

MIAP: INCREASING SHARED SERVICE EFFICIENCY

Case Study

Using the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) Learner Registration Service and the Unique Learner Number (ULN) avoids significant costs for other government bodies of **£7m** each in system hardware and development and **£2m** per year in maintenance.

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MIAP Vision

Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) is a national programme that will streamline the collection, handling and sharing of information on learners and their learning. The long-term vision for data sharing across the post-14 education sector is for unified, accurate information about the learner's participation and achievement to support personalised, front line services and flexible, modular learning. MIAP will enable efficient third-party to third-party administrative processes enabled by sector-wide data and communications standards.

MIAP Shared Services

Learner Registration Service

The Learner Registration Service (LRS) is an Internet based service, which enables education providers to generate a Unique Learner Number (ULN) for anyone over the age of 14 in education or training. Bill Rammell, former Minister of State, for the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, officially launched the LRS in February 2008. The LRS provides unique identifiers, to match and record, and improve control of access to learner records and secure data sharing.

Unique Learner Number

The ULN is a randomly generated 10 digit number, which will be assigned to learners to support their education and learning through data sharing across the education sector.

Business Need

A measure of success for the MIAP Shared Service is the engagement of partner organisations to adopt the ULN as the key identifier for learners as part of new sector wide initiatives rather than creating their own identifiers. This will be a significant accelerator to achieving the highest level of data sharing across the post-14 education sector. Organisations that have adopted the ULN to date are:

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority – Diplomas

To support the aggregation of component achievements that will contribute to the award of a full Diploma, the Qualification & Curriculum Authority (QCA) required a unique learner identifier for the administration of the new Diploma Aggregation Service. The unique identifier will allow Component Awarding Bodies (CABs) to send component achievement information to the Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS). DAS will record each learner's individual component achievements, notifying the relevant Diploma Awarding Body (DAB) when a learner has completed all the components required for a full Diploma. The DAB will then issue the final Diploma certificate.

Learning & Skills Council – Offender Learning, Skills Accounts

The Learning & Skills Council (LSC) is developing a number of customer facing services, which rely heavily on learner identifiers to operate effectively.

The Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) required a unique identifier for offenders to support their learning and development. The movement of offenders between prisons is frequent, which previously resulted in discontinuity of learning plans and offenders receiving disjointed development progression every time they moved to a new prison or moved in and out of the offender community. A unique identifier assists in providing continuity of learning and development to support offenders to integrate back into mainstream society.

To deliver Skills Accounts a unique identifier was required to support the deployment of skills vouchers that detail eligibility and the approximate funding available to a learner. The identifier also enables the sharing of information with careers services to ensure learners receive the best available advice based on the funding available to them. The Skills Accounts ambition is to deliver via existing and trusted systems where possible

Business Challenge

To provide assurance that the MIAP shared services meet the requirements of those organisations dependent on the use of the ULN and the LRS to deliver effectively.

The Solution

The LRS is a shared service, which approved organisations can use to integrate with their own services and avoid the cost of developing and maintaining information management systems to support the identification of learners. The service is also helping to reduce the number of disparate government agency databases, thereby reducing security concerns, as essential data is not duplicated in multiple systems.

Using a single, shared service of learner information will help data accuracy and reduce the incidences of data challenge, which may occur if two or more parallel systems hold the same data.

The ULN means government bodies will not need to assign additional identifiers to learner details. This eliminates the need to re-key and verify learner information where a ULN already exists.

Key Services

- **Configuration** – detailed scoping and testing of IT requirements providing robust and secure systems
- **Security** – data only shared through secure data transfer and secured by a high level security perimeter and log in process
- **Data protection** – governed according to UK and EU law on privacy and data sharing
- **Data quality** – governed by a strict data quality framework and measures
- **Data challenge** – the ability to challenge information and improve data quality
- **Functionality** – generation and verification of ULNs and learner details
- **Help Desk** – telephone and online support to ensure the service operates smoothly and uninterrupted

Benefits

The key benefits of other stakeholders adopting the ULN are those brought about through data sharing. There are also obvious financial benefits of utilising an existing and trusted system rather than adding to the plethora of databases already present within the sector.

Shared service efficiency - capital and revenue

Significant costs are avoided to build and maintain a database of learner identifiers. It is estimated, based on the costs incurred by MIAP, that it would cost £7m to develop the database and £2m per year thereafter to maintain the service.

LRS Development	£7.2m
Software and Hardware	£2.4m
Solution development	£4.8m
Annual operational cost	£1.9m

2007/08 prices (excludes VAT)

Data sharing

Sharing a single source of data will significantly reduce the need to re-key and verify learner information. This will contribute to data accuracy over a longer period by removing the risk of error associated with repeated data input which would otherwise arise when information is duplicated across multiple systems. The Common Data Definitions underpinning the LRS will improve the flow of information to and from Government Agencies and will result in more effective and efficient data sharing for organisations that share data with their Agencies.



Testimonials

" The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for developing a number of key operational systems that are being or will be used to underpin the learning and skills sector. With the advent of MIAP, the LSC has been able to realise significant financial efficiencies through the reuse of the Learner Registration Service. The ability to match students against Unique Learner Numbers has already been deployed in the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS), and is being integrated into the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service and Skills Accounts. Without the use of the existing service the LSC would have had to invest in significantly improved functionality within those services. This has saved around £7m in hardware and development costs and £2m per year for ongoing services.

In addition, the LSC continues to support and monitor the use of the ULN within the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and the National Pupil Database, to assess the possibility of creating matched datasets without purchasing third party services. "

Tim Barrett, LSC Stakeholder Change Manager

" The QCA required a unique learner identifier to support the data sharing requirement of the Diploma Aggregation Service, a key enabler for Diploma awarding. It is crucial to the successful delivery of composite, credit-based qualifications such as the Diploma.

Existing identifiers such as the UPN and UCI were not suitable to meet the rigorous standards of security and reliability that the Diploma demands.

The ULN met the need of QCA in this respect, providing a secure identifier that could be shared across a number of institutions in support of Diploma awarding. "

Richard Fitzpatrick, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority,
Head of Readiness and Implementation and Strategic Systems Group

If you are interested in participating in the development of a case study, to share your experiences of using the MIAP services and the arising benefits, please contact, **Barbara Clark**, MIAP Benefits Manager by email at barbara.clark@miap.gov.uk