Statutory/Mandatory Subject Guide could be transferred to ESR.

Following the release of the NHS England StatMand Staff Movement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to organisations, changes have been made to the Competency Inbound Interface to support the addition of 'Learning disabilities and autism training' to the list of subjects that organisations must accept prior training for.
The NHS organisation that seeks to implement the interface must be aligned to the Skills for Health framework. It is acknowledged that some NHS Organisations record training differently using a variety of systems and local variation, so these are not considered in scope for the interface.

What information is shared between the systems

At go live, an initial ‘full file’ will be sent from ESR to the LMS which will hold personal identifiers for applicants and employees for the employing authority (or VPD), along with competence definitions and the CSTF learning held on ESR. The LMS will then provide updates for those employees held within its system and will return learning completion data to ESR, which is new or an update to the existing information on ESR. ‘Confirmation files’ will be sent back from ESR advising of the success or failure of each record’s update. This flow will continue after go live and will operate in ‘changes mode’ i.e. data will only be sent if there are updates or changes from either ESR or the LMS.

Can I request a ‘full file’ after the initial go live?

If an up to date ‘full file’ is required after go live, this can be requested via the service desk online system using the following path: “Request a new Service” → “AC” → “ESR Interfaces” → “Generic Outbound Interface - Full File Run”.

How often are the systems updated?

Files between the systems are exchanged daily and processed overnight by ESR and the LMS via the automated file exchange process.

Who is included on the interface?

The ESR person types eligible for processing on the interface will be employees and applicants who are at the stage of offer accepted, offered post unconditional or offered post conditional.

It is for the organisation to decide on whether they want to use the interface for all staff or whether to restrict this to a certain group of staff. The restriction will be decided at the implementation stage and can be set on the payroll, position or assignment level and will be ascertained during the work order process discussed in the section 3 below.

2. Business Processes

Do I need to use the IAT?

Yes! Using the IAT facilitates the flow of information within and between NHS Organisations as employees move around. It is important that you perform the pre-hire IAT (and respond to IAT requests) to bring across previous nationally recognised training for your applicant before they start.

In doing so, you can determine if they have any outstanding mandatory training that may need completing before they begin employment and will prevent them spending time undertaking training they have already completed. Alternatively, it will allow you to plan a more streamlined induction so only necessary training is completed.

If you need assistance with how to use the IAT, please refer to the ESR User Manual or speak to your ESR Functional Account Manager. Both of these are available on the ESR Hub: https://my.esr.nhs.uk

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Do I need to accept all learning received via an IAT?

The decision on which learning your organisation will accept, both via the interface and the IAT, is a local one and should be considered prior to implementing the interface. Your internal learning/training management teams and subject matter experts will be key to this discussion. It may be useful to consider creating standard documentation outlining your internal process which is visible for all team members. Through the Enabling Staff Movement work in your region, you may have agreed on the learning that should be transferred - this may assist in the decision around which to accept.

Contact your regional ESR Functional Account Manager for further queries. Contact details are provided in the **Appendix**.

What roles and URPs in ESR need to be allocated?

Prior to implementing the interface, it is recommended that a review of internal business processes is carried out to ensure that the key notification roles and URPs have been allocated appropriately within your organisation and that best practice is being followed. This is especially important in supporting the IAT process and will facilitate the smooth transfer of information, as well as making it easier to manage learning-related notifications effectively.

Some of the key roles and URPs have been identified below and further detail on each is signposted in the Appendix. Please get in touch with your ESR Functional Account Manager for further support and guidance on their allocation and best practice use.

Please visit https://my.esr.nhs.uk and navigate to 'Explore Resources' > 'ESR Functionality' > 'Human Resources' > 'ESR-NHS0060 Workflow Notifications Guide' for more information on notification roles. The following sections may be of particular interest to this interface:

- Stat & Mand Compencies Ntf role
- Multi-Employer Comp Update role
- Learning Administration URP
- IAT Initiation URP
- IAT Approval URP

Refer to the Appendix for further information and contact details for the ESR Functional Account Management Team.

There are also some responsibilities that need assigning in order for the workflow notifications to flow to the correct person. Please see the ESR IAT guidance for further information, or contact your ESR Functional Account Manager.

Do I need to cleanse my data?

Prior to implementing the interface, it is highly recommended that a data cleanse is performed in both ESR and your LMS to ensure that any irrelevant historic data has been removed. For example, maintenance of ESR Person records is vital to prevent duplicate and out of date information being sent across the interface e.g. terminating applicants where appropriate, such as those who are unsuccessful, and historic applicant records that are no longer relevant. This ensures that individuals only have one Person record in ESR (sometimes individuals can have a separate employee record and applicant record, for example, if records have not been maintained appropriately).

Cleansing your data will ensure that notifications are relevant and will help you make the most of the interface.

If you need help with how to do this in ESR, please contact your ESR Functional Account Manager.

How should I map the competencies between ESR and my LMS?

It is important that all CSTF learning completions sent by ESR are mapped appropriately to corresponding learning held within your LMS. Similarly, learning completions on the LMS need to be mapped to appropriate competencies in ESR. The mapping is a necessary pre-requisite to the build of the interface and should be carried out as a collaborative exercise between the learning management team and the LMS provider.

How you choose to perform this mapping is a local decision in partnership with your LMS supplier, but should correspond to your alignment with the Core Skills Training Framework. Careful note should be taken of which levels, versions and renewal periods are being used for each learning completion. Your ESR Functional Account Manager will be able to provide suggestions on best practice and how this may work for your organisation. Contact details are available in the **Appendix**.

3. Troubleshooting and Support

How do I request the interface?

Log into the ESR Service Desk and log a new Work Order using the following menu options: “Request a new Service” → “AC” → “ESR Interfaces” → “Other System Interfaces”.

Go to the “Offering Details” tab and provide the following answers to the five mandatory questions:

1. Requested date for Go Live?
    a. E.g. 30/01/2020 (expected go live date)
2. What is the name of the solution that you wish to interface with?
    a. (Eg Totara, PALMS, e-LFH)
3. Who supplies the solution, or is this a locally developed solution?
    a. (Eg. CLS, e-LFH, Kallidus, Think)
4. What business functionality will the solution provide?
    a. Transfer of CSTF Competency Information
5. What interface are you asking us to switch on?
    a. ESR Competency Inbound Interface
6. Have you read, and do you agree to the statement above regarding your duties as data controller?

As discussed in Part 1, during the implementation process via the SR, you will be asked to specify whether the interface should be restricted to a certain group or switched on for all.

For help on how to raise a Service Request on the ESR Service Desk, please refer to the guide available on the ESR Hub.

Is there a cost to this product?

The Interface is a chargeable interface and will be subject to the standard charging model, including the one-off implementation fee and the ongoing annual support costs.

NHS Organisations will be advised on the specific cost to their Organisation as part of the Service Request process

Who should I contact for support?

Depending on the specific case, issues may need to be resolved by your LMS supplier, the ESR Support Teams or internal colleagues. Some examples of commonly faced issues are presented below to help signpost you to the correct support:

Issue	Support Source
Issues with the data to/from the LMS e.g. appears to be incomplete, incorrect or isn't transferring properly	Raise an SR on the ESR Service Desk and a member of the team will investigate for you
ESR login issues e.g. forgotten password, credentials not working	Please contact the ESR Service Desk
Requesting a new interface	Please raise an SR on the ESR Service Desk and fill in the mandatory details
Need help making changes to a user's competency profile	Please contact your FAM.
How to setup competencies and learning correctly in ESR	Please contact your FAM or refer to the "How-To Guides" section of the https://www.esr-education.online/ website
The IAT process hasn't worked properly	Please contact the ESR Service Desk
Competency information is appearing multiple times	Please contact your LMS to ensure they are not sending the same data in repeatedly
The incorrect data for an individual has been received into ESR or data is missing	Please contact your LMS supplier in the first instance to ensure they have sent the data correctly

4. Appendix

UK Core Skills Training Framework

https://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/services/item/146-core-skills-training-framework

Roles & URPs: Further Detail
Please visit https://my.esr.nhs.uk and navigate to ‘Explore Resources’ > ‘ESR Functionality’ > ‘Human Resources’ > ‘ESR-NHS0060 Workflow Notifications Guide’ for more information on notification roles. The following sections may be of particular interest to this interface:

- Stat & Mand Compencies Ntf role
- Competency Expiry Notifications
- IAT Notifications
- Multi-Employer Comp Update role (Competency Profile Changes)

Suggested URPs associated with this interface that should be allocated as a minimum are:

- Learning Administration URP
- IAT Initiation URP
- IAT Approval URP

The *ESR Hub* also contains links on the front page to the ‘ESR User Manual’ and to ‘ESR User Guides’ for additional information and guidance on ESR functionality.

Contact Details for the ESR Functional Account Management Team
These are available on the ESR Hub using the following link:
https://my.esr.nhs.uk/dashboard/web/esrweb/communications-and-engagement-team

Document Library on the ESR Hub
A wealth of resources is available in the Document Library section of the ESR Hub which can be found here: ESRHUB_ROOT - Browse Content - ESR Hub - NHS Electronic Staff Record.

Additional resources and locations are available if you sign in to the ESR Hub using your ESR login details.