

Unique Learner Number



What is a Unique Learner Number?

A Unique Learner Number, or ULN, is a unique 10-digit identifier (currently used in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) given to anyone aged over 14 involved in education or training.

What is a ULN used for?

A ULN is used by Awarding Bodies to populate the Personal Learning Record, or PLR, with qualifications the learner achieves within the Qualification and Credit Framework, or QCF.

The learner uses their ULN to access their Personal Learning Record, which also allows organisations the learner selects to see their information.

The ULN is anonymous and no additional meaning can be drawn from it, for example, you cannot tell a learner's age, gender, location, ethnicity or level of learning from their ULN.

The ULN remains with the learner throughout their life, so that all their future learning experiences and achievements can be recorded and accessed in one place.

Is a ULN mandatory?

If a learner is working towards a Diploma or Functional Skills qualification, they must have a ULN.

For all other QCF qualifications, providers must have arrangements in place to obtain a ULN for their learners.

A learner can choose not to have a ULN, but no data can be added to a Personal Learning Record without one.

Who has to get the ULN?

The provider who the learner is registered with has to get the ULN for the learner. The provider must then supply the OCN with the ULN when they register the learner with us.

If a learner supplies the provider with a ULN they have previously been given, the provider must validate this with the Learner Registration Service before sending it to the OCN.

How does a provider get a ULN?

Managing Information Across Partners, or MIAP, operates the Learner Registration Service, which is responsible for issuing ULNs. To get ULNs, the provider must first register as a Learner Registration Body. Further information on how to do this can be found using the links overleaf.

How does the ULN affect the 14-19 Diploma?

In order for us to upload achievement that will contribute towards the Diploma, a ULN is required. As a Component Awarding Body, we upload learner achievement to the Diploma Aggregation Service, which will then tell the relevant Awarding Body when a learner has completed all the components required for a full Diploma, so that the Diploma Certificate can be issued. No achievement can be added to the learner's record without their ULN.

Why can't we use another identifier instead of the ULN?

Originally published on the QCDA website.

Existing Number	Why can't it be used for Diplomas?
Unique pupil number (UPN)	The UPN lapses when pupils leave schooling. However, some new qualifications do not have age or time limits. Diplomas are component-based qualifications awarded once the learner achieves the constituent qualifications. Aggregation therefore requires an identification number that remains with a learner beyond school-leaving age. In addition, the UPN is constructed in a way that allows information about a learner to be gleaned from the number itself and therefore has legal restrictions regarding who can see it.
Unique candidate identifier (UCI)	As centres allocate UCIs, students are often allocated a new number at the start of each academic year or are given a new number when transferring between schools. Therefore numbers can be duplicated. This already creates difficulties in aggregating grades, but the introduction of component-based qualifications, such as the Diploma, increases the amount of results requiring aggregation across centres. The ULN eliminates the possibility of duplication. As with the UPN, there are also data protection issues with the UCI.
National Insurance, NHS and passport numbers	Data protection legislation requires that these numbers are only used for their originally intended purpose. They are also unsuitable because not everyone who is eligible to undertake qualifications would have these numbers available to them.

Mini glossary

ULN	Unique Learner Number: 10 digit identifier allocated by the Learner Registration Service. It remains with the learner for life.
LRS	Learner Registration Service: Manages the allocation of the Unique Learner Number.
LRB	Learner Registration Body: In order to access the Learner Registration Service and obtain ULNs, a provider must first register as a Learner Registration Body.
MIAP	Managing Information Across Partners: The organisation responsible for the management of the Learner Registration Service.
PLR	Personal Learning Record: The web-based record of an individual learner's credit achievements. The learner can access this record, and can choose who to share their record with.
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework: Qualification and credit achievement from this framework will populate the Personal Learning Record.

Useful links

Department for Education - <http://www.education.gov.uk/>

MIAP/ULN - <http://www.miap.gov.uk/products/uln/>

MIAP/Learner Registration Service - <http://www.miap.gov.uk/products/lrs/>

MIAP/Learner Registration Body - <http://www.miap.gov.uk/products/lrs/implementationguide/step1signup/>

MIAP/Further Education - <http://www.miap.gov.uk/fe/>

MIAP/Schools - <http://www.miap.gov.uk/schools/>

DAS - <https://www.diplomaaggregationservice.org/DAS/Help/ContactUs.htm>

Available in an electronic format

Licensed by



For further information please contact:

OCN North East Region, 1 Palmer Road,
South West Industrial Estate, Peterlee SR8 2HU

T 0191 518 6550 F 0191 518 6551

E admin@ocnner.org.uk W www.ocnner.org.uk



The *Diversity* of Learning