

1. INTRODUCTION

The Government signalled acceptance of four of the Wolf Review's recommendations when it was published on 3 March 2011, [see Document Summary Service Summary DSS 10/11 31, March 2011, reproducing all of the Wolf Review's recommendations in full]. On 12 May 2011 it published its full response to the Wolf Review of Vocational Education, indicating that it would 'take action on all of Professor Wolf's individual recommendations'. In thematic sections this document sets out the action it intends to take, with key milestones.

2. KEY ACTION MILESTONES

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

3. THEMES

The Government's response begins by setting out the case for vocational education and criticisms of the current system that is 'failing too many young people'. It proposes '**a substantial programme of reform that will transform the lives of young people**'. It then addresses the following nine themes:

- 14-19 vocational qualifications
- The 16-18 curriculum

- Lower attaining pupils
- 16-18 funding
- Apprenticeships
- Strengthening vocational teaching in schools
- Enrolling students in colleges pre-16
- Work experience
- Ofqual and qualifications design

4. KEY POINTS AND ACTION PROPOSALS IN DETAIL

14-19 vocational qualifications

- The vast majority of 14-16 year olds to be taught an academic core, which can then be supplemented by a vocational element.
- Vocational qualifications to be valuable, respected and support progression to further learning and skilled jobs.
- Recognition through **performance tables** of 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.
- 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.
- Wide consultation to refine the attributes of the best vocational qualifications for 14-16 year olds.
- Schools and colleges to be free to choose whatever qualifications they identify as most appropriate for particular students, whether recognised in the performance tables or not.
- Vital that performance indicators do not 'cause schools to concentrate on particular groups of pupils at the expense of others', so performance measures will capture the full range of outcomes for pupils of all abilities. **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' 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.
- Every 18 year old to have followed a broad programme, including English and maths where they had not yet achieved to GCSE level by age 16.
- Qualifications to be of substantial size, rigorously assessed, and offer good progression opportunities.
- The **review of funding** for 16-18 year olds will look at how coherent programmes of learning for 16-18 year olds can be funded.
- 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**.
- The regulator to consider how **spelling, punctuation and grammar** can be strengthened in GCSEs.
- For those who fail to achieve these GCSEs by age 16, consideration of other qualifications that provide significant progress towards future GCSE success.
- The paramount importance of **attracting and retaining high quality teachers** in all subjects, with a particular emphasis on science, mathematics and other high-priority subjects.
- Commissioning a **maths continuing professional development** support programme, to be in place by autumn 2011, building on the achievements of the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) and drawing on Local Leaders of Education and National Leaders of Education as the network of Teaching Schools develops over the next few years.

Lower attaining pupils

- **More support for the most vulnerable young people** who are not able to progress directly to achieve GCSE level qualifications by age 16.
- Raising 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**, incorporating valuable work experience.

- Foundation learning is 'too rigidly structured and qualification driven'. The document states a 'need to understand better what makes a difference, and build on the best examples'.
- The Green Paper, *Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability* published in March 2011 [see *Document Summary Service Summary 10/11 32, March 2011*], sets out the vision for supporting those with special educational needs and disabilities and makes wide ranging proposals that will inform policy in this area, including:
 - **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.**
 - how these indicators can be supplemented with information on pupils' achievements in English and maths post-16, focusing on those who failed to achieve these essential skills by Key Stage 4.

16-18 funding

- **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.
- The 16-19 funding formula to move from a formula based on funding qualifications to one based on **funding learners.**
- The review will consider what the post-16 equivalent of the pre-16 pupil premium may look like.
- Consultation on changes to the 16-19 funding formula over the summer alongside the pre-16 funding formula review.
- Funding rules should support, and schools and colleges should encourage, young people's ability to move sideways or down to take the qualifications they need to equip themselves with the right skills to progress.
- Extension 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

- Removal of bureaucracy to 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.
- Proposals in autumn 2011 and consultation on possible changes to adapt or supplement Apprenticeship frameworks for 16-18 year olds to reflect the importance for this age group of a broader programme of study.
- **Phasing out of Key Skills** from Apprenticeship frameworks by September 2012 so that **Functional Skills and GCSEs will be the only recognised pathways** to achieving the compulsory English and maths elements of an Apprenticeship.
- Proposals to make Apprenticeship frameworks drawn up by bodies other than SSCs (Sector Skills Councils) more widespread by autumn 2011.
- Review of SSCs' role as Issuing Authorities for Apprenticeship frameworks by January 2012.
- Review of 16-19 funding in autumn 2011 to include payments to employers to encourage them to take on apprentices, and proposed adjustments to the general educational content of the Apprenticeship framework for 16-18 year olds.
- Measures to implement transparency of funding for the start of the 2012 academic year.
- Review of contracting processes by January 2012 to achieve efficiencies and greater simplification and as much funding for Apprenticeships as possible to be spent on the programme's delivery.
- Consideration of changes to encourage and enable more smaller employers to offer apprenticeship places.
- Action plan based on the recommendations of evaluation of the work of ATAs (Apprenticeship Training Agencies) and GTAs (Group Training Associations) by May 2011.

Strengthening vocational education in schools

- Change in the law 'as soon as possible' to **allow Qualified Teacher, Learning and Skills (QTLS) holders to teach the subjects in schools** that they already teach in further education colleges.
- Clarification in time for the coming academic year (2011-12) of the existing rules on the supervision and direction of industry experts in schools.

Enrolling students in colleges pre-16

- Creation of at least 24 **University Technical Colleges (UTCs)** by 2014 offering full-time technically-orientated courses with clear progression routes into higher education or further learning in work, including apprenticeships.
- More **Studio Schools** across the country, ('an innovative new model of 14-19 provision delivering project-based, practical learning alongside mainstream academic study where students work with

- More young people to be offered opportunity to enrol in colleges pre-16 where it offers a better learning option than schools, subject to ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place.

Work experience

- **Removal of the statutory duty to provide every young person at Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) with work-related learning** through legislation and a public consultation in autumn 2011, to take effect from the start of the academic year 2012/13, releasing support for more work experience for older pupils.
- 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

- Ofqual to publish a **new qualification regulatory framework**, including **new conditions of recognition**, in May 2011. Each awarding body will need to meet these conditions from **July 2011**.
- It will remain Government policy that **only qualifications regulated by Ofqual will be eligible for use in the maintained sector**. These qualifications will not have to be compliant with the Qualifications and Credits Framework.
- In April a number of qualifications were reinstated on the approved qualifications list and will be available for teaching in September. *[See the list on page 13 of the document]*. Ofqual will consider the extension or reinstatement of qualifications re-presented for accreditation.
- Government will **consult on the future of National Occupational Standards**, including the best way of using them to inform vocational qualifications.
- The Government will consider **legislative changes** to make the relationship 'as clear as possible' between Ofqual and the Government to ensure that the way Ofqual regulates 'does not impede the delivery of Government's policy objectives' in, for example, how qualification structures drive learning; progression to further and higher education; incentives on providers and pupils; and cost.
- The Government agrees that it 'should not be unduly prescriptive' about the ways employers make inputs to qualifications, and will consult with Ofqual, Sector Skills Councils and other employer representatives about how best to take this forward.

The full document can be viewed/downloaded at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/16to19/qualificationsandlearning/a0074953/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report>

This web page also provides a link to the Wolf Review itself.