

**14-19 education  
and skills**

department for  
children, schools and families

# Timeline for HE from 2008-2010

**14-19  
Educational  
Reforms**

**GCSE/A levels  
Apprenticeships  
Functional Skills  
Diplomas  
Extended Project**

# What the 14-19 educational reforms mean for Higher Education

The 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper set out a 10-year reform programme for the education system, including important changes to the qualifications and curriculum that all students will study in the future. The reforms are designed to encourage more young people to continue learning for longer and gain the qualifications they need to progress into further and higher education or skilled employment. Many of the reforms will have a direct impact on HE Institutions, in areas such as entry requirements, curriculum and assessment methods, and the patterns of demand for different and new HE courses. Changes to A levels and the introduction of the new Diplomas mean that from 2010, almost all students entering HE straight from full-time education will have studied something different and been assessed in a different way from current entrants.

## A levels

As part of the A level reform programme, most A levels will move from six units of assessment to four, reducing the number of examinations and freeing up more time for teaching and learning. The content of all A level specifications has been revised, and coursework will be included only where it is the most valid method of assessment and provided that it makes clear how reliability and fairness are secured.

The incorporation of stretch and challenge to the A2 part of the A level programme will include more open-ended questions and questions requiring longer written replies. Far greater emphasis will be placed on synoptic assessment to encourage the development of a holistic understanding of each subject. Exceptionally high achievement will be recognised with the grade of A\*.

Further information on the revised A level criteria is available from [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk). HEIs may wish to look at the changes being made, especially where some A level subjects are compulsory for entry, as there may be implications for the content of first-year programmes or entry requirements.

## Extended Project

An Extended Project is being introduced to test the wider range of higher-level skills. It will be compulsory for Diploma students, and optional for A level students. The Project, which will be in an area of the student's choice, will require a high degree of planning, research and autonomous working and persistence over time, whereby students will explore a subject independently in real depth. As the Extended Project will be available to all students and give them the independent study skills sought by HE Institutions, HEIs are encouraged to publicise the Extended Project as part of their entry criteria.

## Diplomas

The Diploma provides a challenging and high-quality programme of learning that will give young people the skills and knowledge they need to do well at university, as well as in employment.

The nature of Diploma learning means that students will be self-motivated and develop strong intellectual and personal skills that will make the transition for school or college to HE much easier. The flexibility within the Diploma allows universities to specify particular options to be taken as part of the Diploma, which reflect entrance requirements for certain courses. From 2011, there will be 17 Diplomas available in areas across England in subjects ranging from Engineering, IT, Science and Mathematics.

For more information go to [www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19). To get involved in Diploma developments, contact the Diploma Development Partnerships (DDPs). If you have a specific question you can email [info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk) or ring the Public Communications Unit on 0870 000 2288.

■ **Phase 1** (first teaching September 2008) Society, Health and Development [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk) Construction and the Built Environment [www.cbdiploma.co.uk](http://www.cbdiploma.co.uk) Engineering [www.engineeringdiploma.com/1648](http://www.engineeringdiploma.com/1648) IT [www.e-skills.com/itdiploma](http://www.e-skills.com/itdiploma) Creative and Media [www.skillset.org/qualifications/diploma](http://www.skillset.org/qualifications/diploma)

■ **Phase 2** (first teaching September 2009) Environmental and Land-based Studies [www.diplomalbe.co.uk](http://www.diplomalbe.co.uk) Manufacturing and Product Design [www.manufacturingdiploma.co.uk](http://www.manufacturingdiploma.co.uk) Hair and Beauty Studies [www.habia.org/news.asp?strPageHistory=cat&PT\\_ID=182](http://www.habia.org/news.asp?strPageHistory=cat&PT_ID=182) Business, Administration and Finance [www.baf-diploma.org.uk](http://www.baf-diploma.org.uk) Hospitality [www.people1st.co.uk/about-us/improving-productivity/14-19-diplomas](http://www.people1st.co.uk/about-us/improving-productivity/14-19-diplomas)

■ **Phase 3** (first teaching September 2010) Public Services [www.skillsforjustice.com](http://www.skillsforjustice.com) Sport and Leisure [www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com) Retail [www.skillsmartretail.com](http://www.skillsmartretail.com) Travel and Tourism [www.goskills.org](http://www.goskills.org)

■ **Phase 4** (first teaching September 2011) Science, Languages, Humanities. The DCSF 14-19 website will be regularly updated with information on the impact of the 14-19 reforms on the HE sector. [www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=34](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=34)

## Functional Skills

The 14-19 White Paper announced new qualifications in Functional English, maths and ICT so that all young people, whatever their learning route, should be equipped with the skills needed in further learning and employment.

Adults too can take Functional Skills Qualifications.

You can:

- Keep updated on the trials and pilots through [www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19)
- Prepare for final specifications in September 2008. Learners will study Functional Skills as:
  - Part of English, maths and ICT GCSEs. Level 2 Functional Skills will be required in order to achieve an A\*-C GCSE grade
  - Part of a Diploma
  - Part of Apprenticeships
  - A stand-alone qualification

## GCSE

English, ICT and maths GCSEs are changing:

- Learners will not be able to gain Grade C or better without mastering Functional Skills
- QCA has reviewed the use of coursework. In future, coursework will only be used where it is the most valid way of assessing subject-specific skills. The introduction of controlled assessment will make coursework more robust and reliable
- Teaching of the new Science GCSE started in September 2006

## Apprenticeships

Currently the progression of students from Level 3 Apprenticeships to HE is very low. However, the awarding of Tariff points to the qualifications in the Level 3 Apprenticeship Framework will give a value to the qualification mark that can be recognised by the HE sector. The UCAS Board approved the first Tariff scores for some of the Level 3 Apprenticeship Framework in September 2007. HEIs should now be in a position to publish their admissions policies and course-specific entry requirements in relation to the use of the Tariff for Advanced Apprenticeships.

## The Gateway process

The Gateway process assesses the readiness of schools, colleges and other providers, working together in consortia, to deliver Diplomas. Consortia are asked to demonstrate that they have: the desired level of collaboration; the necessary facilities; a plan for workforce development; an effective information, advice and guidance structure, and are engaging with local employers and higher education. Consortia that were successful in the first Gateway process will be delivering the first five Diplomas in September 2008. Applications from consortia to deliver the Diplomas in Phase 2 need to be submitted to their local authorities by December 2007. During January/February 2008 regional panels will consider the submissions. The second Gateway results will be announced in February/March 2008.

## Wider context and support

A new national curriculum and qualification entitlement for young people will mean extensive changes for schools, colleges, and HE Institutions. There are a number of sources of support for HE Institutions to draw on (please turn to the back page for more information).



# Timeline to the 14-19 reforms

2008

JUN JUL AUG SEPT OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MA

**June '08-  
July '08**

Schools and colleges carry out second trial of new A2 assessments

**Oct '08-Feb '09**

HEIs to publish course-specific entry requirements for revised A levels for 2010 entry via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

**Sept '08**

First teaching of A level with increased challenge

**June '08-  
July '08**

Accreditation of Extended Project specifications

**Sept '08**

First teaching of Extended Project, for both A levels and as part of Diplomas (schools and colleges advised to offer the qualification only if they have received training to do so)

**Oct '08-Feb '09**

HEIs to publish course-specific entry requirements re Extended Project for 2010 entry via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

**Sept '08**

First students with pilot Extended Project enter HE

**June-July '08**

Students choose Phase 1 and 3 Diplomas

**June '08**

Accreditation of Phase 2 Diplomas complete

**Sept '08**

First teaching of Phase 1 Diplomas

**Oct '08-Feb '09**

HEIs to publish course-specific entry requirements for Phase 2 Diplomas and indicative admissions policies for Phase 3 Diplomas via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

**Mar '09**

Notification of Gateway success. Providers begin preparing for Diploma delivery in Sept '10 (provisional)

**July '08**

Consultation commences for Phase 3 Diplomas via UCAS

**July '08**

Dissemination of Phase 2 Diploma information to HE

**Sept '08**

Phase 2 Diplomas available

**Dec '08**

Gateway applications received

**May '08**

Development of Phase 3 Diplomas statements complete

**Sept '08**

GCSE consultation completed for English, maths and ICT including Functional Skills

**Oct '08-Feb '09**

HEIs to publish indicative admissions policies for Functional Skills via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

**Sept '08**

Functional Skills teaching in Diplomas

**July '08**

Start of pilots of English, maths and ICT GCSE

**Sept '08**

Evaluation of English, maths and ICT GCSE pilots

**May-Aug '08**

Accreditation of revised GCSE specifications

**Sept '08**

New GCSE specifications reflecting revised course requirements available in centres

**Oct '08-Feb '09**

HEIs to publish indicative admissions policies for revised GCSEs via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

**June '08**

Pilots of English, maths and ICT GCSE including Functional Skills end

**Aug '08**

First awards of two-tier maths and new Science GCSEs

**Sept '08**

Accreditation of new English and ICT GCSE specifications

# 2009

Y JUN JUL AUG SEPT OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MA

**Aug '09**  
First award of revised AS levels

**Aug '09**  
First award of full Extended Project specification

**Sept '09**  
First teaching of Phase 2 Diplomas

**Sept '09**  
Extended Project available to all schools and colleges

**Oct '09-Feb '10**  
HEIs to publish course-specific entry requirements for Phase 3 Diplomas via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

**June '09**  
Accreditation of Phase 3 Diplomas complete

**Sept '09**  
Phase 3 Diploma qualifications available to providers

**Sept '09**  
First applications to HE by Phase 1 Diploma students

**May-July '09**  
Students choose Phase 1 and 2 Level 3 Diplomas

**July '09**  
Dissemination of Phase 3 Diploma information to HE

**Sept '09**  
Final specifications of all three Functional Skills, English, maths and ICT available to schools and colleges

**Oct '09-Feb '10**  
HEIs to publish course-specific entry requirements for Functional English and ICT and indicative admissions policies for Functional maths via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

**Sept '09**  
National implementation of Functional English and ICT

**Dec '09**  
GCSE specifications for English, maths, and ICT including Functional Skills accredited and available to schools and colleges

**Sept '09**  
First teaching of revised GCSE specifications with controlled assessment (English, maths and ICT)

**Oct '09-Feb '10**  
HEIs to publish course-specific entry requirements for revised GCSEs and indicative admissions policies for revised maths GCSE incorporating Functional Skills via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

2010

MAY JUN JUL AUG SEPT OCT NOV DEC

**May-July '10**  
Accreditation of revised A level maths specification

**Aug '10**  
First awards of revised A level

**Sept '10**  
Revised A level maths specifications available in centres

**Aug '10**  
First awards of revised A level including A\* and Extended Project

**Sept '10**  
First revised A level and Diploma students with Extended Project enter HE

**Sept '10**  
First teaching of Phase 3 Diplomas

**Sept '10**  
Phase 4 Diploma qualifications available to providers

**Oct '10-Feb '11**  
HEIs to publish course-specific entry requirements for Phase 3 Diplomas via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

**Sept '10**  
First entry to HE of Phase 1 Diploma students

**Oct '10-Feb '11**  
HEIs to publish course-specific entry requirements for Functional maths via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

**Sept '10**  
First teaching of new Functional Skills in English, maths and ICT in all contexts

**Sept '10**  
First teaching of new English, ICT and maths GCSE incorporating Functional Skills. First teaching of second maths GCSE

**Aug '10**  
Accreditation of maths GCSE specification, including Functional Skills

**Oct '10-Feb '11**  
HEIs to publish course-specific entry requirements for maths GCSE incorporating Functional Skills via UCAS Weblink, prospectuses and websites

KEY

Key actions

Will help you prepare

For information

2011 AND BEYOND

**Review process**  
2013 First Review of 14-19 qualifications

**A levels**  
Sept 2011 First teaching of revised A level maths specifications

**Diplomas**  
Sept 2011 First teaching of Phase 4 Diplomas  
Sept 2011 First entry to HE of Phase 2 Diploma students  
Sept 2012 First entry to HE of Phase 3 Diploma students  
Sept 2013 Every 14- to 19-year-old must be able to access Phase 1, 2 and 3 Diplomas locally

**Functional Skills**  
Sept 2010 National Implementation of all three Functional Skills, English, maths and ICT

We hope you found this timeline useful and informative. The HE section of the 14-19 website – [www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=34](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=34) – will be kept up to date with the latest information on the impact of the 14-19 reforms on the HE sector

# Sources of support for HE Institutions

## Learning and Skills Network

The Learning and Skills Network delivers quality improvement and staff development programmes that support specific government initiatives through research, training and consultancy, and by supplying services directly to schools, colleges and training organisations.

[www.lsneducation.org.uk](http://www.lsneducation.org.uk)

## Quality Improvement Agency

The QIA works across the learning and skills sector to improve performance. It aims to raise the quality of education and training by creating a better learning and skills sector for learners, employers, communities, society and the economy. The QIA will lead a Quality Improvement Strategy for the sector, and will work with the planning and funding bodies, Inspectorates, Centres of Excellence, Lifelong Learning UK and other partners to give a national strategic focus for quality improvement.

[www.qia.org.uk](http://www.qia.org.uk)

## Centre for Excellence in Leadership

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) works with sector partners to ensure world-class leadership within the learning and skills sector. CEL's remit is to foster and support leadership improvement, reform, transformation, sustainability and quality improvement. It serves the existing and future leaders of all providers within the further education system, including FE colleges, training and work-based learning providers, adult and community providers, offender learning, specialist colleges and voluntary organisations.

[www.centreforexcellence.org.uk](http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk)

## Skills for Business network

The Skills for Business network is made up of 25 employer-led, independent Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and the Sector Skills

Development Agency which is responsible for funding, supporting and monitoring the SSCs. SSCs are working to reduce skills gaps and shortages, improve productivity, business and public service performance, increase opportunities to boost the skills and productivity of the sectors' workforce and improve learning supply, including apprenticeships, higher education and National Occupational Standards.

Individual SSCs lead the employer-led Diploma Development Partnerships designing the new Diplomas.

[www.ssda.org.uk](http://www.ssda.org.uk)

## National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

NIACE both represents and advances the interests of all adult learners and potential learners – especially those who have benefited least from education and training. It aims to promote the study and general advancement of adult continuing education.

[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

## Association of Colleges

The Association of Colleges acts as the single voice to promote the interests of further education colleges in England and Wales. The Association provides a broad range of services to its subscribers – for example, supporting colleges to drive up standards, lobbying parliament, and offering consultancy and training. It represents the interests of colleges locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

[www.aoc.co.uk](http://www.aoc.co.uk)

## UCAS

UCAS is the central organisation that processes applications for full-time undergraduate courses at UK universities and colleges. UCAS provides staff development and Continuing Professional Development to its member institutions to support them in their response to curriculum changes. The UCAS / DCSF Curriculum Development Group provides

a forum for HE staff with a strong interest in curriculum and progression to review the impact of curriculum change on progression to HE, and the Group plays a key role in the interface between HE and the implementation of the 14-19 White Paper. UCAS Entry Profiles provide an important vehicle for HE to communicate in advance its generic policies over forthcoming curriculum change in addition to the year- and course-specific information on entry requirements in the course area of Weblink.

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

## Supporting Professionalism in Admissions

SPA is an independent programme supported by the UK HE funding councils and is based at UCAS.

[www.spa.ac.uk](http://www.spa.ac.uk)

## Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

QCA is the regulatory body for public examinations and publicly-funded qualifications including the National Curriculum, GCSEs, A levels and vocational qualifications. QCA regulates awarding bodies, qualifications, examinations and National Curriculum assessment.

[www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)

## Additional copies

Additional copies of this timeline can be downloaded or ordered from the online shop at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications) (search for product reference number 00071-2008).

Copies can also be requested from the DCSF publication helpline by telephoning **0845 60 222 60**, or emailing [dcsf@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dcsf@prolog.uk.com) (quote reference number 00071-2008LEF-EN).

This timeline is free of charge. Please note, however, that a maximum of 50 copies may be requested.