

Managing Data on CourseFinder

A guide for data providers to the CourseFinder prospectus for 14-19 learning and training in Leicester and Leicestershire

www.coursefinder-leics.org



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The data maintenance site is at www.futures4me.co.uk/admin

The public site is www.coursefinder-leics.org

Further information about 14-19 Education, document downloads and the latest news about CourseFinder development are on www.connexions-leics.org/staffroom/coursefinder.asp

Futures4Me manual is an illustrated step-by-step guide to the data management pages produced by S_cool. This can be downloaded from the above Connexions web site.

As the data structure and management pages will be developed further in response to users requests, it is advisable to regularly check the Connexions web site for updated edition of this Guide and S_cool's manual.

Introduction

CourseFinder has been produced as a result of a government initiative to establish online databases throughout the country providing comprehensive information on all learning and training opportunities for young people aged 14 to 19. The initiative will assist with curriculum development for this age group particularly the Diplomas. It will also contribute to the objective of all students staying in education or training up to the age of 18.

For curriculum managers and policy makers CourseFinder will enable them to see the gaps and overlaps in the market and assess the popularity of courses with young people.

For young people, their parents and advisers it will provide clear information to help them plan and make choices.

For schools, colleges and training providers CourseFinder is a shop window for their curriculum.

The Prospectus in Leicestershire

The 13-19 Inter-authority Partnership (LSC, Connexions and the 2 local authorities) are funding the development. The partnership has chosen an off-the-shelf system called Futures4me produced by S_cool Ltd and have commissioned Connexions to manage its development and maintenance.

CourseFinder will link to the on-line post-16 application system, LeCAP and the electronic Individual Learning Plan system, eILP.

Which Courses should be in CourseFinder?

All types of educational and training opportunities including apprenticeships, collaborative learning and e2e should be in CourseFinder. All courses should be included if they are normally intended for young people between the ages of 14 and 19 (school years 10-13), but not including degree level, other Higher Education courses, courses normally started at 18+, or courses primarily intended for adults.

What is Futures4me?

Futures4me is the national database and website which can be customised and renamed for each local area. The appearance and branding is different in each area of the country but the database structure and search mechanisms follow a national specification.

The Futures4Me database incorporates data from the QCA's database of accredited qualifications.

The data about individual schools, colleges and other learning providers and their courses is maintained directly by the providers. A review procedure enables Connexions to monitor the courses added to the database to ensure consistency and quality.

This Guide

The purpose of this Guide is to enable you to maintain the data relating to your institution. It is best read whilst viewing the data maintenance web site (www.futures4me.co.uk/admin). A manual produced by S_cool may help with the practicalities of the site. This guide focuses on the content of each data field.

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Who should maintain the data?

Schools, colleges or training providers are expected to manage the data about their organisation and courses. Providers are advised to appoint a senior curriculum manager to oversee their presence on CourseFinder. The practical tasks of data management can be delegated to appropriate staff.

As the information should be written with young people and parents primarily in mind, responsibility for data maintenance might rest with someone with a marketing or student services remit. They would require authoritative data from a curriculum or data management source.

A username and password can be provided by Connexions for one person at an institution. That person can then add others.

Partnerships, E2e and Increased Flexibility

A course provider may supply a course for others to include within their curriculum. In these cases the initial provider may manage the data themselves or allocate a user login for a lead organisation to handle it for them. The lead organisation can establish a consistent structure and phraseology for the course information.

For e2e the lead body (Rathbone or Leicester College) can list the sub-contracted courses amongst their overall provision. 'CourseFinder e2e Guidelines 2008' is a guide to handling e2e course data.

Similarly, VESA can manage the details of the Increased Flexibility courses. Individual schools can then identify which courses they wish to appear as part of their curriculum offer.

When should the course data be updated?

The course data is held separately for each academic year. CourseFinder users will normally view the lists of courses available in the forthcoming year. They can also opt to view course for the current academic year. On 1st October each year the site will be moved forward to default to the new academic year.

During the summer each year the data should be prepared for release in October. Start the process by making a copy of the latest courses and then amending them to create a provision curriculum offer. Courses which are not yet confirmed can be designated as 'Proposed'.

By the autumn half-term, as courses become confirmed the list should be updated. It is important that the post-16 courses are all accurately described by this time so that students can make decisions and applications.

Quality of the data?

The quality of your information in CourseFinder can have a significant impact on your schools or college's public reputation. The information should be written with young people and parents primarily in mind.

The factors to keep in mind to ensure quality are:

- Relevance to the readership
- Succinct and easy to read language
- Most important information first
- Avoid unexplained jargon and acronyms (unless they are very common)
- Use the structure and sub-headings given in these guidelines
- Correct spelling and grammar

It is advisable to proof read the text yourself and ask others, including students, to read and comment on it. Typing errors can be easier to spot on the live site than on the data input pages. It can be an advantage to draft and spell check the descriptive text in word-processing before copying it into fields on the data input page. Reviewing other's information will give you ideas for what constitutes quality and facilitate the sharing of competent descriptions.

Review Process

Connexions Leicester Shire will oversee the consistency and quality of data. Each new course added to CourseFinder will be checked to

- Ensure the format of the title is compatible with LeCAP;
- The classification of the course is compatible with LeCAP;
- The title matches the qualifications;
- The course is appropriate for the year 10 – 13 curriculum.

Helpdesk

Please contact the Prospectus Helpdesk if you need a username or password, further clarification of these guidelines or assistance in managing the data management pages.

tel: 0116 261 5904

email: coursefinderhelpdesk@connexions-leics.org

We are also keen to hear your ideas for improving the data maintenance pages, information covered and its presentation. We will feed your views into the national consultations with S_cool.

Glossary

Terms used on the data maintenance pages

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Provider | This is any organisation that delivers a course, eg school, college, and training provider. Apprenticeship Providers are treated as distinct to FE providers. |
| Partner | This is a provider who delivers part or whole of a course on behalf of a 'gate keeping' or 'lead' provider. |
| Venue | Location where the training is delivered. This may range from a major campus to borrowed rooms. It can be 'Whole area' if there are many widely spread locations. |
| Campus | An independent site with its own administration, admissions process and contacts. |
| Events | These are activities that students, parents or the public can attend. They will be listed In CourseFinder on an area-wide calendar and alongside the provider details. |
| Programmes | Courses are referred to as programmes, as it is recognised that some courses consist of a range of qualifications and activities that make up the package. |
| QAN | QANs are the unique codes for each qualification accredited by the QCA. By recording these, CourseFinder can be certain that the correct qualification name, sector and level are recorded and any default information can be inserted. It also enables curriculum planners to review the overall provision in an area. |
| Activity | Significant part of a course, which is not QCA accredited. This may or may not lead to a qualification. |
| Academic year | A cohort of courses following the standard Sept to July pattern. Each year can be managed separately with only 2 years (current and next) being live on CourseFinder at any one time. The years are stepped forward on 1 st October each year. |
| Rolling programme | Courses that are always live on CourseFinder regardless of the academic year |

Recommended Browser: To enable effective printing of the course data pages, the data is best managed using the most recent browser, such as Internet Explorer Version 7.

Data Guidelines

These guidelines are aimed at establishing a consistent structure for the data.

Provider's Details

* Indicates a required field

Provider - is any organisation that delivers a course, eg school, college, and training provider. Apprenticeship Providers are treated as distinct entities to FE providers.

The following fields are accessed from 'Edit Details' on your home page menu.

DCSF URN *: This is the Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) allocated nationally through the UK Register of Learning Providers, www.ukrlp.co.uk

Title*: The full name the provider is publicly known as. As this will appear in alphabetical lists you may wish to leave off initial words such as 'The'.

Short title*: The name that CourseFinder will use if the space available is limited (max 50 characters). If you have a popular abbreviation you may wish to type it here.

Type*: Select the type of provider from the drop down list e.g. '14-18 School', 'Work-Based Learning'. If none of the types on the list is appropriate, please ask Connexions to request a new category.

Age Range*: give the minimum and maximum age of students that attend courses

Do not include in the prospectus: This is normally ticked if there are no courses yet on the database for the provider. This option is not currently available.

Do not plot on the map: This is usually ticked if the above is ticked. It may also be ticked if the address given below is not at a location where courses are usually delivered.

Logo: You can import a GIF, JPG or PNG image file (size up to width 300 x height 120 pixels). View this in CourseFinder to check that it displays correctly.

Description: This should start with a brief introductory paragraph describing the school, college or training provider. You could also add paragraphs using the following standard sub-headings. Each subheading should be on a line of its own, be preceded by a blank line and be all in capitals.

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD/PRINCIPAL/DIRECTOR

This could cover ethos, specialist areas, expectations of students, policy matters etc

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT?

An alternative or in addition to the above

STUDENT SUPPORT

General pastoral support, mentoring, special needs etc

OPTION BLOCKS

An introduction to any timetabled option blocks that may restrict the combination of courses a student can apply for.

EMPLOYMENT

For apprenticeships: What help is provided to find an employer? Does an applicant need an employer before he/she is considered? Is the training restricted to employees of specific companies?

Facilities: Add any facilities that the provider offers

Independent Provider: Tick this if the provider is not a public sector organisation i.e. it charges fees for its courses.

Contact*: An office that the public can contact for more information. Example
Student Services
Admissions Manager
Mr J Sparks, Training Manager

Address lines* and contact details: These should be for contact by a student or parent seeking information. CourseFinder will use the postcode to plot the provider's location on the website's map.

URL: Add the provider's home website address.

Allow the Creation of Campuses (see below): Tick this if you have more than one site which manages its own admissions, ie a student would have to apply separately to the different sites. If you have campuses that are not independent in this way, they should be identified as venues..

Venues and campuses

Campus Details (Does not currently apply to Leicester and Leicestershire Colleges)

Campus An independent site with its own administration, admissions process and contacts.

If Campuses are allowed, a single campus for the provider is automatically created when the provider is created. The details for this will initially be the same as those on the Provider page. You can change these to suit the specific campus and create additional campuses.

Address and contact details: These should be those that a student or parent can use when seeking more information about the campus and courses offered there.

Venue Details

Venue Location where the training is delivered. This may range from a major campus to borrowed rooms. It can be 'Whole area' if there are many widely spread locations.

The data covers where it is and how to get there. If you run training courses on a large number of sites, you may decide not to list these but to include a note to this effect in the provider's description.

A single venue for the provider is automatically created when the provider is created. The venue details will initially be the same as those on the Provider or Campus page. You can change these to suit the specific venue and create additional venues.

Name: The name the venue is usually known as

Address*: The venue address is to identify the location. The postcode will identify it on the website's map.

Directions

Please give details of the public transport routes and any transport arranged by the provider. The other modes of transport can also be completed if you consider them significant for this venue.

Events and Open Days

Events These are activities that students, parents or the public can attend. They will be listed In CourseFinder on an area-wide calendar and alongside the provider details.

Title*: What the event is publicly known as

Type: Select from the drop down box.

If none of the types on the list are appropriate, please request from Connexions that a new category be added.

Description*: Any information you wish to give e.g. Clarify who the event is for, what they can find out about, what activities are involved, agendas, facilities.

Website: If there is a page on the provider's website which gives specific information about the event, please add the full address of the page here.

Dates and time: Add the dates and times to appear on the CourseFinder calendar. Once the dates have passed the event will automatically be deleted from the calendar.

Programmes/Courses Lists

* Indicates a required field

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Programmes | Courses are referred to as programmes, as it is recognised that some courses consist of a range of qualifications and activities that make up the package. |
| Activity | Significant part of a course, which is not QCA accredited. This may or may not lead to a qualification. |
| Rolling programme | A cohort of courses that is always live on CourseFinder. Appropriate for most apprenticeships. |
| Academic year | A cohort of courses following the standard Sept to July pattern. Each year can be managed separately with only one year being live on CourseFinder at any one time. 2009/10 will be made live on 1st October 2008. |

Programmes/Courses list

This list is accessed from 'Programmes/Courses' on your home menu. This lists the courses in the current academic year. From this list you can click 'View' to edit the course details or click 'Delete' to permanently remove the course. You can copy ('Clone') a course to use a template for a similar course.

Academic Years

Take care to select the correct year or the rolling program from the drop-down list at the top of the page. For courses that follow the standard academic year, you will usually want to view the one starting in the next autumn.

From 1st October each year the public site will be moved forward to default to the new academic year. A button at the top of the list will allow you to copy programmes to the next academic year. This can only be done once and should be done during the summer each year. Individual courses cannot be copied forward. As part of the copying sequence you can decide which courses to carry forward and which to leave behind. Once you have copied forward, you will need to take care to select the new year when adding to or amending courses.

Rolling programme - For apprenticeships and other courses that can start and finish at any time, the rolling programme will be more suitable. You will need to select it each time you display the list.

Add new Course

At the end of the list of courses is a box to type in the name of a new programme/course and select its type (Apprenticeship, Diploma or Other). See guidelines for the title format and programme type below.

AS and A levels – You can decide whether these should be 2 separate courses or one course combining the two qualifications. The criteria should be whether students normally apply for entry to the A2 stage. For most 6th forms the normal pattern would be to combine them as a single programme, presenting a single option on the LeCAP application.

Programmes via partners

Partner This is a provider who delivers part or whole of a course on behalf of the 'gate keeping' or 'lead' provider.

You can also add a partner's programme. First search for the partner organisation and then select course.

Programme/Course Editor

None of the fields on the programme editor page allow formatting such as bold or bullet points. Capital letters can be used to emphasise a subheading.

Always proofread your course data on the public CourseFinder site. Note that some changes do not come into effect until an overnight site refreshing has taken place.

Course Title

Within LeCAP the qualification and subject are separately recorded in order to present the course titles in a consistent way allowing users to read and scan them quickly. To maintain this title structure a colon is used to separate the 2 elements of the course title. The format described for CourseFinder ensures consistency between the two systems and enables the transfer of data from CourseFinder to LeCAP.

Title: Education courses should be named after their main qualification. To maintain consistency between providers and to clearly differentiate between courses, please use the format of 'qualification: subject' (with no space before the Colon). Examples:

Diploma (Foundation): Engineering
AS/A2 Levels: French
BTEC National Diploma: Travel and Tourism
GCSE (double): Science
GCSE: Design and Technology, Resistant Materials
C&G Levels 1&2: Beauty Therapy
ADSAN: Numeracy

Title: The Diploma. In order to distinguish the new 14-19 Diploma from other qualifications with similar names, please always start with the word 'Diploma' followed by the level in brackets (see the example above). Any other diploma should start with the specific type of diploma.

If a provider uses a title in their printed prospectus or web site that is not based on the qualifications, that title should be entered. This may apply when no accredited qualifications or a range of alternative qualifications are covered by one course. Examples:

Towards Independence
Introduction to: the Motor Trade

Title: Apprenticeship programmes should be named after the occupation or industry being trained for. To maintain consistency between providers and to clearly differentiate between courses, please use the format of 'Apprenticeship: Occupation' (with no space before the Colon). Examples:

Apprenticeship: Travel and Tourism Services
Advanced Apprenticeship: Business Administration
Apprenticeship: Electrical Engineering
Programme-led Apprenticeship: General Construction

Course Code/Reference: The code that providers use internally to identify each course. For all providers it will help to reliably amend or delete courses. This code will be used on LeCAP applications and can therefore be crucial for post-16 courses in tying applications to the correct courses in your college's database.

Qualifications

Add new Qualification: To select a QCA accredited qualification, type in either the 8-digit QAN code or a key word, such as the awarding body initials or the subject name, from the official QCA qualification title. A list will be displayed which you can select from. It is always helpful to know the QAN code in order to be certain of the correct selection.

The QCA database can also be used to identify QAN codes - www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk . If the code exists on the QCA site but you cannot find it on CourseFinder, you can use the 'Report a Missing

Qualification' link on your home page menu to request S_cool to add it. If you know the awarding body and syllabus code you can look up the QAN number on www.st2.co.uk/qanlookup

You can add more than one accredited qualification for each course.

Searchable: When you add a new qualification, you will be asked whether the qualification should be 'Searchable'. Only searchable qualifications will be listed when students search for courses on CourseFinder. Make only the main qualifications searchable. Subsidiary qualifications should not be searchable.

Non-accredited Activities

Name: Any non-accredited qualification activity that forms part of the course can be added in this section.

Description: A brief description can be entered here to clarify what the activity is. If it is a certificated activity you can give other information that is not in the name eg Level, Awarding body, Subject. You could also indicate how the activity fits with the rest of the course e.g. time taken, optional/compulsory.

Course Information

Description*:

We would like this section to follow a consistent pattern so that users can easily pick out the information they require.

It can start with a succinct one-sentence description that will enable the reader to see quickly whether the course or apprenticeship is appropriate for them. This can be a broad aim or whom it is intended for. It can clarify the title, if that is not self-explanatory.

Then use one or more of the following sub-headings as appropriate in the order given. Each subheading should be on a line of its own, be preceded by a blank line and all in capitals. The field does not allow formatting such as bold or bullet points.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Describe whom you think the course would suit

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

Summary of topics covered and skills taught

HOW WILL I STUDY?

Indicate style of learning e.g. practical training, self-study, classroom sessions, course work, projects, field studies etc.

WHAT EXAMS ARE THERE?

Information about the extent that project work, course work and final examinations play in the assessment of grades

OPTION BLOCK:

Identify the timetable block (or indicate if it is a compulsory subject)

EMPLOYMENT:

For Apprenticeships, If this information is not included in your organisation's description you can add it for each programme. What help is provided to find an employer? Does an applicant need an employer before he/she is considered? Is the training restricted to employees of specific companies?

NOTES:

Anything about the course not covered in the fields above, which you think a potential applicant should know. You can use whatever sub-headings you think appropriate. Any doubts whether the course will go ahead can be expressed here.

Enrichment: Other activities which are not an essential or major part of the course

Website URL: Only if a web page is available for this specific course, type its URL here. Do not use a general URL as this should have already been included in the provider's details.

Start Date*: Select a month from the drop down list when the course will start.

Duration*: Select the duration of the course from the drop down list, e.g. 2 years, 6 months or 1 semester. If nothing on the list is appropriate, please request from Connexions that a new category be added.

Delivery*: Select the type of course structure from the drop down list, e.g. Full-time; Part-time; Part of a full-time programme. Apprenticeships should be designated as 'Work-Based Learning'. If nothing on the list is appropriate, please request from Connexions that a new category be added.

Availability*: Select classification from the drop down list, e.g. Current and continuing. If a course is not confirmed, classify it as 'proposed'. If nothing on the list is appropriate, please request from Connexions that a new classification be added.

Age*: What is the normal age range of students on the course?

SEN Target*: Is the course designed for a specific SEN group? If so, select a group from the drop down list. If not, select 'none'.

Entry Requirements: This is the entry requirement for the course including qualification, grades or any additional criteria for applicants. Apprenticeship providers should make it clear whether an applicant will need to be in suitable employment before applying or by the start of the training.

Cost: Fee for the course and any additional obligatory costs of materials, clothing etc.

#What other learning could you do: What are the next steps in education or training after this course.

#Career Information: What learning or occupational options does this lead to? What are the career prospects of students successfully completing the course? What have past students done after completing the course?

#Where Can I Find More Information: Refer to any published information about the course or the qualification or to a person or office to contact.

Generic text For the fields above marked with a #, if generic text associated with the qualification is available, this will appear by default. You can amend this, add to it or replace it. When the course has more than one qualification the text for each qualification will appear. You will therefore need to amend this to merge the two blocks of text as appropriate for your course.

Status – Releasing a new course onto the website

The current 'status' indicates the stage of the process for adding a new course.

Work in Progress – not yet ready or withdrawn from the live site

For Review – Waiting to be checked by Connexions

Re-work – the Connexions reviewer has requested amendments

Live – the reviewer has approved it and the course can now be viewed on the website.

Actions: Click 'Send for review' when you are ready for the course to be made live. The Connexions information staff will check the data for consistency with the rest of the site data and then it make live on the site. Once live, when you amend the data, it will go back to 'Work in Progress' and you will need to click 'Send for review' again. You can withdraw the programme from public view by clicking 'Hide from site'.

Programme Type

Select the appropriate type

Apprenticeship for apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships and programme-lead apprenticeships, but not for pre-apprenticeship courses

Diploma for the new 14-18 Diplomas only. Not for BTEC or other courses with 'diploma' in their title.

Other All courses not included in the above 2 categories, including A level, GCSE, e2e, etc

Contact Name

Contact: An office or person that the public can contact for more information. Examples:

Mr Jones, Course leader
Head of Engineering Department, 0116 2343321
Hairdressing training manager

Venues

A venue must be selected. A course may have more than one venue.

Provider: 'Whole Area' could be selected if the course is held in a number of locations, e.g. an apprenticeship using employers' premises throughout the area.

Venue: Select a venue from the second list.

Options - Partners

Do you make the course available to be offered by schools or other institutions as part of their curriculum? If so, under 'Options', click edit and tick the partnership box.

Numbers

If the current or planned number of places available on the course is known, please add these.

Applicable

'Applicable' refers to courses that are appropriate for applications via the LeCAP process. Only courses for year 12 and 13 students or apprenticeships should be ticked as 'applicable'. This does not include e2e courses, part-time courses requiring employment, courses aimed at 18+ or mature entrants. If in doubt about this, please consult the CourseFinder helpdesk (tel: 0116 261 5904 , email: coursefinderhelpdesk@connexions-leics.org).

Option Blocks

You can create option blocks and give them a name, preferably short as it will be displayed in LeCAP where space is limited. Any existing programme can be added or deleted from a block. If any further explanation is needed of the option block structure, you can add it to the description field in the Provider's Details.

Reports

From your home menu the item 'Reports' provide 3 styles of report. You can use these reports to display your programme data on the screen or download it as an Excel spreadsheet. Each style offers options of different filters and selections of data fields.

Data Accuracy Reports

You can use this style for comprehensive reports of programme data fields or for a limited range of selected fields. The filters include Qualification Type, Academic Year and Programme status.

Expiry Reports

This reports any qualifications for which their QCA accreditation will have expired before the end of this year. It includes the programme name, description and QAN number. These QAN numbers will need to be updated for the current year.

Provision Reports

This report will be most useful for curriculum planners wishing to review the overall provision. It lists the subjects, sectors and qualification types and number of programmes of each type. The filters include Age range, Awarding body, Level, Duration.

Users

To control who can access your data admin pages, click the 'Users' item on your home menu to list all the users. From this list you can delete, add or amend users. The date and time of the user's last activity are on the list of users. The 'user' option only appears on menus for users that have full rights.

When adding a new user a sequence of pages requests names and email address; allows you to allocate username and password (min 7 characters); and provides a check box for you to indicate if the new user should have full rights to create and amend other users' details. The email address of the user allows Connexions to inform them of updates and contact them if any questions arise about the course data.

If a college provides both FE Courses and Apprenticeships, the data managers may be different for each function or a single manager may have a different username for each.

Import/Export Programmes

From your home menu the item 'Reports' provide 3 styles of report. You can use these reports to display your programme data on the screen or download it as an Excel spreadsheet. Each style offers options of different filters and selections of data fields.

Import

A spreadsheet method of importing data may be used as an alternative to manual input or amendment. A spreadsheet for this purpose with an example course can be downloaded from the Connexions website. This is on the Excel'97 format rather than the latest Excel version. The required fields are indicated in this spreadsheet in yellow.

The import instruction manual, which can be downloaded as a pdf file from the Futures4me admin pages, should be read in conjunction with this guide as there are some instances where our guidelines should overrule the manual. This includes the course **Name**, which should follow the format 'Qualification: Subject' as described above. The **programmeGuid** field must be left blank for all new courses. The **Status** should be set all new courses as 'For Review'. The **IsApplicable** field should follow the guidelines above. The **QAN** number although not technically required, should be supplied whenever possible as it provides the Subject Category, NQF Level and Qualification type.

The first stage of the import procedure is a check on the validity of the data. If any data is missing or invalid (e.g. a QAN number is out of date) the whole file is rejected. You can therefore correct the file (or delete the invalid course and input it manually) and repeat the import.

Export

The export facility enables you to save a copy of all the data held on your courses as a spreadsheet in exactly the same structure as for the import. In this case though it is in an XML format. The **programmeGuid** field will contain the ID by which Futures4me knows the course.

You can save a copy of this spreadsheet in the Excel'97 format, amend the data, and re-import it. This is an alternative means of updating your courses. In this case you can leave the status field unchanged or set it to 'For Review' if you wish Connexions to check it.