

Ed Balls MP, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families  
Jim Knight MP, Minister of State for Schools and Learners  
Department for Children Schools and Families  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

March 2008

Dear Ed and Jim,

**Re. 14-19 Expert Advisory Group advice: the 14-19 qualification offer**

Following the establishment of the 14-19 Expert Advisory Group on 23 October 2007, the Group has now met to fulfil its remit to advise the DCSF on:

- the implications for Phase 4 Diplomas on the strategic direction of the 14-19 qualifications offer.

The Group has agreed the following advice, to be considered by the DCSF.

Thank-you for allowing us the opportunity to talk these issues through, we look forward to hearing from you once you have had the opportunity to consider these issues further with your officials.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Anderson – Director of HR Policy, CBI  
Duncan Mitchell – VP & Managing Director, Cisco Systems UK and Ireland  
Professor Michael Arthur – Vice-chancellor, University of Leeds  
Professor Deian Hopkin – Vice-chancellor, London South Bank University  
Professor Steve Smith – Vice-chancellor, University of Exeter  
Dr Geoff Parks – Director of Admissions for the Cambridge Colleges  
Malcolm Trobe – Head, Malmesbury School  
David Kershaw – Executive Principal, New College Leicester  
Jackie Fisher – Principal, Newcastle College  
Sir Mike Tomlinson – Diploma School and College Champion  
Kathleen Tattersall – Chair, Institute of Educational Assessors  
Chris Lines – Teacher, The County Upper School

**The strategic direction of the 14-19 qualification offer**  
**14-19 Expert Group advice**  
**March 2008**

**Context**

1. The Group welcomes the proposed strategy document as an opportunity for the DCSF to set out its expectations for the 14-19 qualification offer of the future, and the steps it is taking to secure an offer that will meet the needs and aspirations of every young person and accelerate improvements in achievement and participation for all. This will be crucial to ensure successful implementation of the new requirement for all young people to be in education or training until the age of 18, by 2015.
2. The Group strongly supports the intention to consult with stakeholders on this approach and these proposed steps.

**Principles**

3. The Group feels strongly that that the 14-19 qualification offer must be configured around the needs of young people. The central purpose of learning programmes and the qualifications that they lead to must be to support young people to participate, achieve and progress.
4. The Group endorses the following principles to underpin the approach to the 14-19 qualification offer:

The qualification offer should be designed to:

- provide a clear and manageable set of choices.
  - enable each qualification to be well understood and have widespread recognition, credibility and currency with the outside world – with employers, universities, learners and the public.
  - offer clear progression routes to higher levels of learning within the 14-19 phase and on to further or higher education, including foundation degrees, and skilled employment. The system should also support learners to progress laterally where appropriate, from a broad qualification in one level to a specialist qualification at the same level, where this supports employment aspirations or progression in further training.
  - provide a reliable assessment of young people's abilities and talents, so they engender confidence from employers, universities and young people.
5. All qualifications should support learning programmes which are:
    - *Excellent* – every programme must be of very high quality, with opportunities to stretch, challenge, inspire and motivate every young person.
    - *Relevant and fit for purpose* – all qualifications should keep in tune with the needs of today's employers and universities. It is crucial that this includes generic employability skills. These are key to enable employers

to meet the challenge of improving performance and remaining competitive in the global economy.

- *Coherent* – programmes should maximise coherence, enabling students to capitalise on their learning and achievement through understanding the interconnectedness between different components.
- *Flexible* – there must be flexibility to allow young people to form personalised learning programmes, tailored to meet their personal interests, strengths and aspirations. Young people must have the opportunity to learn in a style and a context and at a level and pace that allows them to best achieve, progress and fulfil their potential.

## **Approach**

6. The Group supports the ambition – as set out in 2005 White Paper *14-19 Education and Skills* – of a more intelligible and clear set of qualification choices for young people, supporting a range of learning styles and contexts from the general to the occupationally specific: GCSE/A levels; Diplomas; and Apprenticeships. It notes that the role of the Foundation Learning Tier will be critical in providing clear progression pathways that will lead to further opportunities and qualifications for young people not yet working at level 2.
7. The Group welcomes the aim of making sure that all qualifications are achieved as part of a comprehensible national suite. Such an approach is expected to make the qualification offer easier to understand for learners, parents and providers as well as employers and universities as qualification end-users. This is particularly important in the context of applied and vocational routes, which have not typically enjoyed the same recognition and understanding as GCSEs and A levels. It will enable all young people to be pursuing programmes leading to qualifications that have appropriate progression routes to the next level of learning and training.
8. The Group recommends that there is merit in ensuring that young people pursue programmes of learning that include the functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT and the personal, learning and thinking skills, and that Diplomas and Apprenticeship frameworks ensure this. The group agrees that Diploma and Apprenticeship frameworks have considerable flex to bring in much of the best of existing content.
9. Equally, the Group notes that it will be vital to have confidence that the resulting offer will support the needs of all learners and employers, allowing learners to have their varied talents and aptitudes recognised and employers to meet their skills needs. This will be particularly important in order to ensure successful implementation of the new requirement to participate. There must be flexibility within the choices on offer to young people to ensure that each individual has access to a learning option to meet their needs.
10. The Group recommends that as planned reforms to the qualifications offer are developed and implemented, it will be critical to ensure a carefully planned and managed transition from the current offer to safeguard learner and employer needs.
11. Before a decision to cease to fund a qualification for 14-19 year olds is made, the

education sector and employers must be satisfied that there is at least as good or a better offer available in one of the main national suites and frameworks. This decision must be made on a case by case basis, and reflect the needs of young people and the views of higher education, business and all parts of the education sector. The Group recognises that there is good scope for Diplomas across sectors to meet learner and employer needs, but it notes that it is important that care is taken in the transition process, particularly in relation to core parts of the qualification offer. The Group noted that, for example, the level 3 BTEC National Diploma – which is a well regarded qualification in a number of sectors of the economy – is likely to need to remain an important part of the qualification offer as progress is made towards the 2013 Diploma and Apprenticeship entitlements.

### **Managing the qualification offer**

12. The Group suggests that new criteria should be published in the strategy for consultation, against which the Government should make decisions on whether qualifications should be approved for use for under 19 year olds in the maintained sector. The Group notes in particular that any new criteria must be able to reflect the managed transition as the DCSF assesses the suitability of Diplomas as replacement provision, and until access to the new qualification offer is assured for all. It suggests that the criteria should presume that any further proliferation of the qualification offer is undesirable, given the potentially negative effect on public understanding.
13. The Group recommends that the DCSF moves towards a fully credit-based 14-19 qualifications offer by 2013. It believes that there are significant advantages in such an approach in enabling young people to personalise their learning experience, and support transfer and progression across different qualification options.

### **The 14-19 qualification offer**

14. General qualifications. The Group cannot see a case for doing work to prolong the availability of Advanced Extension Awards (AEA) when the A\*, the Extended Project and more AEA style questions in A level papers are in place. However, it suggests that the DCSF could usefully work with Higher Education representative bodies to make a standardised set of level 4 units available to schools and colleges more widely across a range of subjects.
15. It recommends that to support the roll-out of the Extended Project at A level, and its use by higher education in admissions, the DCSF should consider the feasibility of making the Project an entitlement.
16. The Group advises that once Diplomas are working successfully, it is satisfied that they will provide access to the learning offer currently provided by applied A levels. It therefore suggests no longer supporting Applied A levels when the Diploma entitlement is in place and Diploma access is assured. It suggests that there may well be a continuing role for applied GCSEs in the qualification offer, to enable learners taking predominantly general programmes to take a small taster of applied learning alongside. The Group recommends that over time it would be helpful to set the ambition that applied GCSEs are aligned more closely with the Principal

Learning content of Diplomas to support progression and facilitate delivery.

17. The Group recognises that the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma will be one of the qualifications included in the 2013 review, but it is clear that for the time being it has an important place in the current 16-19 qualification offer, providing a well-recognised and valued progression route to higher education for a minority of students who benefit from its broad and challenging requirements. The Group suggests that the DCSF should honour any commitments to funding that have already been made to specific institutions. But it considers that pressing for a wider group to offer the IB would be inconsistent, given the direction set by the Phase 4 Diplomas. It therefore recommends that the DCSF withdraws its commitment to fund a maintained institution in every Local Authority to go through the IB accreditation process by 2010, and the accompanying provision of funding to help meet the authorisation costs.
18. Diplomas. The Group notes the importance of the Diploma Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL) component in offering young people a range of options, from the general to the highly occupationally specific and vocational. It welcomes both the development of new content, to meet the needs of employers and higher education, and efforts to bring in the best of existing provision as more specialist content is developed for updates of the Diploma catalogue.
19. It notes though that the value of some existing qualifications rests not only in their component parts, but in overall features and characteristics. It therefore supports the DCSF's commitment not to cease to fund existing stand-alone qualifications until it is clear that Diplomas are providing at least as good an offer. It urges the DCSF to consider this question on a sector by sector and case by case basis. The Group welcomes the suggestion of a regular review to assess progress in the period to 2013 and beyond.
20. The Group considers that there is merit in expanding the Diploma offer across the suite of 17 Diplomas, to include an Extended Diploma at each level. This will recognise additional breadth in learning programmes.
21. Apprenticeships. The Group notes that the different routes of Apprenticeships and Diplomas will suit different objectives for young people. For those who have a preference for learning the workplace, and who want to undertake training specific to a chosen occupation, Apprenticeships will clearly be a good choice; Diplomas will suit those who wish to maintain a broad programme of learning in a broad sectoral area. However, it welcomes the ambition to where appropriate allow prior learning achieved as part of a Diploma to be recognised towards an Apprenticeship framework (and vice versa), to facilitate progression.
22. Foundation Learning Tier. The Group strongly notes the importance of ensuring that the Foundation Learning Tier is fully inclusive, and provides a suitable learning route for all young people who need to take qualifications at Entry level and level 1.
23. The Group recommends that particular attention is paid by the DCSF and DIUS to ensuring that the Foundation Learning Tier is explicitly presented and understood as a central and integral part of the future qualification offer for young people.

24. Young employees. For 16-18 year old learners in employment, the Group agrees that where an employer provides good quality accredited training, this should count for the purposes of the new requirement to participate. Whether such training should be eligible for public funding should depend on the quality of the training.

#### **Information, Advice and Guidance**

25. The Group is keen to emphasise the importance of providing high-quality impartial supporting information, advice and guidance to make young people fully aware of their options and enable learners to make the right choices about the learning programmes and qualifications available to them. It notes that currently this type of provision can fall short, and recommends that urgent steps are taken to improve the quality of the advice available to young people.

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March 2008

Dear Ed and Jim,

**Re. 14-19 Expert Advisory Group advice Phase 4 Diplomas**

Following the establishment of the 14-19 Expert Advisory Group on 23 October 2007, the Group has now met to fulfil its remit to advise the Department on:

- the high-level design features and standards within which the DDPs will work.
- the most effective Diploma Development Partnership (DDP) structures for Phase 4 Diploma development; and

The Group has agreed the following advice, to be considered by the Department in establishing the DDPs for Phase 4 Diploma development. We hope that you will find this advice useful in aiming for a conclusion that we all want – a highly rated Diploma system offering opportunities for all young people to achieve and progress.

Thank-you for allowing us the opportunity to talk these issues through, we look forward to hearing from you once you have had the opportunity to consider these issues further with your officials.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Anderson – Director of HR Policy, CBI  
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**Phase 4 Diploma Design Features and Standards**  
**14-19 Expert Group advice to DCSF Ministers**  
**March 2008**

Following our discussions, the 14-19 Expert Advisory Group has agreed the following advice to be considered in establishing the new Diploma Development Partnerships (DDPs) for the Phase 4 Diplomas and their terms of reference.

**A. Phase 4 Diploma Development design features and standards**

**Purpose**

1. The Group suggests that the Phase 4 DDPs should ensure that the Phase 4 Diplomas:
  - provide a set of new qualifications that will be engaging, inspiring, attractive and appropriate for a large proportion of 14-19 year olds.
  - promote the knowledge, understanding and application of individual subject disciplines.
  - increase the coherence of programmes of learning for 14-19 year olds so that the elements combine to have meaning and add value for the learner and other users.
  - prepare learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Help to meet: the needs of society and the personal well-being and fulfilment of young people; and the skills needs of universities and employers now and well into the future. It is crucial that this includes generic employability skills. These are key to enable employers to meet the challenge of improving performance and remaining competitive in the global economy.
  - at levels 1 and 2 are built around and support the Key Stage 4 core requirements and expectations.
  - provide young people with the foundation and breadth to progress through the 14-19 phase (including at levels 1 and 2 supporting progression into the full range of level 2 and 3 specialisations) and into further or higher education or an Apprenticeship in appropriate ways.
  - support improvements in the overall performance of the education and training system (in terms of the total percentage of young people who achieve level 2 and 3 qualifications, and the number who specifically achieve level 2 English and maths qualifications and level 2 and 3 maths, science and modern foreign language qualifications).
  - support post-16 participation targets, building to the implementation of the Raising Participation Age proposals from 2013.
  - provide recognition of the range of achievements of young people, inside and outside formal education and training.



- provide clear milestones for achievement at level 1.
  - promote equality of opportunity and inclusion objectives.
2. NOTE: In supporting improvements in the number of young people achieving maths, science and modern foreign language qualifications, the Group suggests that the Phase 4 Diplomas should build on the Government's significant existing programmes of work in these areas.

### **Lines of Learning**

3. To ensure that the Phase 4 Diplomas – together with the Phase 1-3 Diplomas – ensure sufficient coverage of the range of areas that young people may wish to pursue, the Group notes that at least all subject area covered by current GCSE and A level provision must be included within the scope of the 17 Diploma lines. The Group recommends that the DDPs should agree an appropriate balance of subject content across the Diplomas, as they take forward the detailed design of the Phase 4 Diplomas.
4. It recommends that the scope of the Humanities Diploma should cover both humanities and the social sciences. It is expected that there could be some commonality of content across these areas to ensure a coherent learning package. A title of 'Humanities and social sciences' might better reflect the content.
5. Similarly, it suggests that the scope of the Languages Diploma includes within it international studies, alongside the requirement to follow a language. This could embrace a potentially very attractive and rigorous set of studies such as literature, geography, politics, economics and citizenship. This could support the acquisition of language, particularly at Key Stage 4 where specific language learning content alone might not provide a broad enough offer. A title of 'Languages and international studies' might better reflect the content.
6. The Group considers that English should form part of the Principal learning of the Languages Diploma, and might usefully be covered in the Humanities Diploma. The Group agrees that maths must form part of the Principal Learning of the Science Diploma. However, the DDPs must ensure that there is appropriate maths content for learners taking other Diplomas to take mathematics as part of the Diploma through the Additional and Specialist Learning component. The Group notes that this will be important for each of the subject choices taken as part of the Phase 4 Diplomas.
7. In considering the need to ensure appropriate coverage of the culture and the arts within the Diploma suite (literature, art, music, drama, dance), the Group suggests that for learners wishing to specialise in art, music, drama or dance, the Creative and Media Diploma (introduced in Phase 1) could provide a suitable offer. This Diploma allows learners to study a number of disciplines including visual arts, design, drama, dance, music and creative writing across four coherent themes. The study of English literature (and language) would complement this Diploma well and learners could choose to take these subjects as part of the Creative and Media

Diploma through the Additional and Specialist Learning component.

8. The Group is conscious that, depending on the final design of the Phase 4 Diplomas, some current patterns of participation, particularly at level 3, might not be able to be replicated within the 17 Diplomas lines. The extent to which this will be the case will depend on the detailed design work of the Phase 4 Diplomas. However, initial assessment suggests that a significant proportion (possibly around a third) of current student choices may be restricted. In relation to this point, some members of the Group were keen to stress the benefits of studying a coherent subject specialism. But others felt that it was most important to ensure that learner choice and flexibility could continue to be met.
9. The Group agreed that this issue must be kept under close review as development of the Phase 4 Diplomas progresses. This must include consideration of the impact of choice on participation in STEM subjects in particular (see paragraph 12). The Group notes that high quality advice and guidance will be key to ensuring that learners make choices of qualification which support both their individual interests and their preferred career path.

### **Subject content scope across the Phase 4 Diplomas**

10. The Group notes that it is vital that the design of the Phase 4 Diplomas allows learners to develop an appropriate depth of content knowledge, preserving the integrity of distinct subject disciplines, with essential in-depth subject knowledge, skills and application. It recommends that the DDPs should take account of the core subject criteria at GCSE and A level – looking afresh at this where appropriate, and involving employers and higher education as this happens.
11. It suggests that the DDPs should ensure that the right balance between knowledge, skills and application is secured across the Diplomas to allow learners to develop an appropriate depth and breadth of content to develop specialisms and progress to further or higher education, or an Apprenticeship.
12. It recommends that the DDPs should ensure that the design of Phase 4 Diplomas takes advantage of the opportunity offered to make languages, science and the humanities more attractive to learners than the current routes, supporting England's targets where appropriate.
13. The Group strongly notes that the result of the Phase 4 Diplomas must be to increase the number of young people taking STEM and language subjects, in particular but not only at level 3. It recommends that the DDP chairs across Phases 1-4 should be given a direct remit to review the impact of all 17 Diplomas on participation in STEM subjects, and to take any appropriate action to support through Diplomas increased participation in these areas. It suggests that the DDPs might also be asked to consider other strategic cross-cutting areas such as languages and citizenship and issues such as HE and employer engagement.
14. It recommends that the issue of STEM participation is also kept under close review as part of the Department's consideration of the correct balance between coherent programmes and sufficient choice in the Phase 4 Diploma design.

## **Relationship with existing qualifications**

15. The Group suggests that the Phase 4 Diplomas may take advantage of the best of existing qualifications, or units of them where that is appropriate. It recommends that new specially-designed content should be added where appropriate, particularly where it is needed to produce engaging interdisciplinary content.
16. In launching the Phase 4 Diplomas, the Secretary of State announced that rather than reviewing A levels in 2008, he would conduct the first full review of A levels and GCSEs in 2013, looking at the evidence and experience of what has happened as Diplomas are introduced. In designing the Phase 4 Diplomas, the Group notes that this context should be taken into account.

## **Applied learning**

17. The Group recommends that applied learning should be an important part of the Phase 4 Diplomas. The DDPs should ensure that the subject knowledge and skills can be studied in authentic, engaging contexts that add meaning for learners. Theoretical knowledge should be blended where appropriate with the relevant and meaningful direct application of this knowledge in ways that are fit for purpose for each line of learning.

## **Structure**

18. To achieve coherence with Phases 1-3, the Group suggests that all Phase 4 Diplomas should follow the same structure as Phase 1-3 Diplomas, being composed of three parts: Principal Learning; Generic Learning; and Additional and Specialist Learning.

## **Size**

19. To achieve coherence with Phases 1-3, the Group suggests that the Phase 4 Diplomas at each level should be the same size as the Phase 1-3 Diplomas. In relation to level 3 in particular, each Phase 4 DDP should be asked to keep under review the implications for the overall size of the Phase 4 Diplomas and the appropriate balance between Principal Learning and Additional and Specialist Learning within their line of learning.

## **Proportions of component parts**

20. To achieve coherence with Phases 1-3 (for reasons both of equivalence and practical delivery), the Group recommends that all Phase 4 Diplomas should aim for the same proportions in component parts as Phases 1-3.

## **Extended Diploma**

21. Currently, some young people pursue programmes that are larger than 3.5 A levels, and this should continue to be the case. The Group judges that recognition of the scale and demand of such programmes, ought to be possible within as well as

alongside Diplomas.

22. At present at Key Stage 4, Diplomas are designed to fit around the requirements of the National Curriculum (NC), as one part of a larger programme. The Group considers that it would be desirable to provide Diploma options which recognise and reward larger programmes of study at Key Stage 4, as well as post-16.
23. It therefore considers there would be benefit in introducing an Extended Diploma at all levels across all 17 lines of learning to support the reward and recognition of larger programmes of learning.
24. The Group therefore recommends that the Phase 4 DDPs should work with representatives from DDPs from each of the first three phases, to develop an Extended Diploma across all 3 levels (levels 1 and 2 will be particularly appropriate to Key Stage 4 learners). This should be composed of two elements:
  - a. An extended core with additional challenge in English and mathematics.
  - b. An extra Additional and Specialist learning block to recognise further breadth and depth in learning.

*Levels 1 and 2 (most likely to be taken at Key Stage 4)*

25. An extended core should go beyond the requirement of Functional Skills in maths and English at level 2 and recognise achievement of the full NC programmes of study in English and maths (at levels 1 and 2).
26. An extra additional learning block could recognise the achievement of the NC programmes of study outside the Diploma's subject, or further Additional and Specialist learning post-16:
  - Science Diploma – one NC entitlement area (e.g. humanities or languages)
  - Humanities Diploma – probably NC full programme of study in science, or one NC entitlement area
  - Languages Diploma – probably NC full programme of study in science, or one NC entitlement area
27. The Group recommends that the DDPs should design the level 1 and 2 Phase 4 Diplomas in line with the ambition that over time the NC and all 17 Diplomas might be fully integrated for 14-16 year old learners, to guarantee coherence across all learning programmes.

*Level 3*

28. The Group suggests that an extended core should go beyond the requirement of Functional Skills in maths, English and ICT at level 2 and recognise achievement of these subjects at level 3, which may be in units specially designed to support the line of learning. The Group suggests that the DCSF considers asking for input from employers, via Sector Skills Councils, in defining suitable subject content for the 'extended core' for the Diploma.

29. The DDPs should consider whether an extra ASL block could:

- provide an option of recognising the achievement of further Additional and Specialist Learning in a subject of a learner's choice;
- include the recognition that learners had achieved level 4 content (for example, by requiring learners to complete a smaller volume of extra learning at level 4 than would be required if all learning was at level 3);
- provide further opportunities to research and learn independently and in depth, in the style of the Extended Project.

<u>Level 1</u>		<b>Total suggested teaching size</b>	<b>Possible equivalence</b>
	<b>Foundation Diploma</b>	600 glh	5 GCSEs (A*-G)
	<b>Extended Foundation Diploma</b>	Recognise National Curriculum achievement /further core learning and ASL learning (post 16)	To be agreed

<u>Level 2</u>		<b>Total suggested teaching size</b>	<b>Possible equivalence</b>
	<b>Higher Diploma</b>	800 glh	7 GCSEs (A*-C)
	<b>Extended Higher Diploma</b>	Recognise National Curriculum achievement /further core learning and ASL learning (post 16)	To be agreed

<u>Level 3</u>		<b>Total suggested teaching size</b>	<b>Possible equivalence</b>
	<b>Progression Diploma</b>	720 glh	2.5 A levels
	<b>Advanced Diploma</b>	1080 glh	3.5 A levels
	<b>Extended Advanced Diploma</b>	1440 glh	4.5 A levels

### Relationship with content of Phase 1-3 Diplomas

30. It is important that there should be portability of content between all Phase 1-4 Diplomas. The Group therefore recommends that Phase 4 Diplomas should be designed to enable learners to integrate content from the Phase 1-3 Diplomas into their Diploma learning programmes as appropriate. The design should also allow content from Phase 4 Diplomas to be integrated into Phase 1-3 Diplomas.

### **Principal Learning (PL)**

31. As in Phase 1-3 Diplomas, the Group suggests that the Principal Learning (mandatory learning for all learners taking a Diploma in that line of learning) should provide the subject focus of the Diploma line. The challenge in design will be in ensuring that the Principal Learning (plus the project) has coherence, whilst preserving individual subject integrity and learner choice. Each DDP should consider how best to effect this. Some of the first DDPs have achieved this by setting out common themes underpinning a number of optional contexts, which provide coherence and the opportunities to apply and develop the personal, learning and thinking skills. Such an approach would need to address technical issues and comparability issues for grading. Interdisciplinary approaches might also be considered where there are common issues or areas of learning, to add a richness and relevance to the learning experience.

### **Generic Learning (GL)**

32. To achieve coherence with Phases 1-3 as in Phase 1-3 Diplomas, the Group recommends that the Phase 4 Diplomas should incorporate a common core to provide programmes with coherence and breadth. The content of the Generic Learning in the Phase 4 Diplomas should replicate that in Phase 1-3 Diplomas, comprising: functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT; project; PLTS; work experience.

- **Functional Skills.** At all levels the functional skills requirement in the Phase 4 Diplomas should replicate that in Phase 1-3 Diplomas, requiring level 1 skills in the level 1 Diploma and level 2 skills in the level 2 and 3 Diploma.
- **Project.** At all levels the Phase 4 Diplomas should require a project as in existing Diplomas. The DDPs should fully examine the opportunities for engaging in interdisciplinary working through the project.
- **PLTS:** As in Phase 1-3 Diplomas, the personal learning and thinking skills should be integrated in the Principal Learning, where possible.
- **Work experience.** At levels 1 and 2 the work experience requirement should replicate that in Phase 1-3 Diplomas (10 days). At level 3, the work experience requirement should be broadened to recognise achievement in community service or equivalent (and this requirement should apply across all Phases). Particular attention should be paid to the opportunities afforded by the DCSF's Ten Year Youth Strategy for volunteering and positive activities. The DDPs should take into account equality of opportunity for all young people in setting the requirements.

## **Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL)**

33. The Group suggests that the ASL should be used to create pathways to allow learners to take appropriate qualifications to progress into either full-time further and/or higher education or employment with training (e.g. a science Apprenticeship). This should include allowing learners to take advantage of ASL qualifications from across all 17 Diploma lines, where appropriate.

## **Relationship between Phase 4 Diplomas at different levels**

34. The Group considers that it is very important that there are clear progression routes between Phase 4 Diplomas at different levels. This could be facilitated by co-teaching (for example between levels 1 and 2) where possible.

## **Assessment**

35. The Group suggests that the assessment methods in the Phase 4 Diplomas should reflect those in the Phase 1-3 Diplomas, taking account of the demands for rigour, fairness, reliability, authenticity, validity and fitness for purpose. They should be transparent, manageable, straightforward and credible with learners, parents, universities and employers.

## **Grading**

36. The Group agrees that the Phase 4 Diplomas should be graded as in Phase 1-3 Diplomas: A\*-B for level 1; A\*-C for level 2 and A\*-E for level 3. As in Phase 1-3 Diplomas, achievement of all components of the qualification should be required for the Diploma qualification award. The results of all qualifications, including any grades, should appear on the transcript.
37. The Group notes that initially the overall grade for phase 4 Diplomas might need to be drawn from Principal Learning and the Project scores only (because of the wide variety of grading systems used in the qualifications in ASL), although all grades will be recorded on the transcript. The ambition must be that over time all achievements in ASL will be incorporated into the overall grade. As always, this should be consistent across all 17 Diplomas.
38. Depending on the level of integration of the subject content in the Phase 4 Diplomas, the DDPs may need to review the approach taken to grading within Principal Learning
39. The Group notes that the DDP for the Languages Diploma may need to keep under review the issue of the demonstration of lower level language learning within the Diploma. This might be necessary to meet the needs of students beginning the study of a second or third language that may not have been available to them before, and to reflect the differences in the acquisition process of cognate and non-cognate languages (those that share a writing system and those that have totally different writing systems).

## **B. Phase 4 Diploma Development Partnership Structures**

40. In the interests of manageability and given the very large size of some of the interested constituencies, the Group recommends that separate DDPs are established, one for each of the Phase 4 Diploma lines.
41. The Group recommends that there are formal arrangements for the Phase 4 DDPs to come together, to ensure consistency across the Phase 4 Diplomas. It suggests that a forum be established to bring together the Chairs of all DDPs across Phases 1-4 to focus on a number of key strategic issues, develop common responses to common issues and to provide a single voice and ear to the DCSF and other players.
42. The Group supports DDPs that are employer led. As a consequence, it agrees that the appropriate lead organisation for funding and contracting purposes would be an appropriate Sector Skills Council. However, it strongly recommends that the Chairs of the Phase 4 DDPs should be individuals whose experience combines an understanding of the needs of employers with specific subject specialist expertise.
43. The Group suggests that membership of the Phase 4 DDP steering groups ensures appropriate representation from the following groups:

- Chair X 1
- Employers x 3
- HE x 4
- Subject bodies x 2
- Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) x 1 or 2 (if 2, the second should replace one employer place)
- Learning providers/ practitioners x 3 (including one representative from independent schools) (these should be subject specialists in the line of learning)
- Awarding Bodies x 2

*Plus in an advisory capacity:*

- QCA x 1
- DCSF x 1 or 2 (including National subject Directors where appropriate)

Total membership = 19

44. This balance of membership should be consistent across all 3 lines, with some flexibility depending on the particular requirements of the line of learning.
45. The Group suggests that it is vital that members are there in their representative capacity, not only as individuals. The Higher Education representatives should



therefore be Pro Vice-Chancellors (Teaching and Learning) and ideally would be individuals from representative bodies or sector groups. Capturing employer voice is also extremely important, both through SSCs and through individual employer representatives.

46. The Group proposes that it will also be necessary for the DDPs to engage appropriately and draw in the experience of the following wider constituencies: higher education subject specialists; employers; subject specialists and associations; awarding bodies; and schools and colleges.
47. In addition, during the consultation phase of the development process, the DDP should take steps to ensure appropriate input, for example representative employer input.