

**Procedure for Providing  
Learner  
Reference/Attendance  
Letters  
And  
Destinations**

## **Purpose**

UK Data Protection laws gives all individuals who are the subject of personal data ('data subjects') a right of access to the personal data that relates to them that the Group collects and processes. These rights are known as 'subject access rights'. Requests for access to records and for other information about those records are known as 'data subject access requests'. Personal data may take the form of any computerised or paper records.

This document explains the rights of access for learners to personal records that can be released without the need for a formal Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) by the RNN Group, specifically learner reference, attendance letters and destinations.

This type of enquiry should always be directed to [learnerreference@rnngroup.ac.uk](mailto:learnerreference@rnngroup.ac.uk) in the first instance. The team responsible for releasing this information will verify the request and gain any additional consent should this be deemed necessary.

## **Scope**

This procedure applies to all members of staff who are approached to supply learner references, attendance letters or destination data.

## **Responsibilities**

The Information Officers within Student Services are primarily responsible for dealing with the above requests although other staff may be asked to supply this type of information at times.

The Assistant Principal Student Support (or in their absence, the Deputy Head of Student Services) is responsible for advising the relevant staff regarding the supply of the learner requests detailed in this procedure.

## **Procedure - References**

On receiving the request, the Information Officer will confirm that consent for the supply of data has been provided, if appropriate.

In ALL cases (other than a UCAS request detailed below), a standard Pro-Solution template letter will be supplied. The template indicates course details, dates and results along with a percentage mark for attendance and punctuality.


The UCAS template will be used in any circumstances where the learner will be progressing to a Higher Education (HE) programme, in which case a Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) reference will be completed using the secure online portal (**see Guidance for Completing UCAS References below**).

**Note: Templates from a third party must not be completed.**

## How to Create a Learner Reference

1. Open ProSolution
2. Select "Students" (first option across)
3. Change the Academic Year to "All" using the drop down box
4. Locate the required learner : right click on surname
5. Enter surname in the white box which contains "Enter filter text here and press enter"
6. Repeat the above with the learner's first name
7. Select "messages for "Student Detail"" from the bottom box on the left hand side
8. Highlight "DP Standard Reference Letter" in the top box on the left by clicking on it



9. Click on the  icon to generate a Word document
10. This can be printed off and posted out or scanned for emailing (if scanning and emailing then the attachment MUST be password protected)

## How to Encrypt Files/Folders

1. Right click on the Word document
2. Go to 7-Zip
3. Select add to Archive
4. Ensure "Archive Format" is Zip
5. Ensure "Encryption Method" is AES-256
6. Enter password and re-enter to confirm
7. Send the zipped document to the recipient
8. Send the password in a separate email to the same recipient

## How to create an encrypted folder

1. Put all your documents into a single folder
2. Right click the folder and follow steps 2 to 8 above

When the document is sent to the recipient, the following wording must be included in the content of the email.

**Please note : Our data releases are encrypted to AES-256 encryption levels, you will require a third party zip utility such as 7zip to gain access. It is recognised that some Windows built in zip software does not recognise this level of encryption, we advise you to NOT use this built in software to extract the data sent.**

**Should you have any issues in opening the encrypted files then please firstly try using a different browser, failing this please contact the sender for further advice.**

Followed by the instructions to unencrypt:

1. Ensure a third-party zip utility is installed on your device, e.g. 7Zip
2. Save/download the zipped file from email or SharePoint link, perhaps to desktop or separate folder
3. Right click on downloaded file

4. Under '7Zip', select 'extract files'
5. Change the default location to your created folder (2 above)
6. Type in password provided (XXXXXX) into the password box
7. Click OK
8. Go to folder created in 2 above and open files

Pro-Solution will log each time a reference is produced.

The tutor will have the opportunity to add a positive statement to the reference (**see Guidance for Adding Positive Statements**). Once it has been generated from ProSolution, it will be emailed to the tutor from the [learnerreference@rnngroup.ac.uk](mailto:learnerreference@rnngroup.ac.uk) email address using the learner's name as a subject heading. The tutor should respond within 48 hours to the same email address. Failure to do so will result in a 'standard' reference being returned to the requestor.

To maintain the data retention periods within the Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) Policy and Procedure, references with additional comments should be stored in the [learnerreference@rnngroup.ac.uk](mailto:learnerreference@rnngroup.ac.uk) email account for 20 working days after which time they must be deleted.

**NOTE: The Data Retention Policy specifies that the learner data retention period for the RNN Group is 6 years + the current academic year, no data should be retained or supplied from outside this timeframe.**

#### **Guidance for Adding Positive Statements**

- Only supply information that can be evidenced
- Do not comment on extra-curricular activities outside of the RNN Group
- Comment on any work placements undertaken as part of their course
- Expand on timekeeping and attendance (percentage will be provided on the basic response)
- Do not comment about other learners or staff members

#### **Guidance for Completing UCAS References**

- Supply general course information, including details of any work placement undertaken as part of their course
- Provide information on specific modules or course components
- Include any predicted grades for any pending qualifications
- Provide attendance and timekeeping information
- Do not include circumstances that have/could affect the learner's academic work, such as personal problems, illness or any individual needs unless they have provided explicit written consent to do so
- Opinions on their suitability for the course MUST be justifiable on reasonable grounds (i.e. information should be evidenced)
- Do not comment about other learners or staff members

#### **Procedure – Attendance Letters**

Where a Learning Agreement is not accepted as proof of attendance, template letters are available in Pro-Solution for organisations who make any requests.

Note that these template letters will replace any forms that are supplied; this will include, but is not exclusive to, Councils or pensions providers requests.

There is also a general template for letter generation within Pro-Solution that can be handed directly to the learner. This letter can be manipulated by a member of Student Services in order to meet the requirements of the learner.


Learners should always report to Student Services at any RNN Group main College site to obtain an attendance letter. Their identity MUST be checked and confirmed against data held on Pro-Solution, if due diligence cannot be performed then data should NOT be released.

Attendance letters should not be provided to third parties without the consent of the learner.

### **How to Create an Attendance Letter**

#### **Follow steps 1-7 of the "How to Create a Learner Reference"**

8. Select the appropriate DP Standard Attendance Letter from the list

9. Click on the  icon to generate a Word document

### **Useful Information**

#### **Council Tax (taken from the Government website):**

To count as a full-time student (20+ years), your course must:

- last at least 1 year
- involve at least 21 hours study per week

If you study for a qualification up to A level and you're under 20, your course must:

- last at least 3 months
- involve at least 12 hours study per week

The pre-set attendance letters on Pro-Solution only take into account timetabled study; however, Council Tax will accept homework, self-study and placement hours as part of their total per week. Therefore, Council Tax departments may contact the relevant College to confirm expected study/placement hours outside of scheduled timetables for learners aged 20+.

### **Procedure – Learner Destinations**

Learner destination forms part of the individualised Learner Record (PLR). When a learner signs the RNN enrolment form, they agree to the DfE using their information to exercise its functions and to meet its statutory responsibilities.

Learner destinations can also be shared with local authorities and schools/academies within current UK legislation, any other parties that have the right to view this type of content would be detailed within the Group's Data Decision Log, providing the wording: "This data has been supplied ONLY for educational purposes and no other" is used.

Please note other 3rd parties (for example parents, Social Workers etc.) are not entitled to this data, so requests outside of local authorities should be forwarded to the DSAR email address (dsar@rnngroup.ac.uk).

### **Linked Policies/Related Documents**

RNN Group Data Protection Policy  
RNN Group Archiving Policy  
Staff and Learner Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)  
RNN Group Data Retention Policy  
RNN Group Privacy Policy

### **Contact Details**

All Data Subject Access Requests (DSAR) enquiries, without exception, should be directed to sar@rnngroup.ac.uk in the first instance. These will be logged and forwarded to the responsible department or person for action accordingly.

Regulatory recording of enquiries, actions and outcomes are the responsibility of the Information Governance and Assurance team and shall be centrally located.

General Data Protection enquiries, not relating to DSAR's, should be directed to dp@rnngroup.ac.uk. This email address can be used internally and externally for enquiries of this nature.

If urgent contact is required for Data Protection issues, then the following numbers are to be used by staff and can be given out to individuals if the matter requires immediate attention:

IGA Team	01909 504666
Kelly Condon	07815 914809
Shamim Akhtar	07773 313997
Ian Surtherland	07890 523646

### **NOTE:**

Personal data requests that fall outside the remits of learner references, attendance letters and destinations, will be treated as Data Subject Access Requests and will be dealt with by the IGA team.