



Department  
for Education

**Consultation Response Form**

**Consultation closing date: 20 November 2013**  
**Your comments must reach us by that date**

## **16-19 Accountability Consultation**

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link: <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

<b>Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for confidentiality:	

Name: Yolande Burgess	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation (if applicable): London Councils	
Address: 59½ Southwark Street London SE1 0AL	

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: [consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk) or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

Please mark the box that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/>	School	<input type="checkbox"/>	College	<input type="checkbox"/>	Representative bodies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Young Person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Awarding Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Headteacher/Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governor/Governing Body	<input type="checkbox"/>	Union
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other				

Please Specify:

London Councils represents all 32 London boroughs, the City of London, the Metropolitan Police Authority and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. London Councils is committed to fighting for more resources for London and getting the best possible deal for London's 33 councils. We develop policy, lobby government and others, and run a range of services designed to make life better for Londoners.

This response has been prepared with the Young People's Education and Skills Board made up of key stakeholders in London, including the Greater London Authority, the Association of Colleges and the London Work-based Learning Alliance. The Board is chaired by London Councils' executive member for children and young people and is the lead strategic body for 14-19 education and training in the capital.

## Proposals for Publication of Data

1 Do you agree that in future only high value level 2 substantial vocational qualifications which meet pre-defined characteristics should be recognised in the Top Line performance measures for 16-19 year olds?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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### Comments:

We agree that quality substantial vocational qualifications should be recognised although, as the characteristics for high value have yet to be defined, we are unable to fully respond to this question.

With reference to the characteristics of a high value vocational qualification, we urge the Department to use the recent work of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning to shape the characteristics, in particular that qualifications: show a clear line of sight to work, and; can demonstrate that they will be underpinned by the distinctive features of vocational teaching and learning. Without reference to the Commission's work there is a real danger of creating vocational qualifications for young people that do not relate to vocational qualifications for adults, leading to further barriers to employment and career progression.

It will also be important to ensure that the pre-defined characteristics do not lead to a diminished vocational offer to students. Evidence has shown that since the January 2012 changes to the GCSE school performance league tables, schools have substantially reduced the vocational offer to students. The evidence indicates that the decision to reduce the offer was overwhelmingly driven by the impact on the *school* and its standing in the performance tables, and not on the immediate and future needs of students.

2 Should employer recognition, grading and external assessment or moderation be required characteristics for substantial level 2 vocational qualifications in the same way as they are for Technical Level qualifications at level 3?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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### Comments:

We do not agree that employer recognition, grading and external assessment/moderation be required characteristics for substantial level 2 vocational qualifications.

Technical Level qualifications at level 3 and substantial level 2 vocational qualifications are not the same and engagement with employers and learning providers is markedly different. The majority of learning at level 2 tends to take place in an educational setting and involves building knowledge and/or skills in relation a subject area, which requires a significant amount of 'taught' time. Therefore, level 2 grading, assessment and/or moderation should rest with the appropriate education organisation (e.g. the awarding body).

However, awarding bodies should consult with Sector Skills Councils. To improve young people's chances for employment, it is important skills they acquire through any qualification will improve their employability, and that their new found skills are valued by employers.

For comparability and quality purposes, systems are needed to be put in place to ensure the same qualifications delivered across the country are assessed to the same standards by employers.

3 Do you agree that awarding organisations need a two year grace period to redevelop current qualifications to meet the characteristics required? This is the same time period that was given for the redevelopment of Technical Level qualifications at level 3.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

A grace period is clearly appropriate for level 2 qualifications as they have not previously appeared in the post-16 performance measures. However, two years may be too long particularly in relation to the government's proposed time line i.e. you propose to establish an approved list of substantial vocational qualifications in September 2015. Additionally, if awarding bodies are unable to redevelop current qualifications within a reasonable time frame, those qualifications are clearly not sufficiently robust to meet the requirements of the new accountability measures.

We urge government to work with awarding bodies to set a suitable transition period that ensures appropriate rigour, but does not limit or reduce the opportunities available to young people.

4 What do you think this category of vocational qualifications should be called and how do you think it should be defined?

Comments:

There should be no further categorisation at level 2 beyond academic and vocational as there is a risk that young people may feel locked into a specific category which may indirectly limit their options.

Additionally, to avoid over complicating the 16-19 accountability framework, mirroring the definitions used at level 3 would be the only reasonable option. However, the definitional divide used at level 3 does not translate at level 2 because of the focus on applied learning (Applied General) and specialisation (Technical Level).

5 What are your views on the necessity, benefits and implications for students and providers of a best 3 A levels measure?

Comments:

We envisage that the benefits of a best 3 A level measure will be to significantly reduce 2 A level programmes, which are not substantial and do not prepare young people for Higher Education (a principal driver for undertaking A level study). This measure may also lead to standards being driven up as teaching and learning will be geared towards helping students reach for and exceed expectations of good grades. This measure is likely to address a particular weakness in London on average points scores per student studying A levels and level 3 equivalents (currently below the national average).

However, the implications of this measure are that schools and colleges that deliver A level programmes may inappropriately raise the admissions bar for students who would otherwise achieve good grades with additional learning support.

Particularly significant, this measure will by definition exclude those schools and colleges that offer mixed programmes. If this is regarded as a reputational risk by institutions - not appearing in a performance measure that is likely to be key to public interest - it could lead to perversely discouraging those providers from continuing to offer mixed programmes to new cohorts of students, thus limiting the offer.

6 Do you agree that the measures set out in annexes A and B should be the top line and additional data published for students studying at levels one, two and three?

☐

Yes

☒

No

☐

Not Sure

Comments:

At the heart of the education system is progression, to support *all* young people to improve their skills and knowledge as they prepare for adulthood and employment. The proposed top line measures do not provide this holistic picture of progress, especially at level 2.

As the top line accountability measures *will* drive the behaviours of institutions, progress must feature more prominently for institutions to deliver real accountability for their students and not only for their organisations.

Additionally, we recommend further consideration on specific measures:

- *Completion and attainment measure*: this measure should be introduced for level 3 Academic and Applied General study as it provides a rounded picture of retention and achievement, which is a serious omission in the current performance measures tables.
- *Level 2*: the attainment of level 2 mathematics and English qualifications should be a top line measure in line with the requirements under Raising the Participation Age and study programmes.
- Our response to the *Completion of Traineeships and Supported Internships* is in two parts as this measure appears to try and capture performance from a distinct programme (supported internship) and an element (traineeships) of a broader programme (study

programme):

- *Completion of Supported Internships*: we welcome the introduction of a measure that shows how effectively providers enable young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve sustainable paid employment, particularly in the light of the broader special educational needs and disabilities reforms.
- *Completion of Traineeships*: this measure will only be effective if the definition for 'completion' of the programmes include only positive destinations. Additionally, the *Traineeships: Framework for delivery* document notes that "For 16-19 year olds, traineeships will be part of study programmes". This measure implies that the traineeship element of a study programme will be looked at in isolation from the rest of the programme. The implications of 'extracting' the Traineeship completion from a broad and substantial study programme will need to be considered very carefully.
- *Attainment of approved level 3 mathematics qualifications*: whilst we support institutions providing level 3 mathematics, the rational may lead to a perverse incentive to push young people into mathematics study inappropriately. Additionally with the de-coupling of AS and A2 study, students will be locked into a 2 year course of study. This is a rightly challenging subject area and must ultimately be down to student choice.

7 Do you agree that we should explore how to report the achievement of students at level 2 and 3 taking work-based training (including Apprenticeships) with independent training providers in performance tables?

<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:
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8 What are the issues to consider in reporting the achievement of students in work-based training and in setting minimum standards for these providers?

Comments:
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## Minimum Standards

9 Do you agree that minimum standards at level 2 should be based on an attainment and completion measure for those taking substantial vocational qualifications?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

For parity, the minimum standard should be introduced for all study at level 2, including Academic.

It would be helpful for government to set out in its response to this consultation how it envisages the new measures will inform Ofsted inspections and impact on overall effectiveness judgements, particularly for institutions that deliver both pre- and post-16 learning.

10 Do you agree that we should not penalise providers if students leave their course to take up an Apprenticeship, Supported Internship or Traineeship?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

We would propose that the positive destinations within the current Destination Measures should be considered as exclusions in the first 2 terms of study only.

11 Do you agree that the level 3 minimum standards at 16-19 should be based on progress for academic and Applied General qualifications and on attainment and completion for Technical level qualifications?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

We do not agree.

A progress measure will only highlight the performance of those students that complete (that is, those students who stayed on), which by definition cannot reflect the experience of students who were not supported to complete. A minimum standard based on attainment *and* completion should encompass academic and Applied General qualifications.



12 Do you agree that we should extend the reporting of the attainment of low, middle and high attainers to the 16-19 performance tables?

<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:
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13 What categories of destination should we include when reporting the destination of students with learning difficulties and disabilities?

Comments: <p>Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities have the same aspirations as their peers and will for the most part progress to the positive destinations that are currently recognised within the Destination Measures. There is however a need to recognise a more holistic view of positive destinations for young people with multiple and complex needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- recognising supported employment and internship as a sub-category within the employment destination will provide credibility and recognition to these outcomes;</li><li>- with the focus rightly on preparing young people for adult life, transition to independent living (choice and control over life and support) should be recognised as a positive destination. We would recommend that the Department works with the Preparing for Adulthood Team (currently supporting the SEND Pathfinders) to address how such a measure could be defined and see the benefits for widening the scope of positive destinations for young people with complex needs.</li></ul>
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14 What other data could be published to create the right incentives for post 16 providers to ensure the best progress and attainment for all their students, including enabling those with learning difficulties and disabilities to prepare for adult life?

Comments: <p>The proposed reforms introduce a basket of measures that provide a strong and much needed starting point to improve the accountability of institutions for all 16-19 learners. As these new measures are implemented on-going impact assessment will be essential to ensure the drivers behind the accountability reforms (that is, incentivising the right institutional behaviours) are fulfilled, and that there is early identification of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- any additional measures that may be appropriate to include as wider reforms take hold; and</li><li>- the changes in institutional behaviour demonstrate real accountability to all students, that is, demonstrable progress for all students.</li></ul>
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15 Do you think the HE model of 'MOOCs' could work in a 16-19 environment?

<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Virtual Learning Environments are already well established within the 16-19 sector. Any 'MOOC' model for 16-19 year olds, would need to be considered very carefully as many students in this age group still need considerable tutor support to help them manage self-directed study.

The MOOC model may offer more choice, particularly to students who have difficulties in travelling to study, for example, students with particular disabilities or students with temporary illness.

16 If the assessments could be proven to be robust and to meet other key quality criteria, how do you think we could recognise accredited online courses in the accountability system?

Comments:

To avoid creating a two-tier system, recognised courses delivered via MOOCs should form part of the accountability framework to ensure high standards and quality, and provide assurance to young people and parents that the system for teaching and learning is robust.

17 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, whether it was easy to find, understand, complete etc.).

Comments:
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Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

**Please acknowledge this reply.**

X

E-mail address for acknowledgement: [yolande.burgess@londoncouncils.gov.uk](mailto:yolande.burgess@londoncouncils.gov.uk)

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: [carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk)

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 20 November 2013

Send by post to:  
Andrew Taylor  
Inspections and Accountability Team  
Level 2  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: [1619accountability.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:1619accountability.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk)