

# The 14–19 Reforms: at a glance

## Why Reform?

The world is changing fast. Students will be competing with increasing numbers of skilled young people from all over the world, some doing jobs that didn't even exist a few years ago. Employers need people with higher levels of skills and qualifications, and a greater emphasis in education needs to be given to transferable skills.

There have been substantial improvements in results at GCSE and A Level over the last few years and increasing numbers staying on in education to 18 and beyond. But up to 10% of our 16–18 year olds are neither in education or training, nor work, and we need more young people to be achieving at higher levels.

## The 14–19 Reforms

The challenge is to provide the opportunity for every young person to achieve success, by offering flexible routes that provide opportunities to learn in different ways and enable all young people to make the best of their talents.

## 14–19 Pathways

It's also important to make sure that the qualifications young people achieve are trusted and widely understood within a system that is easy to navigate. That is why we are bringing together the wide range of qualifications into defined pathways.

### Up to age 16

- Updated GCSEs
- Foundation and Higher Diplomas
- The Foundation Learning Tier

### Post 16:

- GCSEs or A Levels
- Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diplomas
- Apprenticeships
- The Foundation Learning Tier
- Work with accredited training

There are three main **decision points** for young people – at 14, at 16 and for those who take one-year courses post 16, at 18 as well. Young People can easily change from one course to another at these points. Up to 16, all young people will continue to study statutory subjects such as maths, science and PE, whichever route they take.

All young people will continue in education or training until they are 17 from 2013, and to 18 from 2015.

## The Reforms in more detail

### Functional skills and personal, learning and thinking skills

- These aim to equip all young people with the essential skills they need for life, work and study.
- **Functional skills** in English, maths and ICT are stand-alone qualifications. They are also included in the new 11–19 curriculum, GCSEs, Diplomas, Apprenticeships and the Foundation Learning Tier and will be taken by all young people from 2010.
- There are six **personal, learning and thinking skills** – team working, independent enquiry, self-management, reflective learning, effective participation and creative thinking. These are integrated into the school curriculum and all 14–19 pathways and not separately assessed.

### GCSE, A Level and the Extended Project

- A Levels and most GCSEs have been updated and modernised.
- GCSE English, maths and ICT have been revised to incorporate functional skills from 2010.
- Most GCSE coursework is being replaced by “controlled assessment” – instead of being completed at home, work will be completed in class under supervision.
- For many A Levels, the number of modules has been reduced. Stronger connections between topics and more open ended questions will increase the level of challenge.
- From 2010, an A\* grade at A Level will recognise the highest level of achievement.
- The Extended Project, worth half an A Level, will allow students to pursue an area of special interest, developing analytical and independent learning skills demanded in higher education and skilled employment.

### The Diploma

- Introduced in September 2008, the Diploma is a new qualification for 14–19 year olds combining practical and theoretical achievement.
- Created by schools and colleges, employers and universities, it reflects up-to-date requirements and will enable students to keep their progression options open.
- All universities will accept an Advanced Diploma for entrance to foundation and honours degree courses.
- The emphasis is on helping students understand why skills and knowledge are important and on being able to apply these in realistic scenarios.
- By 2013, 17 Diploma subjects will be available and the Diploma will become an entitlement for all students.
- The Diploma is available at different levels – Foundation, Higher and Advanced.

- Existing qualifications such as BTECs, GCSEs and A Levels are also available as components in the Diploma.
- The Diploma will be an entitlement for all young people by 2013.

### **The Foundation Learning Tier**

- The Foundation Learning Tier has been created to enhance opportunities for young people aged 14 and over working at entry level and level 1 (below GCSE grade A\* to C).
- Young people will be able to undertake small, manageable chunks of learning and gain recognition for their achievements.
- Personalised learning programmes will include personal and social development, functional skills and vocational knowledge and skills.

### **Apprenticeships**

- Apprenticeships are increasing in number and range – the aim by 2020 is for one in five young people to be able to take up an Apprenticeship place.
- A new national, online vacancy matching service now helps young people find an Apprenticeship place.
- Apprenticeships will continue to include existing qualifications, like NVQs, BTECs or City and Guilds.
- Advanced Apprenticeships can lead towards a foundation or an honours degree, providing a valuable, alternative route into higher education.

### **Work with accredited training**

- After 2013 all young people taking up work at 16, will have to continue in part-time education or training until they are 17, and by 2015 until they are 18.
- They will be expected to do at least a day a week or the equivalent.

### **Information, advice and guidance (IAG)**

- With all this change, the right support and guidance is important for our young people and for their parents and carers. In future, every secondary school pupil will have a personal tutor and understand how careers teachers, personal advisers, other Connexions staff and IAG teams in further education can help them.
- A 14–19 Prospectus is available for Kent, setting out all the courses that are available to young people – see <http://www.kentchoices4u.co.uk/> for details.
- Financial support for young people post 16 is available through the Education Maintenance Allowance.

### **Find out more**

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19) – contains up-to-date information about the 14–19 reform strategy, curriculum changes and new qualification routes.