

Specifications for Professional Bodies’ Load Files for the

National Learners’ Records Database

(NLRD Version 2.0)

These Specifications are for the use of recognised

*Professional Bodies*,

which are required to transmit data to the NLRD.

(QCs, ETQAs and Providers have their own load specifications.

Professional Bodies that are also ETQAs must please use the ETQA specifications.)

|  |  |  |
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|  | **This document:****prof body loadspecs - last updated 2014 11 24** |  |

#### **Table of Contents**

[Overview 1](#_Toc405300220)

[General Specification 2](#_Toc405300221)

[File Format & Name 2](#_Toc405300222)

[Header Information 2](#_Toc405300223)

[Date Formats 3](#_Toc405300224)

[Transmission Options 3](#_Toc405300225)

[Latest updates of Edu.Dex, Lookup Tables, etc 3](#_Toc405300226)

[Detail Specifications 4](#_Toc405300227)

[File Layouts 4](#_Toc405300228)

[Key to Abbreviations 4](#_Toc405300229)

[Note on Unique Identifiers 4](#_Toc405300230)

[Person Information (File 35 / Format Identifier 35) 5](#_Toc405300231)

[Person Designation (File 36 / Format Identifier 36) 7](#_Toc405300232)

[Appendix A: Data Definitions and Acceptable Values 9](#_Toc405300233)

[Part 1: Lookup Tables with their Custodians 9](#_Toc405300234)

[Part 2: All Other Variables 13](#_Toc405300235)

[Appendix B: UNIQUE IDENTIFIERS FOR DATA SUPPLIERS 15](#_Toc405300236)

[Appendix C: ALLOWED CHARACTERS 16](#_Toc405300237)

[APPENDIX D: best practice for validating and extracting data 19](#_Toc405300238)

[Appendix E: NLRD MINIMUM STANDARD FOR DATA LOADS 25](#_Toc405300239)

[Appendix F: SOLVING DATA CAPTURING ERRORS THAT ARE LISTED IN EDU.DEX REPORTS 26](#_Toc405300240)

[Appendix G: VARIABLES THAT ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BE NULL AND / OR NOT ALLOWED TO BE ‘UNKNOWN’ 29](#_Toc405300241)

[Appendix H: DOCUMENT HISTORY 30](#_Toc405300242)

This document can be found at www.saqa.org.za/nlrdpbinfo.php

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# Overview

The National Learners’ Records Database (NLRD) is a repository to store and maintain records of South African learners and their achievements, as one of its functions as the electronic management information system of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The content of this database is supplied and maintained by various data suppliers, including Quality Councils, ETQAs and Professional Bodies, across South Africa. These data suppliers create electronic files in standard formats and transmit them to SAQA to be loaded into the NLRD. The purpose of this document is to provide these data suppliers with a description of these standard layouts and how they are to be transmitted to the South African Qualifications Authority.

This document is divided into three main sections:

* ***General Specification***: This section describes the characteristics of load files that are common to all of the formats. Also details are provided as to the various options data suppliers have available to them for transferring data to the NLRD.
* ***Detail Specification – File Layouts***: This section describes in detail the basic format for all of the files that will be loaded into the NLRD. These are the templates that each supplier must use to construct the standard inputs.
* ***Detail Specification – Data Definitions and Acceptable Values***: In the interest of simplicity, the detail specifications only contain a short form description of the required field and some basic information about it such as data type and size. In this section a more detailed description is provided, including all of the acceptable values (and their meanings) for various code values such as gender code.

SAQA and the NLRD development team work closely with data suppliers to modify the formats contained in this document. The specifications are thus based upon both the requirements of the NLRD and the knowledge of external data sources gained through these consultations. As more data has become available, the changes to the formats required by the NLRD have become apparent, in order to adapt to the information requirements of the NQF, as well as the current databases used by data suppliers. For future NLRD releases, it is anticipated that further enhancements will be made.

The batch loading of data by Professional Bodies into the NLRD is currently restricted to the following types of data:

* Person
* Person Designation (the link between specific people and their designations)

The information on the Professional Bodies themselves, as well as the Designations and their Registration Statuses, is not batch loaded but rather entered by NLRD staff in advance of the batch loads.

Batch loading of large volumes is an intricate process, and is easily derailed if there are problems with the data. Hence the existence of these load specifications. In addition, SAQA has made it a prerequisite to accepting the data that data suppliers test and submit the data files using Edu.Dex, the testing and feedback tool provided by SAQA.

# General Specification

This section describes those characteristics of the standard file formats that are common to all layouts and also provides details about how data suppliers can transmit their data files to the NLRD once extraction has been completed.

## File Format & Name

All of the files being transmitted to the NLRD must be fixed length files. Fields must be delimited by size – i.e. the position of the field within the file must be used to map the value to the database column. Each file must be terminated by a carriage return.

Each file being transmitted must adopt the following naming convention:

##### *XXXXNN*YYMMDD.dat

The first four characters, XXXX, represent a four character mnemonic that is associated with each file data supplier (see Appendix B). The two digit NN is a unique identifier associated with each file format. The 6-digit date makes it unique over time and facilitates the management of file transfers. The .dat is a standard file extension to denote a data file.

A sample name would thus be: ECSA35100820.dat (ECSA’s person file, extracted 20 August 2010).

## Header Information

The first record in each transmitted format must contain header information. It must have the same record length as any other standard record in the file, but must contain control information so that the integrity of the file can be verified and to provide some basic identifying characteristics of the file. This header record must have the following format:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Field** | **Description** | **Type** | **Position** |
| Header Flag | “HEADER” - A literal used to filter out this record during loading. *Note: must be uppercase.* | TEXT | 1-6 |
| Supplier Identifier | A unique identifier for each supplier (professional body). | TEXT | 7-10 |
| File Description | A short description of file content – eg. “Person Records” | TEXT | 11-30 |
| Number of Records | A count of the records being sent | NUMBER | 31-40 |
| Filler | Blank space to fill the record out to the fixed record length | TEXT | 40-? |

## Date Formats

Information regarding dates must be transmitted in text format. The standard formats for all dates (which are identified as the DATE data type in the formats) are YYYYMMDD unless otherwise specified by a note in the format specification.

## Transmission Options

All data suppliers have two options for transmitting data to the NLRD. They are as follows:

External Staging Area (preferred by SAQA): Each data supplier has its own login and password, and transmits the data via a secure FTP-like service (the procedure is given in a separate document).

Removable Media (CD / diskette / USB): Data suppliers have the option to send input files to SAQA on CD ROM or USB media.

## Latest updates of Edu.Dex, Lookup Tables, etc

The latest updates of Edu.Dex, the NLRD Lookup Tables for Professional Bodies (Excel version), the Minimum Standard for data loads, and the Specifications for Professional Bodies’ Load Files for the National Learners’ Records Database (this document) are all available on the URL, www.saqa.org.za/nlrdpbinfo.php.

# Detail Specifications

## File Layouts

Each file layout provides the format for a fixed length record, delimited by size (position) for loading into the NLRD. Each file format must have a two-digit format identifier that must also be included in the standard file name as described above. New format identifiers are used for NLRD Version 2.

## Key to Abbreviations

In the file layouts, an indicator is provided as to whether a certain value is required or not. It should be noted that all of the requested values in the formats are important for the proper functioning of the NLRD and should be provided wherever possible (whether required fields or not). In other words, the fields marked ‘Y’ (required) represent the minimum information required to be loaded into the NLRD. Where other, non-required information is not supplied, loading can still occur but its usefulness for the NLRD and thus the NQF will be diminished.

Values in the ‘Require’ column (below):

Y Required

N Not Required (but can be included)

MBB Must Be Blank (because not applicable to Professional Bodies)

(i.e. this applies to other data on the NLRD, but not to Professional Bodies)

C Conditional upon whether or not another value has been input

Values in the ‘Source’ column:

L Lookup table already provided by SAQA; thus always possible to supply the value

T Another file (Table)

## Note on Unique Identifiers

For the loading of records the NLRD relies in many cases upon the unique identifiers employed within the source systems of data suppliers. This is particularly true for designation and person data. In order to facilitate the tracking of changes from one data transfer to the next, the identifiers used by data suppliers must be persistent – i.e. they cannot change from one load to the next. If changes can occur to these values within the systems of the data suppliers, they will need to consult with SAQA to devise a way of ensuring continuity.

The latter identifiers, i.e. those created within the source systems of data suppliers, as well as those in the simple lookup tables (see Appendix A), are known as **Codes** throughout the NLRD (Example: Gender Code.) The identifiers **generated by the NLRD** are known as **Ids**. (Example: Designation Id.) Some identifiers that are in general business usage are also known as Ids. (Example: National Id.)

### Person Information (File 35 / Format Identifier 35)

This file format is designed to transmit basic information about people who are recorded on the NLRD (people who have professional designations; learners; etc), independent of items such as their designations and their qualification/course/unit standard enrolment and achievement data, which is dealt with in separate file formats.

Points about the Person Information file:

1. The unique identifiers for a person must be consistent throughout all of the data submissions related to persons.
2. The name of the person should ideally be as per that person’s ID document. Person\_First\_Name must literally be the first name of the person, and must not contain spaces but may contain hyphens. Person\_Middle\_Name can consist of more than one name and can include spaces.

File Layout

| **Note** | **Field Name** | **Type** | **Size** | **Position** | **Require** | **Source** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | National\_Id | NUMBER | 15 | 1 | C |  |
| 1 | Person\_Alternate\_Id | TEXT | 20 | 16 | C |  |
| 1 | Alternative\_Id\_Type | NUMBER | 3 | 36 | Y | L |
|  | Equity\_Code | TEXT | 10 | 39 | Y | L |
|  | Nationality\_Code | TEXT | 3 | 49 | Y | L |
|  | Home\_Language\_Code | TEXT | 10 | 52 | Y | L |
|  | Gender\_Code | TEXT | 1 | 62 | Y | L |
|  | Citizen\_Resident\_Status\_Code | TEXT | 10 | 63 | Y | L |
|  | Socioeconomic\_Status\_Code | TEXT | 2 | 73 | Y | L |
| 7 | Disability\_Status\_Code | TEXT | 10 | 75 | Y | L |
|  | Person\_Last\_Name | TEXT | 45 | 85 | Y |  |
|  | Person\_First\_Name | TEXT | 26 | 130 | Y |  |
|  | Person\_Middle\_Name | TEXT | 50 | 156 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Title | TEXT | 10 | 206 | N |  |
| 5 | Person\_Birth\_Date | DATE | 8 | 216 | Y |  |
|  | Person\_Home\_Address\_1 | TEXT | 50 | 224 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Home\_Address\_2 | TEXT | 50 | 274 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Home\_Address\_3 | TEXT | 50 | 324 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Postal\_Address\_1 | TEXT | 50 | 374 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Postal\_Address\_2 | TEXT | 50 | 424 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Postal\_Address\_3 | TEXT | 50 | 474 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Home\_Addr\_Postal\_Code | TEXT | 4 | 524 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Postal\_Addr\_Post\_Code | TEXT | 4 | 528 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Phone\_Number | TEXT | 20 | 532 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Cell\_Phone\_Number | TEXT | 20 | 552 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Fax\_Number | TEXT | 20 | 572 | N |  |
|  | Person\_Email\_Address | TEXT | 50 | 592 | N |  |
|  | Province\_Code | TEXT | 2 | 642 | Y | L |
| 3  | Filler01 | TEXT | 20 | 644 | MBB |  |
| 3  | Filler02 | TEXT | 10 | 664 | MBB |  |
| 2 | Person\_Previous\_Lastname | TEXT | 45 | 674 | N |  |
| 6 | Person\_Previous\_Alternate\_Id | TEXT | 20 | 719 | C |  |
| 6 | Person\_Previous\_Alternative\_Id\_Type | NUMBER | 3 | 739 | C |  |
| 3 | Filler03 | TEXT | 20 | 742 | MBB |  |
| 3 | Filler04 | TEXT | 10 | 762 | MBB |  |
| 7 | Seeing\_Rating\_Id | NUMBER | 2 | 772 | N | L |
| 7 | Hearing\_Rating\_Id | NUMBER | 2 | 774 | N | L |
| 7 | Communicating\_Rating\_Id | NUMBER | 2 | 776 | N | L |
| 7 | Walking\_Rating\_Id | NUMBER | 2 | 778 | N | L |
| 7 | Remembering\_Rating\_Id | NUMBER | 2 | 780 | N | L |
| 7 | Selfcare\_Rating\_Id | NUMBER | 2 | 782 | N | L |
| 4 | Date\_Stamp | DATE | 8 | 784 | Y |  |

1. Data suppliers must provide a unique and persistent identifier for Person records from one load to the next. There are two ways of doing this. The first, and preferred, method is to supply the National Id for a particular Person. If the National Id is not available or the data supplier’s source system does not track that value, then the data supplier must provide an alternate unique identifier. This value can be any of a number of alternate id types that are defined in the appendix to this document and will generally represent a value that is used in the source database to uniquely identify a Person record. For example, if there is a Person without a National Id but who is uniquely identified in the source system by a work permit number, the data supplier will place the work permit number in the alternate id field and identify the alternative id type as being ‘work permit number’ using the appropriate alternative id type id, looked up in the appendix (in this instance, 538). In subsequent loads the same work permit number should also be provided in the alternate id field to permit continuity.

National IDs must be 13 characters long (the provision of 15 spaces in the table is due to the probable national need for this, in the future). National IDs not of 13-character length generate a fatal error. Invalid IDs (even if 13 characters in length) are not accepted. The first 10 digits of the National ID are considered the unique identifier*. If the National ID is unknown, please make it blank rather than zeroes.*

It should be noted that it is acceptable (and welcome) to supply both the National Id and an alternate id (with its Alternative ID Type). The alternative id type is now noted as required. If no alternate ID is being stated, then the value for Alternative ID Type should be 533 (None).

It should, furthermore, be noted that each Person should ideally occur only once in the table. Where data suppliers’ systems are unable to prevent Persons from occurring more than once in the table, the NLRD Director must be contacted for advice.

1. If the “maiden name” of the Person is available, this should be supplied here. This will allow the loading program to detect that a change in name does not indicate a new Person, but rather a change in marital status etc of an existing Person.
2. The “Fillers” are place-holders for NLRD fields that apply to loads from ETQAs, and must not be included in loads from Professional Bodies, i.e. they must consist of spaces only (MBB = Must Be Blank). The file will not pass the validations if these fields consist of anything other than spaces.
3. The Date Stamp should be the date on which the record was last **updated**, not the date on which it was extracted. (This will assist in not overwriting more recent biographical Person data if the legacy achievements are received in non-chronological order).

Minimum: 19000101. Maximum: Now. This applies throughout all the files.

1. Minimum: 1850. Maximum: Now-15 years.
2. In order to simplify the validation of these fields, which contain previous descriptors of the Person: if a value is supplied for either of these fields then a value must be provided for both of these fields.
3. The Health and Functioning Ratings will eventually replace Disability Status. For more information on the mapping of these, refer to the document How to map Health and Functioning Codes from Disability Codes - 2014 10.xlsx.

### Person Designation (File 36 / Format Identifier 36)

This file format is designed to transmit the linkages between people and their professional designations.

File Layout

| **Note** | **Field Name** | **Type** | **Size** | **Position** | **Require** | **Source** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1, 2 | National\_Id | NUMBER | 15 | 1 | C |  |
| 1, 2 | Person\_Alternate\_Id | TEXT | 20 | 16 | C |  |
| 1, 2 | Alternative\_Id\_Type | NUMBER | 3 | 36 | Y | L |
| 7, 2 | Designation\_Id | NUMBER | 5 | 39 | Y | T |
| 7 | Designation\_Registration\_Number | TEXT | 20 | 44 | Y |  |
| 3 | Designation\_Prof\_body\_Id | NUMBER | 10 | 64 | Y | T |
| 4, 8 | Designation\_Start\_Date | DATE | 8 | 74 | C |  |
| 5, 8 | Designation\_End\_Date | DATE | 8 | 82 | C |  |
| 8 | Designation\_Structure\_Status\_Id | NUMBER | 10 | 90 | Y | L |
|  | Prof\_Body\_Decision\_Number | TEXT | 20 | 100 | N |  |
| 6 | Filler01 | TEXT | 20 | 120 | MBB |  |
| 6 | Filler02 | TEXT | 10 | 140 | MBB |  |
|  | Date\_Stamp | DATE | 8 | 150 | Y |  |

1. The combination National\_ID, Person\_Alternate\_Id and Alternative\_Id\_Type must exist in the Person Information file.

National IDs must be 13 characters long (the provision of 15 spaces in the table is due to the probable national need for this, in the future). National IDs not of 13-character length generate a fatal error. Invalid IDs (even if 13 characters in length) are not accepted. The first 10 digits of the National ID are considered the unique identifier*. If the National ID is unknown, please make it blank rather than zeroes.*

1. The combination of National\_ID, Person\_Alternate\_Id, Alternative\_Id\_Type and Desigation\_ID must be unique.
2. The value Designation\_Prof\_body\_ID must be the submitting Professional Body’s ID.
3. Minimum: 19900101. Maximum: Now.
4. Minimum: 19900101. Maximum: Now+3 years.
5. The “Fillers” are place-holders for NLRD fields that apply to loads from ETQAs, and must not be included in loads from Professional Bodies, i.e. they must consist of spaces only (MBB = Must Be Blank). The file will not pass the validations if these fields consist of anything other than spaces.
6. The combination of values Designation\_Id and Designation\_Registration\_Number must be unique in the file. The NLRD only accepts Designation\_Ids that have been found using the searchable database on the SAQA website. The Designation\_Registration\_Number is the number assigned by the Professional Body to this person’s designation record.
7. The rules of combination for when designation dates are required or not (depending on the value of Designation Structure Status ID) are supplied in the NLRD Lookup Tables for Professional Bodies (the Excel version, found on www.saqa.org.za/nlrdpbinfo.php) in the worksheet, *structure s*.

# Appendix A: Data Definitions and Acceptable Values

### Part 1: Lookup Tables with their Custodians

(These tables are also available on request in MS Excel format, for data suppliers who wish to load them onto their systems.)

| **Field Name** | **Description** | **List of Values** | **Custodianship** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Alternative Id Type [[1]](#footnote-1) | A unique (system generated) identifier for an alternative id type. | 521 SAQA Member Id527 Passport No. or Foreign ID No.529 Driver’s Licence531 Temporary ID number533 None535 Unknown538 Work Permit Number539 Employee Number540 Birth Certificate Number541 HSRC Register Number561 ETQA Record Number565 Refugee Number566 Membership Number | SAQA |
| Citizen Resident Status Code | A code indicating the residence status of an individual.***Data suppliers are urged not to use ‘U – Unknown.’*** | U UnknownSA South AfricaO OtherD Dual (SA plus other)PR Permanent Resident | SAQA |
| Disability Status Code | A code indicating whether or not an individual is disabled. Statistics SA has added, in 2006, the additional qualifier that this should have lasted for six months or more.Disability Status is about to be discontinued, and will be replaced by Health and Functioning Ratings. | N None01 Sight (even with glasses)02 Hearing (even with a hearing aid)03 Communication (talking, listening)04 Physical (moving, standing, grasping)05 Intellectual (difficulties in learning); retardation06 Emotional (behavioural or psychological)07 Multiple09 Disabled but unspecifiedN - was 01[[2]](#footnote-2) None now - was SightN - was 02 None now - was HearingN - was 03 None now - was CommunicN - was 04 None now - was PhysicalN - was 05 None now - was IntellectN - was 06 None now - was EmotionalN - was 07 None now - was MultipleN - was 09 None now - was Disabled but unspecified | Statistics SA(Note: the code for “None” is N on the NLRD, but 00 for Stats SA) |
| Equity Code | A code to identify all of the various racial groups that the system will need to track.***Data suppliers are urged not to use ‘U – Unknown.’*** | BA Black: AfricanBC ColouredBI Indian/AsianOth OtherU UnknownWh White | Statistics SA |
| Gender Code | A code to describe the gender (sex) of an individual. | M Male F Female  | SAQA |
| Health and Functioning Rating ID | Unique (system generated) identifiers for rating the level of functioning on each of the following indicators in turn:* Seeing
* Hearing
* Communicating
* Walking
* Remembering
* Selfcare
 | 1 No difficulty2 Some difficulty3 A lot of difficulty4 Cannot do at all6 Cannot yet be determined60 May be part of multiple difficulties (TBC)70 May have difficulty (TBC)80 Former difficulty - none now | Statistics SA: 1-6SAQA: 60-80 |
| Home Language Code | An acronym reflecting the major official languages in South Africa. Currently it is anticipated that 11 will be captured. ***Data suppliers are urged not to use ‘U – Unknown.’*** | Eng EnglishAfr AfrikaansOth OtherSASL South African Sign LanguageSep sePedi [also known as Northern Sotho / Sesotho sa Lebowa]Ses seSothoSet seTswanaSwa siSwatiTsh tshiVendaU UnknownXho isiXhosaXit xiTsongaZul isiZuluNde isiNdebele | SAQA |
| Nationality Code | A code identifying the nationality of an individual. SAQA would prefer data suppliers to note the SADC countries individually, but will not insist on this.Thus, either use SDC, or use the individual codes for NAM … TAN.***Data suppliers are urged not to use ‘U – Unspecified.’***It is unlikely that NOT will be required, but it is included for completeness. | SA South Africa SDC SADC except SA (i.e. NAM to ZAI)NAM Namibia BOT Botswana ZIM Zimbabwe ANG Angola MOZ Mozambique LES Lesotho SWA Swaziland MAL Malawi ZAM Zambia MAU Mauritius TAN Tanzania SEY SeychellesZAI ZaireROA Rest of AfricaEUR European countries AIS Asian countries NOR North American countries SOU Central and South American countries AUS Australia and New ZealandOOC Other and rest of OceaniaNOT N/A: InstitutionU Unspecified | Statistics SA and SAQA each own aspects of the categories, SAQA owns the codes |
| Province Code | A code referencing a particular South African province. | 1 Western Cape2 Eastern Cape3 Northern Cape4 Free State5 Kwazulu/Natal6 North West7 Gauteng8 Mpumalanga9 LimpopoN SA National (i.e. in SA but province unspecified)X Outside SA | Statistics SA(Note: the codes for “SA National” and “Outside SA” are SAQA’s, as Stats SA does not have codes for these) |
| Socioeconomic Status Code | A code indicating the (socio) economic status of an individual. | U Unspecified01 Employed02 Unemployed, looking for work03 Not working – not looking for work04 Not working – housewife / home-maker 06 Not working – scholar / full-time student07 Not working – pensioner / retired person08 Not working – disabled person09 Not working – not wishing to work10 Not working – none of the above97 N/A: Aged <1598 N/A: Institution | Statistics SA(Note: the code for “Unspecified” is U on the NLRD, but 99 for Stats SA) |
| Designation Structure Status Id [[3]](#footnote-3) | The value is assigned by SAQA | 501 Registered503 Deregistered505 Reregistered578 Active579 Inactive594 Exemption - Age595 Exemption - Ill Health596 Exemption - Other597 Exemption - Restricted***Please contact the Director: NLRD if the Status required for a specific Professional Body or Designation is not yet shown here*** | SAQA |

### Part 2: All Other Variables

As noted in the Overview section of this document, SAQA will test all data submissions extensively. This data testing activity will include the identification of “superficial” data values in some fields, including the following:

1. Descriptive text fields (names, addresses, telephone numbers, etc.) that contain words like UNKNOWN, AS ABOVE, NOT APPLICABLE, TEST, etc.
2. Address fields (lines 1 – 3, i.e. except Postal Codes) that contain only numbers.

| **Field Name** | **Description** | List of Values |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date Stamp | This data element reflects the date upon which a particular record was last updated. The field will be used by the NLRD to compare the date stamp stored on the database to ensure that older versions of records do not overwrite more recent versions.*For this reason, the Date Stamp should be made equal to the Achievement Date when transmitting* ***Legacy*** *achievements.* | N/A |
| Designation End Date | The date upon which a person’s link to a designation will cease to be valid unless it is renewed. Dates that are in the future are permitted where the term is finite and has not yet ended. | N/A |
| Designation Prof Body ID | The Prof Body ID of the Professional Body that has accorded the person the specific designation | See Appendix: Unique Identifiers for Data Suppliers |
| Designation Registration Number | A registration number for a person who is has been accorded a designation by a Professional Body | N/A |
| Designation Start Date | The date upon which a person is accorded a designation | N/A |
| Person Alternate Id | This is required for persons who are not citizens of South Africa or who do not have a National Id, and optional (and welcome) for everybody else. The various types of identifiers that might be included here include: Work permit number, Passport number, etc. See Alternative Id Type in the Lookup Tables, above. | N/A |
| Person Birth Date | A person's date of birth. | N/A |
| Person Cell Phone Number | A person's cell phone number. | N/A |
| Person Email Address | A person's email address. | N/A |
| Person Fax Number | A person's fax number. | N/A |
| Person First Name | The first name of a person. | N/A |
| Person Home Addr Postal Code | The postal code for a person's permanent address. | N/A |
| Person Home Address 1 | The first part of a person's permanent address. | N/A |
| Person Home Address 2 | The second part of a person's permanent address. | N/A |
| Person Home Address 3 | The third part of a person's permanent address. | N/A |
| Person Last Name | The last name of a person. | N/A |
| Person Middle Name | The middle name of a person. | N/A |
| Person Phone Number | A person's phone number. | N/A |
| Person Postal Addr Post Code | The postal code for a person's mailing address. | N/A |
| Person Postal Address 1 | The first part of a person's mailing address. | N/A |
| Person Postal Address 2 | The second part of a person's mailing address. | N/A |
| Person Postal Address 3 | The third part of a person's mailing address. | N/A |
| Person Title | Examples of titles include Ms Mrs Miss Mr Dr Prof Rev etc. | N/A |
| Prof Body Decision Number | The decision number corresponds to according a designation. (Not all Professional Bodies use this field.) | N/A |

#  Appendix B: UNIQUE IDENTIFIERS FOR DATA SUPPLIERS

As mentioned under General Specification (File Format & Name), each data supplier[[4]](#footnote-4) is required to use a unique, unchanging four-character mnemonic as part of its file names. In order to ensure that data suppliers do not duplicate each other’s names, the list is supplied here.

It should be noted that the presence of a data supplier on this list does not imply that it has completed the recognition process.

Professional Body IDs are also supplied, for use within the data files. In addition, if data suppliers so choose, they may use these (with a leading ‘0’) as part of the file names instead of the mnemonics (e.g. ECSA would use 0623).

The mnemonics of the participating Professional Bodies are available in a separate spreadsheet, which is available on www.saqa.org.za/nlrdpbinfo.php.

# Appendix C: ALLOWED CHARACTERS

##### Disallowed or discouraged characters

The following are not only **disallowed** but will actively trip up the procedures: **“ ” \*** [quotation marks and asterisk]

Others, like **,** [comma] and **:** [colon], are strongly discouraged.

##### Special characters

In order to prevent the accidental corruption of characters which are not supported by differing operating systems and/or database engines, the data values in any data submission may only contain characters with an ASCII decimal value from (and including) 32 to (and including) 126. Special characters like É or é must therefore be recoded to an ASCII character that falls within this range of characters.

The list of recoding required for special characters is as follows:

| **Uppercase** | **Lower case** |
| --- | --- |
| **Special character** | **Recode character** | **Special character** | **Recode character** |
| À | A | à | a |
| Á | A | á | a |
| Â | A | â | a |
| Ã | A | ã | a |
| Ä | A | ä | a |
| Å | A | å | a |
| Æ | AE | æ | ae |
| Ç | C | ç | c |
| È | E | è | e |
| É | E | é | e |
| Ê | E | ê | e |
| Ë | E | ë | e |
| Ì | I | ì | i |
| Í | I | í | i |
| Î | I | î | i |
| Ï | I | ï | i |
| Ð | ETH | ð | eth |
| Ñ | N | ñ | n |
| Ò | O | ò | o |
| Ó | O | ó | o |
| Ô | O | ô | o |
| Õ | O | õ | o |
| Ö | O | ö | o |
| Ø | O | ø | o |
| Ù | U | ù | u |
| Ú | U | ú | u |
| Û | U | û | u |
| Ü | U | ü | u |
| Ý | Y | ý | y |
| Þ | TH | þ | th |
| ß | SS | ÿ | y |

##### Allowed characters

The list of allowed characters per field is as follows:

| Field Name | Good | Strongly discouraged |
| --- | --- | --- |
| National\_IdPerson\_Home\_Addr\_Postal\_CodePerson\_Postal\_Addr\_Post\_Code | 1234567890 | Everything else |
| Person\_First\_Name | ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz'- [hyphen]  | Everything else Disallowed: [space][[5]](#footnote-5) |
| Person\_Last\_NamePerson\_Middle\_NamePerson\_TitlePerson\_Previous\_Lastname | ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz' [space]- [hyphen]  | Everything else |
| Person\_Alternate\_Id | ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890\ @ \_- [hyphen]  | Everything else |
| Person\_Home\_Address\_1Person\_Home\_Address\_2Person\_Home\_Address\_3Person\_Postal\_Address\_1Person\_Postal\_Address\_2Person\_Postal\_Address\_3  | ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890# & ( ) / \ : . \_ , '  [space] - [hyphen]  | Everything else**Disallowed: A data value that contains only numbers** |
| Person\_Email\_Address | ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890\_ . < > - [hyphen] | Everything else**Disallowed: A data value that does NOT contain the @ character** |
| Designation\_Registration\_NumberProf\_body\_Decision\_Number | ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890 @ # & ( ) / \ : . \_ + [space]- [hyphen] | Everything else |
| Person\_Phone\_NumberPerson\_Fax\_Number | 1234567890 ( ) / [space]- [hyphen] | Everything else |
| Person\_Cell\_Phone\_Number | 1234567890 ( )  [space]- [hyphen] | Everything else |

# APPENDIX D: best practice for validating and extracting data

1. Ensuring that fields contain **valid characters only** can be done in one of two manners (the first being preferred):

Method 1:

Define ten different accepted character string arrays on the information system and place a validation rule on each specific data field which confirms that the user is entering a value that only contains characters that are found in the validation array.

The input string must be converted to UPPER case before comparing.

The ten different character strings are as follows (see Appendix D for which strings apply to which fields):

1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZ`'-

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZ`' -

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZ-1234567890@\_

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZ -1234567890#&()/\:.\_`',

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZ1234567890\_.<>-@

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZ1234567890@#&+() /\:.\_-

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRTSUVWXYZ1234567890@#&+() /\:.\_,`'-

1234567890 ()/-

1234567890 ()-

Method 2:

The program that extracts data for the NLRD strips any invalid characters from the field in question.

*Whichever method is used, it should be noted that it is unrealistic to expect users of the information system to remember which characters may or may not be used in each of the data fields.*

1. Ensuring that fields contain **valid strings only** can be done in one of two manners (the first being preferred):

Method 1:

Define three different accepted character string arrays on the information system and place a validation rule on each specific data field which confirms that the user is entering a value that does not contain the words found in the array.

The input string must be converted to UPPER case before comparing.

The three different character strings and which fields they relate to are as follows:

| **Character String** | **Related Fields** |
| --- | --- |
| %UNKNOWN% or %AS ABOVE% or %SOOS BO% or %DELETE% or N/A or NA or U or NONE or GEEN or 0 or TEST or %ONTBREEK% or NIL | Person\_Alternate\_IdPerson\_TitlePerson\_Home\_Address\_1Person\_Home\_Address\_2Person\_Home\_Address\_3Person\_Postal\_Address\_1Person\_Postal\_Address\_2Person\_Postal\_Address\_3Person\_Phone\_NumberPerson\_Cell\_Phone\_NumberPerson\_Fax\_NumberPerson\_Email\_AddressDesignation\_Registration\_Number |
| %UNKNOWN% or %AS ABOVE% or %SOOS BO% or %DELETE% or N/A or 0 or TEST or %ONTBREEK% or NIL | Person\_Last\_NamePerson\_First\_NamePerson\_Middle\_NamePerson\_Previous\_Lastname |
| %ZZZ% or %XXX% | Person\_Last\_NamePerson\_First\_NamePerson\_Middle\_NamePerson\_TitlePerson\_Previous\_Lastname |

Method 2:

The program that extracts data for the NLRD strips any invalid character strings from the field in question.

*Whichever method is used, it should be noted that it is unrealistic to expect users of the information system to remember which character strings may or may not be used in each of the data fields.*

1. Ensuring that **required fields** are not left blank:

Define *not null* and *not empty* string validations on the information system.

1. Ensuring that **Postal Codes** are always correct can be done in one of two manners:

Method 1:

The information system can have a drop-down list of all valid postal codes. Usage of this method often includes a drill-down functionality when used in conjunction with a Province. Non-South African postal codes are marked as such and treated differently.

Method 2:

The information system can confirm that the length of the South African postal code is exactly 4 characters.

1. Ensuring the integrity of **National ID and Birth Date (and Gender)**:
	1. Any value indicated as being a South African **National ID** should be validated by the information system to ensure all of the following:
		1. The string contains exactly 13 characters.
		2. The allowed characters are covered in item 1 above.
		3. The string does not contain four zeros from position 1 to 4.
		4. The string does not contain four zeros from position 7 to 10.
		5. The string does not contain ten of the same numbers (e.g. 1111111111).
	2. The information system should automatically populate the **date of birth** field by deriving it from the National ID. If the user opts to change the date of birth the system should generate an error. In this case, the user must undertake one of the following actions:
* Indicate that the value input into the National ID field is in fact not a National ID, or
* Change the National ID, or
* Leave the date of birth as is.

The information system should also check the date of birth field to ensure that it is feasible. At present, NLRD data suppliers’ systems usually only relate to people of age at least 15, so the information system must not allow a date of birth generating a person age of less than 15.

* 1. The information system should automatically populate the **gender** by deriving it from the National ID. If the user opts to change the gender the system should generate an error. In this case, the user must undertake one of the following actions:
* Indicate that the value input into the National ID field is in fact not a National ID, or
* Change the National ID, or
* Leave the gender as is.

If these requirements cannot be achieved for data capturing, then the program that extracts the data for the NLRD must ensure that the extracted data fields conform to these standards.

1. Ensuring that valid Alternative\_Id\_Type values are used in conjunction with Person\_Alternate\_Id values:

Implement proper logic on the information system (this will be specific to each data supplier).

A typical error is that the Alternative\_Id\_Type is given as “None” (Alternative\_Id\_Type\_ID = 533), yet a Person\_Alternate\_Id is provided.

1. Ensuring the integrity of the **Date Stamp** values:

This field should represent the last date on which a record was updated.

The program that extracts the data for the NLRD must ensure that the correct field is extracted from the information system.

An error that has occurred for some NLRD extractions has been that dates that are at some time in the future have been included. Both the validations and the extract program should ensure that this is not possible.

1. Correct population of the information system’s **drop-down** options:

The NLRD Load Specifications, as well as the Lookup Tables for Professional Bodies (e.g. *lookup tables for prof bodies 2010.xls*) published by the NLRD, should be utilised to ensure that the correct lookup values are in place in the information system.

All errors that indicate that an invalid ID or Code (e.g. Alternative\_Id\_Type, Province\_Code) has been supplied can thus be eliminated.

*Once again, it is unrealistic to expect users to remember each Id or Code for these types of data fields.*

1. Ensuring that **e-mail address** values are valid:

This is the only field that must contain an @ character. This can be ensured by implementing a validation rule that ensures that the input string contains this character.

1. Ensuring that records are **not duplicated**:

This must be done by implementing correct logic on both the information system and the program that extracts data for the NLRD.

1. There should be no **orphan records** (e.g. when a Person Designation record does not relate to any parent record for the Person).

The existence of orphan records in data extracted for the NLRD is always an indication of a problem with either the information system (probably the relationships within the database) or the method of extraction.

1. Ensuring that the **designation start date** is not greater than today's date:

The information system must be set up to record date values in a logical manner. This includes ensuring that the user cannot define a start date that is greater than today's date. The NLRD extraction must extract only the actual start date value (not the expected start date).

1. Ensuring that **start dates are always before end dates**:

The information system must not allow the user to define a start date that is greater than the end date.

1. Ensuring the **correct** **period** between all start dates and end dates:

The information system must not allow the user to select an end date that is greater than the allowed time period, as per the data supplier’s rules (it is advised that the system actually defaults the end date to the relevant date once the user selects the start date – the user may change this value to an earlier one if required).

1. Ensuring that **date values are feasible**:

The information system should contain appropriate validations, for instance it should not allow the user to select a date before 1900/01/01.

1. Ensuring that extracted fields **do not commence with a space:**

The program that extracts data for the NLRD should left-trim all values.

1. Ensuring that **addresses** contain appropriate values only:

The information system and the program to extract data for the NLRD should include validations such as:

* Values for Address Lines 1, 2 and 3 must not contain numbers only.
* Values for Address Line 3 must not contain four consecutive numbers. If they do, this indicates that postal codes have most likely been included in this field. (The most usual values for Address Line 3 are town / suburb names or null.)

If either or both of these conditions are included in the data extracts to the NLRD, they will generate fatal errors in the NLRD test system, and any address containing them will be made null by SAQA before the data file that had contained that address is loaded onto the NLRD.

*It is, in fact, realistic to expect users of the information system to capture data for these fields correctly.*

1. **Ensuring that the extracted dataset remains constant and that it can be used for audit trails:**

Once a dataset has been extracted for testing and transmission to the NLRD, a copy of it (as it is, prior to Edu.Dex testing) should be retained. This means that it can be referred to again, if needs be. It can also be used to generate reports of what exactly was submitted for loading.

# Appendix E: NLRD MINIMUM STANDARD FOR DATA LOADS

The minimum data standard for Professional Body submissions to the NLRD is that

data will be submitted in April/May and October/November of each year,

and will be incorporated into the NLRD

and signed off by 15 May and 15 November respectively.

Note: Only files generated by Edu.Dex will be accepted. Empty files must not be submitted. Only extracts indicating that an Edu.Dex update was carried out not more than two days before the extract will be accepted.

The following steps must be followed:

PB Step 1:

* Professional Body obtains Designation IDs and their registration statuses from the SAQA website

PB Step 2:

Professional Body submits, by latest 4 May and 4 November, all records in its system[[6]](#footnote-6), for each of the following:

* File 35: Person Information
* File 36: Person Designation

PB Step 3:

* NLRD confirms acceptance and loading of the Step 3 submissions by latest 15 May and 15 November.

Yvonne Shapiro

Director: NLRD

November 2010

# Appendix F: SOLVING DATA CAPTURING ERRORS THAT ARE LISTED IN EDU.DEX REPORTS

**Most common errors made during data capturing**

Whenever data has to be captured on-line, the possibility of errors being made is always present. Edu.Dex, the software program for data testing, assists with identifying and removing these errors.

Depending on the severity of errors (fatal or non-fatal) encountered using Edu.Dex, the data supplier may or may not be able to complete the testing and upload the data. In either event, log files are generated by Edu.Dex to inform the data supplier about the outcome of the testing. In these log files, the data supplier can look at all the errors that were picked up during the test.

The most common data capturing errors that influence data suppliers’ ability to upload data that has real integrity are the non-fatal errors that do not normally cause Edu.Dex to stop building a batch file, but – if unchecked – can result in nonsensical information being loaded.

Even with Edu.Dex, not all errors can be eliminated. Certain aspects of the data can only be tested for correctness once the submission is loaded onto the NLRD. If errors occur at that stage, the data supplier is informed via e-mail of the errors, with an explanation of why they occurred and how to correct them.

Some of the more common fatal errors are explained in the tables on the next two pages.

**File 35 - Person Information**

| **Validation Severity** | **Description** | **Explanation** | **For Action** | **Actions To Be Taken** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fatal | Records that have space as first character for:* Alternative\_Id\_Type
* Citizen\_Resident\_Status\_Code
* Date\_Stamp
* Disability\_Status\_Code
* Equity\_Code
* Gender\_Code
* Home\_Language\_Code
* Nationality\_Code
* Person\_Alternate\_Id
* Person\_Birth\_Date
* Person\_Cell\_Phone\_Number
* Person\_Email\_Address
* Person\_Fax\_Number
* Person\_First\_Name
* Person\_Home\_Addr\_Postal\_ Code
* Person\_Home\_Address\_1
* Person\_Home\_Address\_2
* Person\_Home\_Address\_3
* Person\_Last\_Name
 | A space is not allowed as the first character in any field. | Data supplier | Ensure that no fields commence with spaces.Also, ensure that there are no ‘offset’ problems in the extract. |
| Fatal | Person records that are not associated with any designations | A person record was added in the Person Information file, but there is no association with any designations for this person. This error occurs where a person was entered into File 35, but no reference was made to the person in File 36. | Data supplier | The data supplier must either enter information for this person into File 36 or remove the person's record from File 35. |

**File 36 - Person Designation**

| **Validation Severity** | **Description** | **Explanation** | **For Action** | **Actions To Be Taken** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fatal | Records that have space as first character for:* Alternative\_Id\_Type
* Date\_Stamp
* Designation\_End\_Date
* Designation\_Prof\_body\_Id
* Designation\_Id
* Designation\_Registration\_Number
* Designation\_Start\_Date
* Designation\_Structure\_Status\_Id
* Prof\_body\_Decision\_Number
* Person\_Alternate\_Id
 | A space is not allowed as the first character in any field. | Data supplier | Ensure that no fields commence with spaces.Also, ensure that there are no ‘offset’ problems in the extract. |

# Appendix G: VARIABLES THAT ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BE NULL AND / OR NOT ALLOWED TO BE ‘UNKNOWN’

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| File | Field Name | Required |
| 35 | Alternative\_Id\_Type | Y |
| 35 | Equity\_Code | Y |
| 35 | Nationality\_Code | Y |
| 35 | Home\_Language\_Code | Y |
| 35 | Gender\_Code | Y |
| 35 | Citizen\_Resident\_Status\_Code | Y |
| 35 | Socioeconomic\_Status\_Code | Y |
| 35 | Disability\_Status\_Code | Y |
| 35 | Person\_Birth\_Date | Y |
| 35 | Province\_Code | Y |
| 36 | Alternative\_Id\_Type | Y |
| 36 | Designation\_Start\_Date | Please see File 36 Rules of combination, on the “structure s” tab, in the NLRD Lookup Tables for Professional Bodies (Excel, on www.saqa.org.za/nlrdpbinfo.php) |
| 36 | Designation\_End\_Date | Please see File 36 Rules of combination, on the “structure s” tab, in the NLRD Lookup Tables for Professional Bodies (Excel, on www.saqa.org.za/nlrdpbinfo.php) |
| 36 | Designation\_Structure\_Status\_Id | Y |

|  |
| --- |
|  |

# Appendix H: DOCUMENT HISTORY

| **Date** | **Editor** | **Filename** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2010-08-10 | Yvonne Shapiro | prof body loadspecs draft - 2010 08 10 | Commenced the draft load specifications |
| 2010-11-04 | Yvonne Shapiro | prof body loadspecs 2010 11 04 | Finalised the load specifications |
| 2011-09-13 | Yvonne Shapiro | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2011 09 13 | Added to the Appendix on Unique Identifiers for Data Suppliers: “It should be noted that the presence of a data supplier on this list does not imply that it has completed the recognition process.” |
| 2011-10-20 | Yvonne Shapiro | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2011 10 20 | 1. Now also mentioned on the contents page: www.saqa.org.za/nlrdpbinfo.asp ;
2. Added the contact details of the Deputy Director: NLRD.
 |
| 2011-10-26 | Yvonne Shapiro | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2011 10 26 | Added Alternative ID Type to the Lookup Tables Appendix. (It had been left out in error.) |
| 2011-11-17 | Yvonne Shapiro | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2011 11 21 | The two submission files have been renamed to 35 and 36, to distinguish them from the ETQAs’ submission files 25 and 26. |
| 2011-11-21 | Yvonne Shapiro | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2011 11 21 | Amended all “N/A” values in the ‘Require’ column to “MBB”, i.e. “Must Be Blank (because not applicable to Professional Bodies)”, and the names of those fields to “Filler01” etc. |
| 2011-12-08 | Yvonne Shapiro | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2011 12 08 | Appendix B: Stated the list of the ten professional bodies participating in the pilot phase, together with their Professional Body IDs and four-character mnemonics. |
| 2011-12-14 | Yvonne Shapiro | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2011 12 14 | Appendix A: Removed “Student Number” from the list of allowed Alternative Id Types, as this does not apply to Professional Bodies. |
| 2012-02-21 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2012 02 21 | General Specification (File Format & Name): Incorrect reference to Appendix C changed to Appendix B. |
| 2012-03-27 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2012 03 27 | Appendix A: Removed *Structure\_Status\_Id* 580 (“Deceased”) from the lookup table *Designation Structure Status Id*. |
| 2012-04-20 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2012 04 20 | Appendix A: Added the lookup tables *Citizen Resident Status Code* and *Socioeconomic Status Code* (Lookup tables also updated accordingly). |
| 2012-11-27 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2012 11 27 | Appendix B: Unique Identifiers for Data Suppliers: More Professional Bodies added to the list. |
| 2013-03-13 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2013 03 13 | Appendix B: Unique Identifiers for Data Suppliers: More Professional Bodies added to the list. Mnemonic of FBC changed from FPCS to FBCS. |
| 2013-03-25 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2013 03 25 | Appendix A: *Membership Number* (ID 566) added. *Student Number* removed, as it does not apply to Professional Bodies.Appendix B: Unique Identifiers for Data Suppliers: More Professional Bodies added to the list. Title of South African Reward Association corrected. |
| 2013-05-30 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2013 05 30 | Appendix B: Unique Identifiers for Data Suppliers: Names of a few Professional Bodies corrected (CISA, FBCSA, IWH, IBA, ICM, IoDSA, IRMSA, SABPP, SAICA & SAPFTC). |
| 2013-10-02 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2013 10 02 | Appendix B: Unique Identifiers for Data Suppliers: More Professional Bodies added to the list. |
| 2014-04-07 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2014 04 07 | 1. Appendix B: Unique Identifiers for Data Suppliers: List of Professional Bodies removed. These are now available on a separate spreadsheet.2. Reference to the URL www.saqa.org.za/nlrdpbinfo.asp changed to www.saqa.org.za/nlrdpbinfo.**php**. |
| 2014-11-24 | Carina Oelofsen | prof body loadspecs - last updated 2014 11 24 | 1. Person File (File 25): Added six Health and Functioning rating fields.
2. Appendix A (Part 1):
* Added the values allowed for the six Health and Functioning rating fields.
* Updated the descriptions of Equity Code, and added one.
 |

1. “Student Number” is not included, as it does not apply to Professional Bodies. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. All of the “N - was xx” Disability Codes are for use when the person's Disability Status has been recorded as something other than “None”, and must now be recorded as “None”. The reason for the extra codes is that the NLRD data load procedure will ignore attempts to replace a real value with a value of “None”. This way, the incoming dataset has to deliberately state the request to change the value. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The notion of “Structure Status” is an historical one. It was originally introduced to refer to SAQA as a “structure” with “substructures” that had various statuses, and has continued to be utilised throughout the NLRD. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. While consultants to Professional Bodies are sometimes themselves data suppliers, they should use each client’s mnemonic when creating file names. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Any names further to the Person\_First\_Name must be included in Person\_Middle\_Name, which does allow spaces. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This is the most robust way to operate, as it ensures that all updates are transmitted to the NLRD. If there is no change to a record since the previous submission, the NLRD’s load procedures simply ignore that record. The NLRD does indeed have the capacity to cope with this volume of data. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)