



**MIAP**  
Managing Information  
Across Partners

**Learner Registration Service**  
**Searching for Learners**

Version 3.0

November 2009



## Contents

Contents .....	2
1. Purpose of Guidelines .....	3
2. Intended Audience .....	3
3. Introduction.....	3
4. Summary of Recommendations .....	4
5. Recommendations for searching learner details .....	5
5.1. Structure of names.....	6
5.2. More Search Suggestions .....	9
6. Recommendations for Recording/Updating Learner Details .....	12
6.1 Capturing Names.....	12
6.2 Capturing Addresses.....	13
6.3 Capturing other information.....	15

## 1 Purpose of Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to give you guidance on how to refine your search in the LRS to find learners:

- Search - Giving you tips that will give you the best chance of finding an existing learner record for a person.
- Capture - Providing recommendations for the best way to record a person's details in Learner Registration Service (LRS) in order to aid later retrieval.

By following guidance on both of these aspects you are also helping to maintain the quality of the MIAP LRS and reduce the likelihood of duplicate Learner records.

## 2 Intended Audience

This guidance is intended for registered users of the MIAP LRS who are obtaining ULNs from the LRS.

## 3 Introduction

The difficulties faced in developing the MIAP LRS are that it is a record of real people who have real lives. This may seem an obvious statement but recording real people offers many challenges to systems. Real peoples' lives are immensely varied and within a large population there will be a wide variety of combination of circumstances which reflect their lives.

Unfortunately systems like conformity and are extremely poor at dealing with unexpected scenarios which they are not specifically designed to handle. Add into this the fact that the peoples' details are input by a wide variety of different users across the learning provider community (Learner Registration Bodies - LRBs). Given the situation that each input user may interpret the way of recording an individual's situation differently, you have a high possibility of varied (or inconsistent) input into the MIAP LRS.

In this guide you will find tips on searching and capturing learner details with examples of some of the real life scenarios that can occur which will help you get better results out of MIAP LRS and record data more consistently.

MIAP cannot guarantee that all users will follow these guidelines for capturing data thus it is important for you to consider our recommendations for searching.

## 4 Summary of Searching Recommendations

Below is a one page summary of the key guidance points in this document.

1. Search should always be the first action you perform when obtaining a ULN for a person.
2. Always perform a search first before registering someone as a new learner.
3. Try searching using the person's previous family name before they were married or from a previous marriage.
4. Try swapping Given name and Family names around or use their middle name as their Given name.
5. Try searching for the person with and without a prefix/suffix on their Family name or use alternate forms of prefix/suffix (e.g. Mc Donald).
6. Try searching using their preferred or nickname as the Given name.
7. Check appropriate spelling of the person's name and consider using phonetic spelling.(e.g Czaja as Chiah)
8. Try using a Date of Birth, swapping Month and Day around (if less than or equal to 12) or try using the first of the month (01-MM-YYYY).
9. Try searching using a previous address postcode for the person (or their parent's postcode).
10. Try searching using a default postcode 'ZZ99 9ZZ'.
11. When you do find a possible match but you are not certain then check the Notes field on the learner's record.
12. When you are updating a family name copy the current family name into the previous family name field.
13. Use Address matching tools (such as <http://postcode.royalmail.com>) to produce a full address.
14. Always complete the address lines with the postcode.
15. Where date of birth is not known use the first of the month. If month is not known, use first of January of the relevant year.
16. If you are capturing the school at age 16 record either the proper school name, or a familiar or place name. Do not include the word 'School' or 'College' and keep it short.

Please print this page to refer to when using the LRS.

## 5 Recommendations for searching learner details

Recommendations for searching learner details are placed first in this guide deliberately as this should always be the first action you perform when seeking to obtain a ULN for a learner.

***“If at first you don’t succeed try, try again.”***

The above is the key aspect to remember. If your initial search yields possible matches, too many matches or no match then try some of the Tips in this section.

It is too easy as a user to ignore searching the MIAP LRS and move straight to obtaining a new ULN for the individual, however doing so will inevitably lead to larger number of duplications within MIAP LRS. This will reduce the effectiveness of the Personal Learning Record both for the learning provider community and for the learners themselves who will lose faith and trust in the system.

MIAP strongly urges all LRBs to perform some searching of MIAP LRS for every person before obtaining a ULN. Persistent offenders who go straight to create ULN and result in a pattern of duplicate creation will be raised as an issue to management.

Ideally you will obtain a ULN from an individual which will greatly aid your searching. However even with a ULN search you must also provide the person’s Given and Family Name. Therefore even with a ULN you can still return a No Match if the name is not entered correctly.

Demographic searches that do not include the ULN which use the Given name, Family name, Gender, Date of birth and Postcode can in a database which consists of millions of names yield varying results depending upon the input and the quality of the captured learner data.

The guidance given in this document can apply to both ULN and Demographic search routines. One of key reasons for not matching will be differences in the Given or Family Name.

One of the primary causes for not matching will be a marital name change. For example a young girl ‘Jane Wilkins’ is registered by her school and given a ULN. Later on in her life Jane leaves home, gets married and then enrolls at a college of further education. Jane Wilkins is now Jane Bright.

If you entered ULN 1234567890 and Given name 'Jane' and Family name 'Bright' the system would not match.

Also you will encounter persons who may have been married more than once. This scenario could apply to potentially 50% of the population!

Thus our first recommendation:

**TIP 1:** Try searching using the person's previous family name before they were married or from a previous marriage.

Naming in some cultures is different to the standard form of recording names used in England.

## 5.1 Structure of names

There are many different ways a culture can structure a name, and the people who speak your language may use any of the following, or a different way besides:

- [given name] [family name] - Jeffrey Henning (American/English)
- [family name] [given name] - Mao Ze-Dong (Chinese)
- [given name] [home town's name] - John Zamoyski (Polish, from town of Zamosc; toponymic)
- [given name] [occupation name] - John Smith (English)
- [given name] [maiden name] [husband's family name] - Karen Flynn Henning (American/English)
- [given name] [middle name] [family name] - Jeffrey Alan Henning (American/English)
- [given name] [middle name] [confirmation name] [family name] - Karen Lee Kristina Flynn (Catholic Irish)
- [given name] [family name] [occupation name] - Mark Jones-the-petrol (Welsh)
- [given name] [son of] [father's name] - Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (Norse)
- [given name] [daughter of] [father's name] - Vigdís Finnbogadóttir (Norse)
- [given name] [father's name + "child of"] [family name] - Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev (Russian)
- [given name] [middle name] [maternal grandfather's family name] [paternal grandmother's family name] [paternal grandfather's family name] -- Eliana Marcia Villela Gomes Soares (Spanish/Brazilian)
- [given name] [middle name] [maternal grandfather's family name] [paternal grandfather's family name] [husband's mother's name]

- [husband's father's name] -- Maria Beatriz Villela Soares Veiga de Carualho (Spanish/Brazilian)
- [given name] [father's family name] y [mother's family name] - José Aguilar y Fernández (Spanish)
  - [given name] [father's family name] de [husband's father's name] - María Álvarez de Aguilar (Spanish)
  - [given name] ["father of" eldest son]
  - [given name] [father's given name] - Tafari Makonnen (Amharic)

This list is in no means exhaustive, with the possibility of variations even within a tradition.

In Britain and the U.S., the first name, the given name, is the one the person regularly goes by. This is not so in Germany and other European countries, where many people go by their middle names, so that Helmut Michael Schneid is likely to be called Michael by his friends, not Helmut.

Of course, many Oriental languages put the family name before the given name, reversing the regular order of Occidental names. Thus, Mao Ze Dong is known as Chairman Mao, not Chairman Ze Dong. (Hungarian is another language that puts the family name first.) which leads us onto our next tip.

**TIP2: Try swapping Given name and Family names around or use their middle name as their Given name.**

In addition to this many names may have a prefix or a suffix. English names are unique in one respect -- no other language has a construct similar to the Sr. ("Senior") that gets appended to the names of fathers who have son with the same names, so that Carl Glenn Henning's eponymous father is known as Carl Glenn Henning, Sr. As for the Jr. appellation, it is used in English, Spanish and Portuguese names, among others, though not the Roman numeral designations II, III, IV and so on. Brazilian names have analogous structures to Jr., where Neto is to "grandson" and Sobrinho is to "nephew" as Júnior is to "son".

Some languages, such as Russian, add gender endings to the family name, so that it is Mr. Molotov, but Mrs. Molotova. The Japanese routinely append an honorific to a person's name, such as -san; or -sama, a superhonorific; or -kun, for someone familiar or subordinate; or -chan, a term of endearment reserved for children.

Below is a list of possible prefixes/suffixes:

- Van de
- Mc or Mac
- O'
- Jr
- Sr
- The third or (III)
- Esq

This list is by no means exhaustive, with the possibility of variations of how these are captured.

**TIP3:** Try searching for the person with and without a prefix/suffix on their Family name or use alternate forms of prefix/suffix.

*Note you do not need to worry about punctuation within a name as the search routine in MIAP LRS will strip any punctuation out before performing the search. Thus O'Leary will be searched as OLeary and Kennedy (III) will be searched as Kennedy III.*

Some cultures do not have Family names or surnames; however you will often find that they have adopted a Family name within the UK.

Some people will have double barrelled names James Croft–White. To search for these types of name, you can use the whole name or any part of it as the search process strips out any punctuation included. So Croft–White will be searched as 'CroftWhite'. If you are uncertain of the order, you can search using just 'White' or 'Croft' on their own.

#### Nickname or familiars:

Many people have a preferred way of being addressed; these can be fairly straightforward variations, a short version of their Given name or a more abstract name. For example a person called Robert can be known as Rob, Bob, Robbo, Bobby etc. James is often called Jim, or Jimmy. For some cultures this can be more complicated where Gucharadin is known as 'Rad'. Ideally these should be captured in the preferred name field not the given name.

**TIP4:** Try searching using their preferred or nickname within the Given name.

In all the cases above it is paramount to consider what supporting documentary evidence is provided and to search primarily using the name as given on the evidence. See Recommendation for recording/updating learner details for advice on recording names.

Spelling will be an issue for many names and variations will occur on input and via searching. Again it is important to use spelling as given on documentary evidence to aid consistency.

MIAP LRS will use phonetic checking to match Given or Family name. However for many cultures the phonetic sound of the name can be very different to its actual spelling. For example 'Peter Czaja' the phonetic spelling is 'CHI' + 'AH' which is very different to the Peter's actual family name and is unlikely to return a match.

TIP5: Check appropriate spelling of the person's name and consider using Phonetic spelling.

## 5.2 More Search Suggestions

Date of birth is a required field within the demographic search function and even date of birth can cause a potential mismatch. Often people will mix American and English dates formats thus 5<sup>th</sup> February (05/02/07) will become 2<sup>nd</sup> May (02/05/07). Many people do not know their true date of birth and as such have adopted a date. Early statistics in MIAP LRS show a significantly higher proportion of date of births recorded for the first of the month than any other date. This is not due to a population birth phenomenon but that dates of birth of some people cannot be determined. In other cultures a birthday is not always their date of birth, for example Greeks often use a Saints day for their date of birth.

TIP6: Try using a Date of Birth swapping Month and Day around (if less than 12) or try using the first of the month (01-MM-YYYY) or first of the year.

Address data is not static: people move, houses are built or demolished and the Royal Mail have a rolling programme of changes to the Postcode system to make it more efficient. Thus searching by postcode can result in many mismatches.

For example James Watt may have been given a ULN while in school and the address supplied at this time relates to his parents address. Later in his life he has left home, is married with his own family when he registers for a course. Searching for a James Watt with his current postcode will not provide

an exact match, and there may be more than 5 James Watts with the same date of birth.

**TIP7: Search using a previous address postcode for the person (or their parent's postcode).**

A person who does not wish to reveal their address or lives in a new build and cannot supply a postcode yet will be captured as 'ZZ99 9ZZ'.

**TIP8: Search using a default postcode 'ZZ99 9ZZ'.**

School at Age 16 can also be used in the search criteria, however at the early stages this is unlikely to contain values within the Personal Learning Record and may not yield any results. The issue with this field is that names of the school can vary. The School at Age 16 may contain the proper school name, or a familiar or place name, the school may have even changed name since that person last attended. If you wish to search this field it is our recommendation that you follow this advice:

- Do not include 'School' in the field.
- Use the full official name of the school (with or without the type e.g. 'Grammar').
- Or search using a familiar/place name by which the school is known.

See Recommendations for recording/updating learner details for more details on Address and Postcode capture.

**Tip9: When you do find a possible match but you are not certain then check the Notes field on the learner's record.**

The Notes field may contain some additional information to make sure you have identified the correct individual. The Notes field is often updated when a merge or unmerge is performed due to a previous difficulty in finding the correct learner record. The Notes field may contain information to prevent you repeating the same process or help you identify the individual.

By following the search recommendations we have outlined you are more likely to find an appropriate match. As MIAP LRS database continues to grow and records a larger proportion of the population it will be increasingly more important to be specific with your search criteria in order to find 10 or less matches necessary to give a result.

The following is a summary of the search tips:

- 1. A search should always be the first action you perform when obtaining a ULN for a person.**
- 2. Try searching using the person's previous family name before they were married or from a previous marriage.**
- 3. Try swapping Given name and Family names around or use their middle name as their Given name.**
- 4. Try searching for the person with and without a prefix/suffix on their Family name or use alternate forms of prefix/suffix.**
- 5. Try searching using their preferred or nickname within the Given name.**
- 6. Check appropriate spelling of the person's name and consider using phonetic spelling.**
- 7. Try using a Date of Birth swapping Month and Day around (if less than or equal to 12) or try using the first of the month (01-MM-YYYY).**
- 8. Try searching using a previous address postcode for the person (or their parent's postcode).**
- 9. Try searching using a default postcode 'ZZ99 9ZZ'.**
- 10. When you do find a possible match but you are not certain then check the Notes field on the learner's record.**

## 6 Recommendations for Recording/Updating learner details

***“As a general rule, the most successful man in life is the man who has the best information.”***

Benjamin Disraeli

The success of MIAP LRS is dependent on the quality of the information captured about the learners. It is also the key to making the search for learners easier which in turns improves the quality of MIAP LRS. Thus our first tip is:

**TIP11: Always perform a search first before registering someone as a new learner.**

This section gives you additional advice for recording or updating a person's details in a consistent way. The aspects of data capture discussed are:

- Capturing Names
- Capturing Addresses
- Other information

### 6.1 Capturing Names

The previous section for searching has already discussed, describing different naming conventions in great detail. The following are recommendations for recording names...

- Avoid using numbers in the name John Smith the 3<sup>rd</sup> can be captured as John Smith III
- Use the recognised short forms Jr and Sr for Junior and Senior.
- Mac or Mc can precede the family name
- O' as in O'Leary can be used
- Do not include alternative or middle names in a field enclosed within brackets in the Given name or Family name - use the fields supplied for this purpose.
- Double barrelled names can be included use a hyphen or space to separate the parts of the Family name.
- Use the person's full name in the given name field. Alternatives or their

- preferred way of being called can be captured in the preferred given name (although this is not a search field).
- Avoid using special characters with inflections in the name such as ö, ê, which may occur in some names. Capture names using characters without the accent.
- Only input the person's first name into the given name field, all additional names must be input into the other name field. By putting more than one name in the given name field it reduces the chance of the learner being found again and increases the chance of no match and the subsequent creation of a duplicate ULN.

Spacing and punctuation can be used in the name fields in order to make the name clearer to read. It does not affect search as spaces and punctuation are removed when attempting to match.

The key point in capturing names is to spell the name correctly and deciding which part of the learner's name is their given name and which part is their family name (given the different naming structures discussed earlier). Spelling and structure can be more difficult with names from different cultural backgrounds.

**TIP12:** When you are updating a family name copy the current family name into the previous family name field.

Retaining the previous name can be very helpful in determining if the correct learner is found. For example previous family name can hold a previous marital family name or the family name before they were married.

By including the Previous Family Name in your batch file, if the ULN is present but it does not match on the Given Name and Family Name, the LRS will perform a search using the Previous Family Name against the Family Name and Previous Family Name which will increase your chances of a match.

## 6.2 Capturing Addresses

At data entry, the importance of ensuring that the address information being entered into MIAP LRS is correct cannot be overstressed, if data is incorrect when first entered into the system, it is harder to correct it at a later stage. Batch database checking and cleaning tools can be used to correct this data later, but the chances of successfully updating a database is still dependent on how good the data was in the first place.

Common problems in recording the addresses in MIAP LRS include:

- Incorrect spelling of a place name
- Using house name instead of number
- Wrong entry on the wrong address line
- Missing part of the address
- Incorrect Postcode entry
- Non UK (or foreign) address
- Prohibited address

While MIAP LRS does not support any rapid addressing tools when registering or updating learners. Rapid addressing tools are often the best way to capture addresses quickly and accurately, whereby a whole address is generated by simply entering a postcode and premise number or name. If you use address tools in your organisation it is a good idea to use this tool to generate addresses and to use the generated address to load into LRS.

**TIP13: Use Address matching tools to produce a full address.**

Such tools can be helpful where the information available is not complete or incorrect (e.g. where a customer does not know the postcode, or gets it wrong).

If you do not have access to addressing tools then you must obtain the correct address from the documentary evidence to ensure that the correct address is accurately captured within LRS.

Where the address does not have a postcode (such as a new build) use the dummy postcode 'ZZ99 9ZZ'.

Some learners may be studying at a distance and provide a non-UK address. In these cases you must enter the address as supplied. However the postcode/zip code for that country cannot be entered. In these cases the postcode has to be set to 'ZZ99 9ZZ'.

**TIP14: Always complete the address lines with the postcode.**

If the address is a prohibited address the system will give you an error message. Prohibited addresses relate mainly to Offenders and cover Prison and Probation addresses. You can either input another address for the person or leave the address lines as blank and enter the default post code (ZZ99 9ZZ).

On first entry of the address MIAP LRS will automatically set the date of address capture to the current date. When an update to the address occurs, the Date of Address capture will be updated with either the date as per the batch file or the date the update is performed when using the batch functionality.

### 6.3 Capturing other information

Date of birth must be obtained from documentary evidence.

**TIP16:** Where date of birth is not known use the first of the month. If month is not known, use first of January of the relevant year.

Try to capture any of the optional additional information that is available for the person, as this may help to differentiate that person in the future. This includes:

- Preferred given name
- Email address
- Nationality
- Middle other name
- Previous family name
- School at age 16
- Scottish candidate number

The above with the exception of School at age 16 are not searched but do provide further details to verify you have found the correct learner.

**TIP17:** If you are capturing the school at age 16 record either the proper school name, or a familiar or place name. Do  
not include the word 'School' and keep it short.

For example

'Bishop Vesey Grammar School' can be captured as 'Bishop Vesey Grammar' or 'Bishop Vesey'

'Hill Lane Comprehensive School, Clowne' is the only school in the village/town and may go by the place name Clowne School. Thus you may record 'Clowne'. This can be especially helpful where the school name is not unique but the place name is.

The system will also prevent the use of prohibited values in some of these fields. For example it is not acceptable to record the school at age 16 as a Young Offenders Institute. If this occurs either enter another value or leave the field blank (if optional).

By following these capture/update recommendations the quality of MIAP LRS data will improve. You are also more likely to find this learner again in the future. As MIAP LRS database continues to grow and records a larger proportion of the population it will be increasingly more important to capture as much information as possible in order to differentiate very similar learners.

The following is a summary of the capture/update tips:

- 11. Always perform a search first before registering someone as a new learner.**
- 12. When you are updating a family name copy the current family name into the previous family name field.**
- 13. Use Address matching tools to produce a full address.**
- 14. Always complete the address lines with the postcode.**
- 15. If you are updating the address you need to change the date of address capture yourself.**
- 16. Where date of birth is not known use the first of the month. If month is not known, use first of January of the relevant year.**
- 17. If you are capturing the school at age 16 record either the proper school name, or a familiar or place name. Do not include the word 'School' and keep it short.**



MIAP  
Learning and Skills Council  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry  
CV1 2WT

T 0845 019 4170  
F 024 7682 5681  
[www.miap.gov.uk](http://www.miap.gov.uk)

Publication code: **USR02 Version 3.0**