

1. What is new?

In collaboration with assured training and assessment providers, the National Skills Academy for Rail (NSAR) has invested in the development of an Events Calendar in Skills Backbone to share provider training and assessment plans in order to maximise the scope of each assurance visit and improve the effectiveness of unannounced assurance visits. All assured training and/or assessment providers are required to use this system in line with the Rail Training Assurance Scheme (RTAS) Rules, Issue 1.0 (to be published early 2017).

User Acceptance Testing has shown the development to be user friendly and effective in sharing training and assessment plans in an open and transparent manner with NSAR for the purposes of planning assurance visits. Feedback from testing has been taken on board and further development taken to further improve the solution.

2. Who is affected?

Use of the events calendar affects **all** assured providers delivering and administrating training and/or assessment to the rail industry workforce.

3. What are the changes?

The Events Calendar enables you to share your training and assessment plans effectively with NSAR in an easy to use online package as part of your membership to Skills Backbone. This approach enables benefits to both assured provider and assurance organisation:

- Improvements to the scope of unannounced assurance visits, which the events calendar is critical in supporting, should result in reduction of investigations which has the potential to reduce the levy currently paid by providers to support the undertaking of investigations by Assurance Managers
- Reassurance that providers are open, transparent and available to be visited at any time
- Reduction of effort in more time consuming methods of communication such as email for both assured provider administrators and NSAR Assurance Managers as training and assessment plans are able to be viewed at any time without contact with the provider's administrators to identify what events are being delivered at a specific point in time

Adding events to the calendar has been assessed at 45 seconds per event with a total commitment of around 4 hours per month from administrators for the largest of organisations. Assured providers will be able to view their events in a calendar and list form within the system and will also be able to export reports of their own events.

In line with feedback during testing, NSAR has taken the opportunities this development presents to make further improvements to the system.

- Assured courses have been brought in line with Sentinel course codes and titles. The full assured course name list will be cascaded before go live. Once the calendar has gone live, if there are any discrepancies showing for events that you deliver then please contact accreditationadmin@nsar.co.uk with the detail.
- Regions on Skills Backbone have also been reviewed and amended to be clearer as to the location at which the provider is delivering an event.

4. When does it happen?

The events calendar will be available from w/c 12/09/2016.

Use of the calendar will be mandatory as of 25/10/2016.

5. How does this affect me?

From the date of go live assured providers will have 6 weeks in total to add all of their planned events for the coming calendar months (October & November) and are required to continue to provide the forthcoming calendar month base scheduled events, no later than the 25th of each calendar month. Short notice changes to the monthly plan can be made throughout the month, however, the final plan for the week ahead must be input no later than the Friday before at 16:00. It is important to note that the location of an event must include whether the event is being held at the providers own and/or another provider's approved premises and contain the full address details.

You will receive an administrator's User Guide which you will be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of.

Use of the calendar will be mandated as part of the RTAS Rules, Issue 1.0 (to be published early 2017) and verification checks will be undertaken by NSAR Assurance Managers. Failure to use the calendar in line with the above requirements can result in suspension of an assured provider's capabilities to deliver training and/or assessment for 5 working days.

6. Where can I get further information?

For any questions not covered by this briefing, assured course list and user guide please contact, in the first instance, accreditationadmin@nsar.co.uk.

Additional support:

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Appendix A – Region Guide

Country	Region	
Scotland	Western Isles	
	Highlands	
	Grampian	
	Tayside	
	Argyll & Bute	
	Central	
	Fife	
	Edinburgh	
	Glasgow	
	Ayrshire & Lanark	
	Borders	
	Dumfries & Galloway	
England	Northumberland	
	Newcastle Area	
	Durham	
	Cleveland	
	Cumbria	
	North Yorkshire	
	West Yorkshire	
	South Yorkshire	
	Lancashire	
	Manchester Area	
	Merseyside	
	Humberside	
	Lincolnshire	
	Cheshire	
	Staffordshire	
	Shropshire	
	Hereford & Worcestershire	
	Derbyshire	
	Nottinghamshire	
	Leicestershire	
	Warwickshire	
	West Midlands	
	Northants	
	Bedfordshire	
	Cambridgeshire	
	Norfolk	
	Suffolk	
	Essex	
	Hertfordshire	
	Buckinghamshire	
	Gloucestershire	
	Oxfordshire	
	Wiltshire	
	Bristol Area	
	Somerset	
	Dorset	
	Devon	
	Cornwall	
	Berkshire	
	Surrey	
	Hampshire	
	Greater London	
	West Sussex	
	Kent	
	East Sussex	
	Wales	Anglesey
		Gwynedd
Conwy		
Denbighshire		
Flintshire		
Wrexham		
Powys		
Cardiganshire		
Pembrokeshire		
Carmarthenshire		
Glamorgan		
Monmouthshire		
Swansea		
Vale of Glamorgan		
Cardiff		

