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## Dame Glenys Stacey: speech to

2020.

Speech

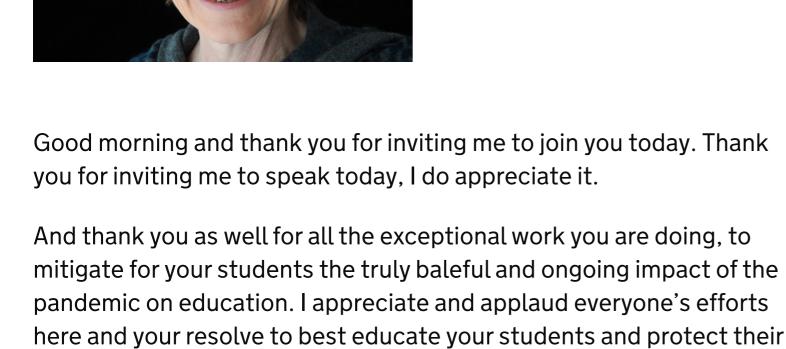
## **AOC's FE Summit, 18 November** 2020 Dame Glenys Stacey's speech to the Association of

Colleges' Further Education Summit, 18 November

Published 18 November 2020 From: Ofqual and Dame Glenys Stacey

Delivered on: 18 November 2020 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as

it was delivered)



from me Much of the talk in recent months has been of GCSEs and A levels but

These are particularly important to many of your students, and they

are increasing in prominence generally with the government's Post-16

But first, I do want to make clear that we at Ofqual are sorry for what

happened this summer: the distress and anxiety it caused for many

today I'd like to focus on vocational and technical qualifications.

qualification review and the anticipated FE White Paper.

long known and respected, in the FE sector. A heartfelt thank you

futures. It is outstanding in so many respects, but it is also what I have

students and their parents; the problem it created for teachers; and the impact it had on higher and further education providers. For our part, we are truly sorry for that. The government has since renewed its commitment to examinations. I welcome that: we know this is generally the best way of testing knowledge and understanding, and the feedback we are getting from recent focus groups at Ofqual shows that parents and students, they

are welcoming it too. In this year, because of the pandemic, there are

new challenges, in assessing the right things in the right ways, so that

even under exceptional assessment and examination arrangements,

Now, awarding organisations with high levels of subject knowledge

we still want to get sufficiently valid and reliable results for your

students.

actually, as well as for this year.

and expertise have the ability to consider how the right things should be assessed, and how to adapt assessment in this exceptional year. But they must also have a deep understanding of how centres and your colleges operate and their student cohort, as well as the needs of future employers or higher education providers. So, from my perspective, knowing the challenges on the ground, understanding the impact of change and appreciating how these qualifications are used is critical to developing appropriate assessment – not just this year, but for the longer-term future

With these things in mind, we are regulating awarding organisations in

novel ways, in these extraordinary times. We have got something

called the Extraordinary Regulatory Framework – bit of a mouthful,

assessments and qualifications where necessary and appropriate.

but it allows awarding organisations to use their judgement to adapt

Just thinking that through, particular skills and levels of practical competence are important for a student to be able to demonstrate their mastery and move into employment. Missed learning in key areas can make the difference between a student understanding safe and unsafe practices in some subject areas – and that is another key issue

for us. Any changes proposed by awarding bodies do need to protect

And as AoC are telling us on your behalf, there have been difficulties

in students accessing mandatory work placements as a result of the

these key attributes of particular qualifications

pandemic, so we have that to look at as well.

of learning during this difficult time

For those students intending to progress to higher education, often taking VTQs alongside A levels, there are other challenges. We know how important it is that there is coherence with GCSEs, AS and A levels. And so awarding organisations must try, as far as possible, to ensure that adaptations made to assessments do not advantage or disadvantage students against those taking GCSEs, AS and A levels. There needs to be a level playing field there.

Taking into account public health advice such as social distancing

time for teaching and learning; and make these assessments as

So some examples then, assessment tasks or briefs may be available earlier or assessment windows extended. Assessments may be streamlined to free up for time for teaching and learning – without reducing the content that is taught. And, of course, there is the introduction of remote assessment and remote invigilation - allowing assessments to take place in different settings. Now there are risks involved with these adaptations. We are

monitoring how awarding organisations make use of these new

freedoms, with a keen eye on validity, but also an awareness of the

example we hear from you that the January RQF exams are likely to be

logistically challenging - we're actively looking at what we can do and

practicalities of assessment for many of these qualifications. For

And we are working closely with the awarding organisations and

we do recognise the need for early certainty.

information you keenly need. So just to finish off, and to look further ahead, we welcome the upcoming White Paper, of course, and government's ambitions for a high quality, coherent qualification market which offers the right level of choice for all types of learners at all levels. We want to see the detail of that. In the meantime, we are strengthening our capacity and redoubling our efforts in anticipation – so for example, we are

gathering and publishing more data than ever before about VTQs, and

I will mention here our VTQ landscape explorer analytics tool, it's a

To finish, as you balance the necessary changes and adaptations

during this pandemic with caring for your students', and your own

nice useful piece of kit that we're updating on our website this week.

sector, are working hard to safeguard sufficient validity in assessments but also keeping at heart the student perspective. Above all, we want students to have the reassurance and confidence that they have been treated fairly, and future employers to have confidence in the skills of their new employees. Published 18 November 2020

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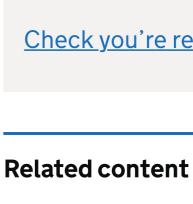
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constraints, awarding organisations are putting in place a wide range of adaptations for vocational and technical qualifications to free up manageable and flexible as possible. And we've been encouraging professional bodies and employers to work closely with their awarding organisations so that students are not unreasonably penalised for loss

sector bodies, including AoC, to set in place consistent approaches wherever possible and appropriate. This is not only in relation to qualifications with much in common, such as functional skills qualifications, but also in relation to how and when awarding organisations communicate with you to help you receive the

health and wellbeing, we, together with AoC, the awarding organisations, DfE and many other stakeholders across the whole

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