

Implementing the Further Education and Skills Reform Programme

BIS / DfE brief on progress for FE Governors and Leaders:

July 2015

Contents

This document contains briefing on the following topics:

Apprenticeships	2
Degree Apprenticeships	2
Traineeships	3
Maths and English	3
Technical Certificates	4
FE Workforce Strategy	4
FE Commissioner Summary Assessments	4
Outcome Based Success Measures	5
Vocational Qualifications	5
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	6
Chartered Status	6
Tackling Extremism and the Prevent Duty	6

Apprenticeships

We are committed to 3 million apprenticeship starts during this parliament. Our priority is to work with employers to increase the number of apprenticeships they offer. We are developing a comprehensive plan for growth and implementing the employer-led reforms, which are improving the quality of apprenticeships to provide the skills that employers need.

Over 1200 employers are involved in designing new apprenticeship standards in over 100 sectors with 130 standards approved and more than 150 new standards in development. The first apprentices started on the employer-led standards in September 2014. Standards and assessment plans produced by employers and agreed by Government are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards> .

The 'Apprenticeship Voucher' for employers is the new mechanism that will give employers purchasing power over the government contribution to apprenticeship funding. It is being developed and tested with employers for implementation from 2017.

To encourage employers to offer more opportunities, eligible employers can receive a £1,500 per apprentice Apprenticeships Grant for Employers for up to five new apprentices aged 16-24. From April 2016 employers will not be required to pay employer National Insurance contributions for apprentices under the age of 25 on earnings up to the upper earnings limit.

The July Budget announced a UK-wide levy for large employers to help fund the increase in quantity and quality of apprenticeship training. The Apprenticeships Levy will raise money to fund increases in apprenticeship numbers and quality and will be entirely funded by the contributors. More details will be announced in the Spending Review.

Degree Apprenticeships

Degree Apprenticeships are allowing young people to combine a world-class degree with a world-class apprenticeship. They can either include an existing degree as part of the training with an independent end point assessment, or can apply a new model where employers and universities together design a training programme that combines the academic and applied skills as a new honours/master's degree. In both cases, the apprentice will come out of the apprenticeship with a recognised degree that meets any relevant professional registration requirements for occupational competency. The employer and Government will co-fund the training costs, including the degree and as apprenticeships are jobs, the apprentice will earn a wage from the start of their degree apprenticeship. Degree Apprenticeships are already available in Automotive, Digital Industries and Banking occupations. A further 11 have been approved for development, such as chartered surveyor, construction site manager and aerospace engineer.

Traineeships

The budget and spending review will require priorities and efficiencies across the range of provision for young people. As we consider how we increase productivity in our country, it is essential that we give our learners the best possible chance of being work ready when they leave education. At the recent AELP Conference, the Minister was clear that he saw the work experience of English and maths offered within traineeships as a clear route to work readiness, with traineeships being a key route into apprenticeships. The traineeship programme started small but in this third year the Minister would very much like to see it expand and for providers to discuss with employers how to start new programmes or grow those where they are achieving successful progression into apprenticeships or other sustainable work.

Maths and English

English and maths remains a priority for this government. We have put English and maths at the heart of all our programmes, and set high expectations for our young people so that they are clear about the importance of studying these subjects.

From August 2015, the 16-19 maths and English funding condition will be revised, so all full-time students starting their study programme who have a grade D GCSE or equivalent in maths and/or English must be enrolled on a GCSE or approved IGCSE qualification in maths and/or English, rather than an approved stepping stone qualification.

The Education and Training Foundation continue to offer a range of opportunities and resources for teachers, trainers and leaders to support practitioners to confidently teach maths and English which we urge you to make full use of. Please visit <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/our-priorities/maths-english/>

Further stepping stone qualifications have been approved at entry and Level 1. They are modular in nature, and could be used to target specific English and maths topics a student might need to focus on ahead of progressing to a Functional Skills or GCSE qualification. For further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding>

As part of the government's plans to ensure pupils can compete with the top performers in the world and secure the best jobs, a new grading system is being introduced from 2017 at GCSE to replace the A to U system with a new 9 to 1 scale. Under the new system, a 'good pass' – currently a C grade - will become a grade 5 under the new scale. The new 'good pass' is comparable to a high C or low B under the current system – making it comparable to the standard aimed for by pupils in top-performing countries such as Finland, Canada, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The Government intends to align the new GCSE good pass in English and maths with the 16-19 English and maths funding condition. We intend though to take a phased approach: for the academic years 2017-18 and 2018-19 the funding condition will be based on the new GCSE grade 4.

Technical Certificates

This September sees the first teaching of technical certificates – high-quality level 2 qualifications that develop occupationally-specific knowledge and skills and will enable employment in certain jobs or progression to a Tech Level. All of the approved qualifications have met tough new quality criteria and, importantly, have the support of employers. There are over 160 qualifications to choose from in sectors ranging from carpentry to music technology to vehicle maintenance. These qualifications will be counted in the new technical certificate category in performance tables from 2017. If you already teach level 2 students or you expect to have some this September, we would urge you to look at the list of approved qualifications which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-and-vocational-qualifications-for-14-to-19-year-olds> . Teaching qualifications from the approved list will give students the confidence that the courses they are taking are of a high quality and are the right ones for the occupations or vocational sectors they plan to enter.

FE Workforce Strategy

The joint BIS/DfE FE Workforce Strategy remains the focus for Government's support in helping to improve professional standards and the capacity and quality of leaders, managers, teachers and other staff in further education.

We continue to look to and provide grant funding for the Education and Training Foundation, as the independent sector-led organisation responsible for standards, so that they can support the sector through their programmes and services. Their role in supporting providers recruit good quality candidates to teach in FE is essential. Our priorities continue to be raising standards in teaching and learning, especially maths and English, a focus on leadership and governance, improved vocational education including better engagement with employers, and better use of technology.

We continue to review progress against the strategy. We will shortly receive an evaluation report to further our understanding of the impact of the strategy on the sector to date. We are also looking at improved data about the skills of the FE workforce especially in the teaching of maths and English to better model the scale of the challenge going forward.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-workforce-strategy>

FE Commissioner Summary Assessments

BIS continues to publish the FE Commissioner's Summary Assessments outlining the findings and conclusions from his assessment of colleges. To date, 26 summaries have been published and can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-commissioner-intervention-summary-assessments>

BIS will continue to publish future FE Commissioner Assessment reports once they have been responded to by the college or institution subject to intervention.

Governing bodies and senior executives will be able to learn lessons from the FE Commissioner's range of experiences in intervention cases.

To date, the FE Commissioner and his team have carried out interventions in 31 institutions, including 26 general FE colleges, 4 local authority institutions and 1 specialist designated institution. 7 general FE colleges and 2 local authority institutions have been successfully removed from intervention enabling provision to be maintained in the best interests of learners in the respective local areas.

Outcome Based Success Measures

Work continues on Outcome Based Success Measures. The measures capture three areas: learner destinations (into sustained learning, and into or within sustained employment, including apprenticeships); learner *Progression* (progression to a higher level qualification); and *Earnings* (following completion of learning). The measures use matched data which is already collected across government.

These new measures, with the existing success rates (to be re-named "achievement") will give a more rounded picture of provider performance which can be used by learners, employers, providers and others to inform choice, for provider self-assessment and for performance management and inspection.

We intend to publish a further consultation in autumn 2015 with more detailed proposals for a new minimum standards accountability framework using outcome measures. Our aim remains to introduce the measures as part of a new minimum standards framework in 2017.

Our consultation last year showed a clear demand for the outcome measures to be published at course or qualification level. In March 2015, we published experimental data on qualification outcomes at national level. This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-further-education-outcome-based-success-measures-experimental-data-2010-to-2011>

We will welcome your views when we consult in autumn 2015.

Vocational Qualifications

Ofqual, the independent regulator of qualifications, has recently completed a consultation on the practical implications of removing the requirement that regulated vocational qualifications should conform with the rules of the Qualification and Credits Framework (QCF). Existing high-quality qualifications which were designed according to QCF rules will continue to be available, but in the future awarding organisations will be able to decide whether qualifications should be designed around units or not. Ofqual will be announcing the outcome of the consultation shortly.

The development of a smaller and more relevant funded adult vocational qualifications offer is continuing, with around 4,400 qualifications available for funding at present.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

After almost a full academic year of the 0-25 special education needs and disability system being in place, we are pleased with the progress that colleges are making. In the best cases, students are following bespoke programmes, tailored to their individual needs and covering all four preparing for adulthood outcomes (employment, independent living, community participation and being healthy). We have been working with Ofsted to ensure that the new Common Inspection Framework holds colleges to account for the provision they offer for their SEND learners. The Common Inspection Framework can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015> . The new framework includes a separate judgement for high needs learners for FE providers, as well as a focus throughout on the progression of all learners with SEND (most of whom are not high needs).

We have spent a lot of time this year listening to colleges, and hearing their concerns with the new system. We know that some colleges are worried about their capacity to fully engage in EHC assessment and planning, and have found practical problems, for example, in responding to local authorities in 15 days when they are considering naming the college in a plan. We want to make sure we resolve these issues quickly, and nip them in the bud before they become ingrained in the system. We will be working hard over the next few months to consider how we can further support colleges and local authorities to get things right. This includes holding joint local authority and college workshops in the autumn term, led by the Preparing for Adulthood team (NDTi). More information can be found at <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/>

Chartered Status

The Institution for Further Education has recently been granted a Royal Charter. This is an historic moment in that the IFE will give the sector its first ever Chartered body. The IFE will provide a strong and independent focus for provider quality improvement within the sector and help to raise the esteem in which the sector is held.

The new chartered body will be at the forefront of driving forward professionalism in the sector. It will celebrate and build upon what the sector does well, bringing together the best performing organisations to share best practice.

The process of appraising and admitting members to the new chartered body will start in the autumn. For further information contact: ed.quilty@fecharter.org.uk or visit the website <http://www.fecharter.org.uk/>

Tackling Extremism and the Prevent Duty

Government plans to publish the Extremism Strategy in the first half of September. The Prevent Duty which came into force on 1 July for all named sectors has a key role to play in tackling extremism.

It will be a requirement of all FE institutions to comply with the Prevent Duty. BIS, the DfE and Ofsted have confirmed that Prevent will remain as part of Safeguarding and Ofsted will continue to monitor compliance with the Duty with a sharper focus as part of their inspection framework under leadership and governance. Ministers are pleased to hear of the positive and proactive response from the FE sector in ensuring compliance with the Duty by undertaking risk assessments, reviewing and updating policies, training of staff at all levels and in supporting the work we are undertaking with the Educating and Training Foundation in developing and sharing best practice which can be found at <http://www.preventforfeandtraining.org.uk/>

In addition to the work we are undertaking with the ETF, we are currently in discussion with Jisc to explore how they may help you in ensuring your IT filtering systems are fit for purpose.

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
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