

# Wolf Review of Vocational Education

## Government Response

## **Wolf Review of Vocational Education – Government Response**

In his foreword to the Government's White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, the Secretary of State for Education said that it is only through reforming education that we can allow every child the chance to take their full and equal share in citizenship, shaping their own destiny, and becoming masters of their own fate. We will not achieve this ambition if we do not also reform vocational education, so that just as every pupil should have the opportunity to attend an excellent school with excellent teachers, and study a world class curriculum and stay on in learning to age 18 and beyond, every young person should also have the opportunity to take excellent technical and practical courses.

Vocational education is immensely valuable for two, crucial, reasons.

First, it is an essential part of a broad curriculum. Just as much as academic education, vocational learning provides invaluable opportunities for young people to develop their potential and expand what they know, understand and can do; and to gain recognition for that learning which allows them to progress as they move to adulthood. Investigating and developing genuine craft skills, and experiencing the satisfaction of technical accomplishment, has just as important a place in our education system as does mastering an academic discipline. If either academic or vocational study is over-emphasised, to the detriment of the other, we impoverish the opportunities available to young people in this country.

Second, vocational education is a vital underpinning for our economy. The development of young people's skills in areas of immediate relevance to employers and business is a central part of the Government's plans to boost economic growth, and to support higher levels of youth employment. It is a commonplace that technical education in England has long been weaker than most other developed nations. Yet it is also widely agreed that our country's future relies upon building an advanced economy founded on high-level technical skills, and the ability to remain at the forefront of ever-faster technological change. We must, therefore, put in place the reforms needed in our education system to address the long term weaknesses in practical learning. Professor Wolf's review establishes the principles on which we can do that.

As Professor Wolf points out, there are areas of strength in vocational education in this country, and examples of excellent vocational provision for young people. Places on the best Apprenticeships, such as those provided by Network Rail or Rolls Royce, are highly regarded by both employers, and by potential apprentices. They are more oversubscribed than the most desirable course at the best university. There are excellent colleges, highlighted in Professor Wolf's review, like City and Islington College and Macclesfield College, offering specialist education with a national, and international reputation. And there are excellent qualifications available, providing clear routes for progression into full time employment, or further study in higher education.

However, these examples of excellence do not add up to an excellent system, and too often are provided in spite of, rather than because of, the structures that Government has created. In short, the current system of vocational education is failing too many young people.

That failure can stem from a number of different causes:

- Indifferent teaching of highly specialised subjects from teachers who are not well enough versed in the courses they are leading.
- Young people taking courses and qualifications which have been designed to meet the needs of adults, already in employment, seeking to hone the skills they use every day – but which offer no route to further education nor entry to employment for those still in education.
- Perverse incentives, created by the performance and funding systems, encouraging the teaching of qualifications which attract the most performance points, or the most funding – not the qualification that will support young people to progress.
- Students without a solid grounding in the basics being allowed to drop the study of English and maths – the most vital foundations for employment - when these are precisely the subjects that they most need to continue.
- Not enough Apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds and a lack of incentives for employers to be involved in the programme.
- And underlying these problems, an attitude that vocational education is a second choice, easy option for the less able, which has been reinforced, not tackled, by claims of “equivalence” between qualifications which no one has truly believed.

These problems have been laid bare by Professor Wolf’s incisive and far-reaching review. So too have the best means to address them. We must not simply assert the equivalence of vocational and academic education, pretending that all study and every qualification is intrinsically the same, which will in fact serve only to devalue vocational education in the eyes of employers, higher education institutions, parents and head teachers. Nor is it achieved by the wholesale development of new, untried and untrusted qualifications. Rather, we must ensure that we learn the lessons of the excellent practice that exists in this country, and reform the incentives and systems in which schools, colleges and employers operate to that they support such excellence, not hinder it.

As Professor Wolf’s review sets out, we need to ensure that every student studies only the best vocational qualifications, appropriate for their age, which ensure they can progress to further study or into a job. We need qualifications to respond easily to changing labour market demands – and to demand

excellence in ways which are true to the skills and occupations concerned. We need to ensure that the approach for adult learners is different: adults need to have access to programmes that are directly relevant to their immediate or future career needs and be able to measure their skills by the flexible, employer-led qualifications in the new Qualifications and Curriculum Framework.

We will take action on all of Professor Wolf's individual recommendations, and in doing so, deliver on three key themes.

We will:

- Ensure that all young people study and achieve in English and mathematics, ideally to GCSE A\*-C, by the age of 19. For those young people who are not immediately able to achieve these qualifications, we will identify high quality English and maths qualifications that will enable them to progress to GCSE later. We will also reform GCSE to ensure that they are a more reliable indicator of achievement in the basics, in particular by ensuring that GCSEs are reformed alongside our current review of the National Curriculum.
- Reform performance tables and funding rules to remove the perverse incentives which have served only to devalue vocational education, while pushing young people into qualification routes that do not allow them to move into work or further learning. Those vocational qualifications that attract performance points will be the very best for young people – in terms of their content, assessment and progression.
- Look at the experience of other countries to simplify Apprenticeships, remove bureaucracy and make them easier for employers to offer.

This is a substantial programme of reform that will transform the lives of young people. While system change on this scale cannot happen overnight, we are determined to act as quickly as possible to ensure that improvements can begin to have a positive impact for young people as soon as possible and urge all delivery partners to do the same.

We are also delighted that Professor Wolf has agreed that she will continue to provide advice to the Government as plans for implementation are developed in more detail and then delivered. Working closely with Government officials, she will ensure the spirit and detail of the review is implemented and will provide Ministers with regular updates on progress.

This document sets out the Government's response to Professor Wolf's recommendations. We accept all of them, and what follows sets out how we will take them forward. Rather than simply take each recommendation in turn, it considers her report thematically and sets out how the Government will implement not just the letter but the spirit of her report, transforming the quality of vocational education for young people in this country.



## 14-19 Vocational Qualifications

Young people aged 14-16 must have a broad and balanced education that provides the foundation for further learning. We want the vast majority of 14-16 year olds to be taught an academic core, which can then be supplemented by a vocational element. We agree with Professor Wolf that allowing young people to specialise too soon narrows their choices and limits their chance to secure further learning and employment in the longer term.

Pupils must be offered vocational qualifications that are valuable, respected and support progression to further learning and skilled jobs. We therefore agree with Professor Wolf that we should clearly and simply recognise through performance tables those vocational qualifications which are most appropriate for the vast majority of 14-16 year olds, and which are comparable in terms of rigour of content and assessment to other qualifications that will count in the tables.

We want 14-16 year olds to do vocational qualifications that are comparable with the best academic qualifications in terms of content, assessment, and opportunities to progress. We will identify the best vocational qualifications for this age group and will recognise them in performance tables. In this way we will break free from the old equivalency based performance tables and include only a set of clearly defined vocational qualifications which have the greatest benefit for this age group. Preferred qualifications for this age group will:

- Have rigorous assessment, including a percentage of external assessment;
- Provide good progression opportunities to Level 3;
- Be in subjects which are recognised by employers and higher education;
- Offer rigour, breadth and depth;
- Be of an appropriate size to complement the academic core for the majority of students.

We will consult with employers, schools, colleges, higher education, and other experts over the summer in order to refine the attributes of the best vocational qualifications for 14-16 year olds.

At the same time as incentivising take up of these key vocational qualifications, we are clear that young people must take the qualifications that are right for them. We want schools and colleges to be free to choose whatever qualifications they identify as most appropriate for particular students and will enable them to progress, whether they are recognised in the performance tables or not. This may be appropriate where a student has a particular commitment to a specialisation like drama or music, or for those young people who may not be able to complete a full GCSE programme immediately (for example those with English as a Second Language). The most important thing is that the choice of course or qualifications is driven by what is best for the pupil, not the performance table score.

There is a risk that steps to limit the vocational qualifications that can contribute to performance indicators will lead to some schools paying less attention to their less academically successful pupils. It is also true that threshold measures, such as the percentage achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C, can cause some schools to neglect their more able pupils. It is vital that performance indicators do not inadvertently cause schools to concentrate on particular groups of pupils at the expense of others. To avoid this we will continue to include performance measures, like average point scores, which capture the full range of outcomes for pupils of all abilities. In addition, from 2011 the performance tables will show for each school the variation in performance of low attaining pupils, high attaining pupils and those performing as expected.

## **16-18 Curriculum**

Ensuring 16-18 year olds are undertaking a coherent and well considered study programme is vital to ensuring their education has the breadth, as well as the depth, to enable them to respond to changes in the jobs market and in their careers over their lifetime. The rapidly changing labour market and the fact that few 16 year olds know exactly what career they will be in at 22 means that learning up to 18 should provide breadth and keep options open alongside specialisation. We need to make sure that every 18 year old has followed a broad programme, including English and maths where they had not yet achieved to GCSE level by age 16, so that they have a secure foundation with which to progress.

The general principles for such a programme are likely to cover contact time, continuation/achievement of English and maths where appropriate, and qualifications that are of a substantial size, rigorously assessed, and offer good progression opportunities. We will refine these principles and will consult with higher education, learning providers, employers, Ofqual and other experts over the summer. The review of funding for 16-18 year olds will look at how we can fund coherent programmes of learning for 16-18 year olds.

All young people must leave school or college with good English and maths skills. For the majority of young people this should mean the achievement of GCSE maths and English A\*-C: we know these qualifications support entry to the labour market and progression to further and Higher Education. However, we are aware that confidence in the GCSE has been undermined in recent years. So we have asked the independent regulator, Ofqual, to consider how to reform GCSEs in order to reduce modularisation and re-sitting and ensure that exams are typically only taken at the end of the course. We have also asked the regulator to consider how spelling, punctuation and grammar can be strengthened in GCSEs. In the coming years, alongside the review of the National Curriculum, these measures will ensure that we restore confidence in GCSEs as rigorous and valued qualifications.

For those who fail to achieve these GCSEs by age 16, we will consider

whether there are other qualifications that provide significant progress towards future GCSE success. Once we have established which qualifications are suitable we will develop new indicators for the performance tables showing the progress made by pupils in English and maths after the age of 16.

The White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* set out the Government's belief that the single most important factor in giving every child a good education is to have good teachers delivering good teaching. The importance, therefore, of attracting and retaining high quality teachers in all subjects, with a particular emphasis on science, mathematics and other high-priority subjects, is paramount.

We will commission a maths continuing professional development support programme, which will be in place by autumn 2011. This will build on the achievements of the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) and draw on Local Leaders of Education and National Leaders of Education as the network of Teaching Schools develops over the next few years. We will also continue to fund schemes which provide existing maths teachers with the detailed subject knowledge to become recognised as specialist teachers.

### **Lower Attaining Pupils**

All young people, regardless of their starting point, should be stretched to their full potential. We want to do more to support the most vulnerable young people who are not able to progress directly to achieve GCSE level qualifications by age 16. Too many young people are failing to reach this critical level, which harms their prospects for progressing in education or training and finding a job. We share Professor Wolf's concern that the proportion of young people in this group is high in England compared to other countries. We must raise the attainment of the lowest performing young people so that more of them are well placed to progress. Post-16 programmes of study need to support students to achieve English and maths, and incorporate valuable work experience. We agree also that foundation learning which presently shapes much of what is taught to this group of young people, is too rigidly structured and qualification driven. We need to understand better what makes a difference, and build on the best examples.

We will find out what schools, colleges and other providers are doing well to support these young people, including the most disengaged, and enable them to progress to GCSE level qualifications at age 16 or soon after. We will examine the evidence here and internationally, and will publish our findings and recommendations by December 2011. We want study programmes for these young people to offer high quality, genuine work experience and focus on achievement of English and maths. This work will be informed by an independent evaluation of Foundation Learning, which will be published in the summer, and by the experiences and views of providers and young people.

A significant proportion of these young people will have special educational needs, and some of those needs will be particularly complex. For those with these more complex needs the Green Paper, *Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability* published in March 2011, sets out our vision for supporting those with special educational needs and disabilities and makes wide ranging proposals that will inform policy in this area. This includes a proposal for new indicators in the performance tables relating to the lowest attaining pupils between Key Stages 1 and 2, and Key Stages 2 and 4 in English and maths. We will consider how we can supplement these indicators with information on pupils' achievements in English and maths post-16, focussing on those who failed to achieve these essential skills by Key Stage 4. Taken together with other plans announced in the Green Paper and the new Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 destination measures (announced in the White Paper *The Importance of Teaching*), which will show how many pupils progress into further education, employment or training, these new measures will ensure that schools and colleges are held accountable for helping all of their pupils to prepare for success post-16 and beyond.

## **16-18 Funding**

We are committed to all 16-19 year olds having individually tailored programmes that enable them to fulfil their ambitions whether that is moving on to employment or further study. As part of this the funding for 16-19 education needs to be radically changed to remove perverse incentives for colleges to accumulate qualifications rather than provide sensible, balanced and broad programmes of study.

We have announced that we are reviewing the 16-19 funding formula. This review will consider how we can move from a formula based on funding qualifications to one based on funding learners. The review will consider value for money and what weightings may be needed to reflect the content-related cost of courses and for particular groups of high-need young people. This latter aspect will consider what the post-16 equivalent of the pre-16 pupil premium may look like. We are aiming to consult on changes to the 16-19 funding formula over the summer alongside the pre-16 funding formula review.

As Professor Wolf says, every young person should be able to take the qualifications they need to equip themselves with the right skills to progress, and schools and colleges should encourage this. Where it is clearly in the young person's best interests to be able to move sideways or down, they should be able to do so, and the funding rules should support this.

Professor Wolf notes that not every young person will achieve Level 2 or 3 by 19 and we need to give them opportunities for a second chance. She proposed that there should be no time limit on when young people take up this opportunity. It is presently the case that we provide full Government funding for young adults to support them to achieve their first full level 2 or

first full level 3 qualification up to age 24. The funding is focussed on this age group because it can secure long term economic benefits and maximise the impact of investment from limited resources. It is right to retain this focus, but we recognise that some young people achieve a full level 2 qualification by the age of 19 without reaching this level in the critical areas of English and Maths. We will therefore extend the availability of full government funding for level 2 courses in English and Maths to those 19-24 year olds who have yet to achieve this level in both.

## **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships are rightly regarded as the best way to learn in work. Places on the best Apprenticeships are as highly sought after and regarded as places at the most prestigious universities. We want to ensure that all Apprenticeships are as good as the best, and that we learn from international practice. We will remove bureaucracy and make Apprenticeships easier for employers to offer, ensuring that the money spent by Government and employers on Apprenticeships is used to the very best effect.

We support the emphasis placed by Professor Wolf on progression and flexibility within frameworks and recognise that, especially for 16-18 year old apprentices, the general educational component should provide a firm foundation that they can build on through further learning and throughout their career. In this light, we are considering whether and how Apprenticeship frameworks for 16-18 year olds should be adapted or supplemented to reflect the importance for this age group of a broader programme of study; and we will come forward with proposals in autumn 2011. We will consult with employers and delivery partners on any proposed changes.

We agree with Professor Wolf that 16-18 year old apprentices who have not yet achieved GCSE A\*-C in English and maths should have the opportunity to do so. Providers can already offer GCSEs as part of their Apprenticeships programmes, and we will phase out Key Skills from Apprenticeship frameworks by September 2012, meaning that Functional Skills and GCSEs will be the only recognised pathways to achieving the compulsory English and maths elements of an Apprenticeship. When taking this recommendation forward we will also consider international models which have general educational content and will publish further research on lessons we can learn from international exemplars by January 2012.

Apprenticeship frameworks can already be drawn up by other bodies, aside from SSCs, and we will come forward with proposals to make this more widespread by autumn 2011, for example through the continued expansion of the Apprenticeship Frameworks Online service. Employers need a credible voice in the design of qualifications, provided through SSCs. It is important that SSCs have a remit which focuses their work on the areas where they can add most value. We will review their role as Issuing Authorities for Apprenticeship frameworks by January 2012.

Payments to employers can be an effective way to encourage them to take on apprentices, as demonstrated by a number of apprenticeship programmes abroad. It is important to ensure that any such scheme will deliver the outcomes we want as well as offer value for money, and further work will be needed to assess the costs and benefits in the context of the cost of the programme as a whole – including any proposed adjustments to the general educational content of the Apprenticeship framework for 16-18 year olds. We will consider this as part of our review of 16-19 funding, and in light of our planned research into employer investment, which will report in autumn 2011.

We will also want to ensure transparency of Apprenticeship funding, and the related benefits employers receive – because intermediaries often receive payments on employers' behalf, many employers are not aware how much money the Government is investing in the training of Apprentices. We will investigate how this might work in practice, with a view to implementing transparency measures for the start of the 2012 academic year.

We believe that as much funding for Apprenticeships as possible should be spent on the programme's delivery, and we will review contracting processes by January 2012, with a view to achieving efficiencies and greater simplification, drawing where possible on lessons learned from international exemplars.

We are looking at what changes can be made to the current apprenticeship system to encourage and enable more, smaller employers to offer apprenticeship places. We are particularly keen to see the current GTA network grow although there are other models, for example Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs) and National Skills Academies, which are also important and can complement GTAs (and vice versa). The National Apprenticeship Service will be publishing an evaluation of the work of ATAs and GTAs by May 2011. We will produce an action plan based on the recommendations of this evaluation. One possible funding route for supporting such collective activity is BIS's new Growth and Innovation Fund.

### **Strengthening vocational teaching in schools**

We believe that schools should be free to appoint the right teachers to deliver the appropriate curriculum for their pupils. For too long highly experienced Qualified Teacher, Learning and Skills (QTLS) holders have been unable to teach the subjects in schools that they already teach in further education colleges. This means that head teachers and governing bodies have not always been able to appoint the right teachers for the delivery of high quality education across the full range of subjects taught in schools. That is why we are giving schools the freedom to select the teachers with the skills and experience that they require.

Recognising QTLS status in schools will require a change in the law. A statement will be made this summer explaining how and when the changes

will apply. Subject to statutory and parliamentary procedure, we intend to implement this recommendation as soon as possible.

We will also clarify the existing rules on the supervision and direction of industry experts in schools. This clarification will be made available in time for the coming academic year.

### **Enrolling students in colleges pre-16**

We believe that it is right for young people to have a choice as to where they take their education. That is why we are supporting the creation of University Technical Colleges (UTCs), which offer full-time technically-orientated courses, with clear progression routes into higher education or further learning in work, including apprenticeships. Studying in UTCs provides opportunities for young people to integrate academic study with practical learning, studying core GCSEs alongside technical qualifications. UTCs specialise in subjects which need modern, technical, industry-standard equipment, such as engineering and construction, and teach these disciplines alongside business skills and the use of ICT. In the March 2011 Budget, Government committed to establishing at least 24 UTCs by 2014.

We are also keen to see many more Studio Schools across the country, an innovative new model of 14-19 provision delivering project-based, practical learning alongside mainstream academic study. Students work with local employers and a personal coach and follow a curriculum designed to give them the employability skills and qualifications they need for work or further education.

For some young people at age 14, college will offer a better learning option than schools, subject to ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place. This will enable them to access good quality vocational provision, alongside the core academic Key Stage 4 programme. Students are currently able to enrol in colleges pre-16 and we want to see more young people being offered this opportunity. We will communicate this to all schools and colleges directly to ensure they are aware before the end of the summer term. We will also work with colleges in the autumn term to better understand the existing barriers to enrolling 14 year old learners.

### **Work Experience**

We need to ensure that all young people are able to gain real experience and knowledge of the workplace. Genuine work experience is an important part of a student's programme of study while remaining in education, and we are committed to supporting schools and colleges in achieving this aim.

Local authorities are already under a duty to encourage work experience for students 16-19 and we have begun working with partners to promote this. A group of local areas and training providers are also developing Work Pairings models, which offer young people training and intensive work experience with local employers. These will help to inform thinking on future work experience models for all 16-19 year olds. The review of lower attaining pupils will consider how work experience and internships can support progression for these young people. We will consider how local employers could be reimbursed.

We will seek to remove the statutory duty to provide every young person at Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) with work-related learning. This will be achieved through secondary legislation and will involve, amongst other things, a public consultation in autumn 2011 and parliamentary debates in early 2012. We anticipate that the duty will be removed from the start of the academic year 2012/13 and release support for more work experience for older pupils. However, schools will still be free to determine whether and how work experience for young people at Key Stage 4 is provided.

## **Ofqual and Qualifications Design**

Regulation of the qualifications market needs to be efficient, risk-based, maintain standards and support effective teaching. Ofqual is already changing the way it regulates: recently it consulted on how it will regulate awarding bodies rather than their qualifications. Ofqual will publish its new qualification regulatory framework, including new conditions of recognition, to make a reality of this ambition in May 2011. Each awarding body will need to meet these conditions from July 2011. Ofqual will continue to intervene in individual qualifications if necessary, based on an assessment of risk, notably to secure that standards are maintained.

It is and will remain our general policy that only qualifications regulated by Ofqual will be eligible for use in the maintained sector, so that schools, colleges and young people can have confidence in their quality. These qualifications will not have to be compliant with the Qualifications and Credits Framework, though this does not lessen the importance of offering qualifications which will encourage and facilitate progression to further study post-19. Ofqual will expand further on this in its own response to be published in parallel with this Government response.

The Wolf Report identified some recent changes to the funding processes that have meant that a number of trusted qualifications are no longer available, which is causing concern with some colleges and employers.

In April the following qualifications were reinstated on the approved qualifications list and will be available for teaching in September:

Awarding Organisation	Name of Qualification	Code
Edexcel	BTEC National Diploma in Aviation Operations (Level 3)	50012101
Edexcel	BTEC National Award in Aviation Operations (Level 3)	50012095
Edexcel	BTEC National Certificate in Aviation Operations (Level 3)	50012113
City and Guilds	Level 2 Certificate in Electrotechnical Technology	10035692
City and Guilds	Level 3 Certificate in Electrotechnical Technology	10036027
City and Guilds	Level 2 Certificate in Basic Plumbing Studies	10033567
City and Guilds	Level 3 Certificate in Plumbing Studies	10033579
City and Guilds	Level 2 Certificate in Heating and Ventilation	10035126
City and Guilds	Level 3 Certificate in Heating and Ventilation	1003514x

Ofqual will consider the extension or reinstatement of qualifications re-presented for accreditation, as it has done for childcare qualifications where there was a lack of provision.

It will continue to be acceptable for accredited QCF units and qualifications to be used where doing so meets learner needs.

Young people should be able to take courses which provide them with the skills they need to progress into employment. Ensuring that national and local employers can contribute to the development of National Occupational Standards will help secure this. National Occupational Standards will, however, remain a crucial part of professional qualifications for adults. By the autumn Government will consult on the future of National Occupational Standards, including the best way of using them to inform vocational qualifications, working with UK Commission for Education and Skills, national employers' bodies, Sector Skills Councils, Ofqual, and other key partners.

Ofqual and the Secretary of State have crucial and complementary parts to play in ensuring that qualifications are of the highest quality. Ofqual is the guardian of qualification standards and the legislation makes clear its veto over anything that would compromise standards. Ofqual is accountable to Parliament for securing its objectives, including the qualifications standards objective. However, Ministers have a democratic mandate over education policy, and consequently a legitimate interest in many aspects of how Ofqual regulates, for example, where this affects: how qualification structures drive learning; progression to further and higher education; incentives on providers and pupils; and cost, to name just a few. Ofqual too need to ensure that the way they regulate does not impede the delivery of Government's policy objectives. The legislation needs to provide a firm basis for that relationship.

Already, Ofqual has to have regard to Government policy, as directed by the Secretary of State. We will consider over the summer, with Ofqual, how to make the relationship between Ofqual and Ministers as clear as possible and whether any further changes to the legislation would help this.

Young people should be able to undertake courses which provide them with the skills they need to progress into employment. Involvement from local employers is vital to ensure that qualifications are relevant. While Sector Skills Councils currently play a key role in making sure this is the case, we agree that Government should not be unduly prescriptive about the ways employers input to qualifications. By autumn we will consult with Ofqual, Sector Skills Councils and other employer representatives to work out how best to take this forward.

### **Performance Indicators and Published Information**

More information needs to be available to inform choice of provider post 14 and to support accountability.

The Government is committed to reducing the regulatory burdens placed on educational institutions and ensuring that they have as much flexibility as possible to decide for themselves how to deliver a high quality education that meets the needs of their pupils. We will therefore encourage the publication of more information, but not insist on it, and will re-visit the issue in future to see how many institutions have responded.

## Key milestones for implementing Wolf recommendations

Recommendation	Action	Date
23	List of trusted qualifications reinstated and available for teaching from September	May 2011
17 and 18	Announcement clarifying the rules around professionals teaching in schools	May 2011
22	New qualification regulatory framework published by Ofqual	May 2011
19	Communicate to schools and colleges on pre-16 enrolment in colleges	June 2011
4	Publication of Foundation Learning evaluation	June 2011
22 and 25	New Ofqual conditions and criteria to regulate more strategically come into force	July 2011
4 and 7	Consultation period on Special Educational Needs Green Paper ends	July 2011
11	Review of 16-19 funding formula	Summer 2011
1-3	Consult on core attributes for 14-16 qualifications in performance tables	Summer-Autumn 2011
5 and 6	Consult on study programmes for 16-18 year olds	Summer-Autumn 2011
9	Consult on English and maths qualifications for 16-18 year olds	Summer-Autumn 2011
19	Complete investigation into barriers to pre-16 enrolment in colleges and make recommendations	Autumn 2011
10	Maths CPD support programme	Autumn 2011
8	Development of Proposals on Apprenticeship framework	Autumn 2011
4 and 7	Review of provision for lowest attaining learners complete and recommendations made.	December 2011
8	Review role of SSCs as Issuing Authorities for Apprenticeship frameworks	January 2012
11	Implementation of new 16-18 funding formula	March 2012 onwards
21	Statutory Instrument commences removing statutory requirement for work-related learning at Key Stage 4	September 2012

### **14-19 Vocational Qualifications**

**Recommendation 1:** The DfE should distinguish clearly between those qualifications, both vocational and academic, which can contribute to performance indicators at Key Stage 4, and those which cannot. The decision criteria should be explicit and public. They will include considerations of depth and breadth (including consultation with/endorsement by relevant outside bodies), but also assessment and verification arrangements which ensure that national standards are applied to all candidates.

**Recommendation 2:** At Key Stage 4, schools should be free to offer any qualifications they wish from a regulated Awarding Body whether or not these are approved for performance measurement purposes, subject to statutory/health and safety requirements.

**Recommendation 3:** Non-GCSE/iGCSE qualifications from the approved list (recommendation 1 above) should make a limited contribution to an individual student's score on any performance measures that use accumulated and averaged point scores. This will safeguard pupils' access to a common general core as a basis for progression. At the same time, any point-based measures should also be structured so that schools do not have a strong incentive to pile up huge numbers of qualifications per student, and therefore are free to offer all students practical and vocational courses as part of their programme.

**Recommendation 26:** DfE should introduce a performance indicator which focuses on the whole distribution of performance within a school, including those at the top and bottom ends of the distribution.

### **Lower Attaining Pupils**

**Recommendation 4:** DfE should review current policies for the lowest-attaining quintile of pupils at Key Stage 4, with a view to greatly increasing the proportion who are able to progress directly onto Level 2 programmes at age 16. Performance management indicators and systems should not give schools incentives to divert low-attaining pupils onto courses and qualifications which are not recognised by employers or accepted by colleges for progression purposes.

**Recommendation 7:** Programmes for the lowest attaining learners - including many with LDD as well as those highly disaffected with formal education - should concentrate on the core academic skills of English and maths, and on work experience. Funding and performance measures should be amended to promote a focus on these core areas and on employment outcomes rather than on the accrual of qualifications.

## 16-18 Curriculum

**Recommendation 5:** The overall study programmes of all 16-18 year olds in 'vocational' programmes (i.e. currently everything other than A levels, pre-U and IB, and including 'Foundation Learning') should be governed by a set of general principles relating primarily to content, general structure, assessment arrangements and contact time. Provided these are met (and see recommendation 6 below), institutions should be free to offer any qualifications they please from a recognised (i.e. regulated) awarding body, and encouraged to include non-qualifications-based activity.

**Recommendation 6:** 16-19 year old students pursuing full time courses of study should not follow a programme which is entirely 'occupational', or based solely on courses which directly reflect, and do not go beyond, the content of National Occupational Standards. Their programmes should also include at least one qualification of substantial size (in terms of teaching time) which offers clear potential for progression either in education or into skilled employment. Arrangements for part-time students and work-based 16-18 year olds will be different but the design of learning programmes for such students should also be considered.

**Recommendation 9:** Students who are under 19 and do not have GCSE A\*-C in English and/or maths should be required, as part of their programme, to pursue a course which either leads directly to these qualifications, or which provide significant progress towards future GCSE entry and success. The latter should be based around other maths and English qualifications which have demonstrated substantial content and coverage; and Key Skills should not be considered a suitable qualification in this context. DfE and BIS should consider how best to introduce a comparable requirement into apprenticeship frameworks.

**Recommendation 10:** DfE should continue and if possible increase its current level of support for CPD for mathematics teachers, and give particular attention to staff who are teaching post-16 students in colleges and schools. DfE and BIS should discuss the possibility of joint funding for post-16 CPD activities in English and Mathematics, especially as they relate to apprentices and to general FE colleges recruiting adults as well as young people

## 16-18 Funding

**Recommendation 11:** Funding for full-time students age 16-18 should be on a programme basis, with a given level of funding per student. (This can and should be adjusted for differences in the content-related cost of

courses, and for particular groups of high-need student.) The funding should follow the student.

**Recommendation 12:** There should continue to be no restrictions placed on a young person's programme in terms of which level or type of qualification they can pursue. If it is appropriate for a student or apprentice to move sideways (or indeed 'downwards') in order to change subject or sector, that is their choice.

**Recommendation 13:** Young people who do not use up their time-based entitlement to education (including apprenticeship) by the time they are 19 should be entitled to a corresponding credit towards education at a later date. The existing system of unique student numbers plus the learning accounts being developed by BIS should make this straightforward.

## **Apprenticeships**

**Recommendation 8:** The DfE and BIS should evaluate the extent to which the current general education components of apprenticeship frameworks are adequate for 16-19 year olds apprentices, many of whom may wish to progress to further and higher education. It does not appear appropriate, given this Government's commitment to progression through apprenticeship that frameworks should, as at present, be drawn up entirely by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), who conceive their role in relation to current employers, and current, occupationally specific job requirements. The review of frameworks should also consider ways to increase flexibility and responsiveness to local labour markets and conditions.

**Recommendation 14:** Employers who take on 16-18 year old apprentices should be eligible for payments (direct or indirect), because and when they bear some of the cost of education for an age-group with a right to free full-time participation. Such payments should be made only where 16-18 year old apprentices receive clearly identified off-the-job training and education, with broad transferable elements.

**Recommendation 15:** DfE and BIS should review contracting arrangements for apprenticeships, drawing on best practice internationally, with a view to increasing efficiency, controlling unit costs and driving out any frictional expenditure associated with brokerage or middleman activities that do not add value.

**Recommendation 16:** DfE and BIS should discuss and consult urgently on alternative ways for groups of smaller employers to become direct providers of training and so receive 'training provider' payments, possibly through the encouragement of Group Training Associations (GTAs).

### **Strengthening vocational teaching in schools**

**Recommendation 17:** At present teachers with QTS can teach in FE colleges; the FE equivalent - QTLS - should be recognised in schools, which is currently not the case. This will enable schools to recruit qualified professionals to teach courses at school level (rather than bussing pupils to colleges) with clear efficiency gains.

**Recommendation 18:** Clarify and evaluate rules relating to the teaching of vocational content by qualified professionals who are not primarily teachers/do not hold QTLS. Many schools believe that it is impossible to bring professionals in to demonstrate/teach even part of a course without requiring the presence of additional, salaried teaching staff. This further reduces the incidence of high quality vocational teaching, delivered to the standards that industries actually require.

### **Enrolling students in colleges pre-16**

**Recommendation 19:** Make explicit the legal right of colleges to enrol students under 16 and ensure that funding procedures make this practically possible. Colleges enrolling students in this age group should be required to offer them a full KS4 programme, either alone or in collaboration with schools, and be subject to the same performance monitoring regime (including performance indicators) as schools.

### **Work Experience**

**Recommendation 21:** DfE should evaluate models for supplying genuine work experience to 16-18 year olds who are enrolled as full-time students, not apprentices, and for reimbursing local employers in a flexible way, using core funds. Schools and colleges should be encouraged to prioritise longer internships for older students, reflecting the fact that almost no young people move into full-time employment at 16; and government should correspondingly remove their statutory duty to provide every young person at KS4 with a standard amount of “work-related learning”.

### **Ofqual and Qualifications Design**

**Recommendation 22:** DfE should encourage Ofqual to move as quickly as possible away from regulating individual vocational qualifications and concentrate on regulating awarding bodies. When there is reason for concern about a particular qualification, Ofqual should continue to intervene.

**Recommendation 23:** DfE should confirm and clarify that qualifications offered to 14-19 year olds and funded through YPLA will not in future

need to be either QCF-compliant or belong to a specified group with additional approval criteria (GCSE, A Level, Diploma etc). They should, however, be offered by a regulated awarding body. As an immediate and temporary measure the Secretary of State should use his powers, under Section 96, to approve the funding of key established qualifications which have not been approved by SSCs, and have therefore not been accredited, but which are recognised by DfE as playing an important role in the country's vocational education system, and which are clearly valued by employers and/or higher education.

**Recommendation 24:** DfE and BIS should discuss and consult on the appropriate future and role of National Occupational Standards in education and training for young people, and on whether and how both national employer bodies - including but not only SSCs - and local employers should contribute to qualification design.

**Recommendation 25:** The legislation governing Ofqual should be examined and where necessary amended, in order to clarify the respective responsibilities of the regulator and the Secretary of State

**Recommendation 27:** At college and school level the assessment and awarding processes used for vocational awards should involve local employers on a regular basis. Awarding bodies should demonstrate, when seeking recognition, how employers are involved directly in development and specification of qualifications.

#### **Performance Indicators and Published Information**

**Recommendation 20:** All institutions enrolling students age 16-18 (post-KS4), and those offering a dedicated entry route for 14-year old entrants, should be required to publish the previous institutions and, where relevant, the qualifications and average grades at the time of enrolment of previous entrants. (This should be done on a course-related rather than an institution-wide basis.)

You can download this booklet online at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications>  
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