

United Kingdom

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: United Kingdom: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2006

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Author: ReferNet United Kingdom

Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in United Kingdom. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2006. Later editions can be viewed from August 2007 onwards at:

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

United Kingdom

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



United Kingdom

01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The United Kingdom (UK) is a union of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and Northern Ireland. UK is both a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy. There is no single document that forms a constitution for the UK.P>

The UK government comprises the legislature (Parliament), the executive (the Cabinet, which consists of 20 ministers chosen by the Prime Minister) and the judiciary. UK Parliament consists of the Queen, the appointed House of Lords and the elected House of Commons. The UK Parliament makes primary legislation, although since late 90s it has devolved a range of issues and powers to the three devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Parliament is supreme and has authority over government and law making in the UK as a whole, in consultation with devolved administrations.

In contrast to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, England has no separate elected national body exclusively responsible for its central administration. Instead a number of government departments look after England's day-to-day administrative affairs (e.g. the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for policy on education and training, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for welfare of people, training and employment programmes, etc.). The Regional Development Agency in each region (6) of England has a strategic role. Building on these enhanced responsibilities of the regions, the government has proposed a role for elected regional assemblies, which were set out in the White Paper [1].

The powers that have been devolved vary between the three nations, but all have significant powers to direct regional and economic development policy in the interest of local people.

Following devolution, the UK government retains responsibility in Wales, Scotland for certain matter, including foreign affairs, defence and overall economic policy.

The Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly also have extensive powers for education and training. Since October 2002, the Assembly in Northern Ireland has been suspended for political reasons. The National Assembly for Wales has powers to make secondary legislation to meet distinctive Welsh needs on issues that have been devolved. Wales elects five Members of the European Parliament in Brussels. The Welsh Assembly government EU Office in Brussels looks after Welsh interests in the European Union.

The Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive (the administrative organisation for the Scottish Parliament) have wide powers for social policies, including education and training, health issues and most of social affairs and were established under the Scotland Act 1998.

For education and training, the UK has a devolved system of governance. There are differences and similarities between the education and training systems of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England, which will be reflected in this overview. Scotland,

in particular, has an education system with a long history of independence from other parts of the UK.

To understand the overall framework for training in the UK, these factors should be borne in mind:

- Major decisions about workplace training and human resources development are in the hands of employers. The long tradition of 'voluntarism' still runs through many aspects of the governance of training today;

Government has become proactive in leading vocational education and training (VET) strategy – to raise levels of qualification in the population, to increase employability, and to improve the competitiveness and productivity of the UK economy.

Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions, May, 2002

([1]) Key Stage 1 of compulsory education: ages 5 to 7; KS 2: 7 to 11; KS 3: 11 to 14; Key Stage 4: 14 to 16. See Diagram 1 of 0401).

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The UK is approximately 242 514 km² (England 130 281, Scotland 77 925, Wales 20 732 and Northern Ireland 13 576). England has the highest population density of the Union (383 inhabitants per km²), Scotland has the lowest density (65 per km²).

The population of the UK has grown and changed significantly over the last 50 years. Mass immigration has contributed to a vast ethnic diversity across society. In 2004 the UK was home to 59.8 million people. This represents a 19 per cent increase from its population of 50.3 million in 1951, and a 3.3 per cent increase over the last decade (1994 to 2004). Current projections estimate the UK population to reach 67 million by 2031.

Table 1: Structure of the population in 2005 (by country and age group, in %)					
	ENGLAND	WALES	SCOTLAND	N. IRELAND	UK
POPULATION (THOUSANDS)	50 094	2 952	5 078	1 710	59 834
% POPULATION AGED					
UNDER 5	5.7	5.4	5.2	6.5	5.7
5-15	14.0	14.2	13.4	16.3	14.0
16 TO PENSION AGE *	61.9	60.1	62.4	61.3	61.8
ABOVE PENSION AGE *	18.4	20.3	18.9	15.9	18.5
% POPULATION CHANGE 1991-2005	6.5	4.4	-0.9	10.3	5.7

* Pension age is currently 65 for males and 60 for females.

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Population Trends No. 122 (Winter 2005)

Due to increased life expectancy and lower fertility rates the UK has an ageing population. The percentage of people aged 65 and over increased from 13% in 1971 to 16% in 2003. Over the same period, the percentage of the population under 16 fell from 25% to 20%. According to the Official Statistical Year Book of the UK, this ageing trend will continue and the number of people aged 65 and over will exceed those aged under 16 by 2013.

During the second half of the 20th century there was a major internal migration of people from the coal, shipbuilding and steel industry areas in the North of England, Wales and Scotland to the South of England and the Midlands. The Scottish Executive has launched some initiatives to reverse the population decline by retaining native Scots and attracting talented people from overseas. In England, there are big variations across the regions: the population in the North East fell by 1.8% between 1991 and 2003, while the population in London rose by 8.2% during the same period. These demographic, economic and social trends have direct implications for VET in terms of employees' flexibility, occupational pathways, recognition of qualifications and upskilling amongst others.

Over the same period, there was immigration mainly from Commonwealth countries, followed more recently by an increase in the number of European nationals and asylum seekers in the UK. The number of people awarded legal settlement in the UK as a percentage of the population represented 0.09% of the UK population in 1991, 0.18% in 2001 and 0.24% in 2003.

Projections place the UK population at just under 65 million by 2025. Two-thirds of this increase is attributable to new inward migration. There has been an increase in net inward migration from 28,000 in 1991 to 87,000 in 2000. In 2004, an estimated 223,000 more people migrated to the UK than migrated abroad. This net inflow is much higher than for 2003 when 151,000 more people migrated to the UK than left to live abroad. A key reason for this was net inflows of non-British EU citizens to the UK, which increased from 14,000 in 2003 to 74,000 in 2004. Citizens of the ten EU accession countries made up estimated four fifths of the increase.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Growth in the UK economy has been fairly steady for over a decade. The economy's trend rate of growth between 1997 and 2001 was 3% a year, compared with 2.5% over the previous economic cycle (1982-1993). According to the OECD, although annual average growth has lagged behind the US, it was above the EU and G7 average (see Table 1).

Table 1. GDP per capita at current market prices, using current PPPs (in USD / EUR) – evolution from 2000-2003 in various Member states (thousands)				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
UK	23.9/17.9	25.4/19.1	27.1/20.4	29.0/21.8
EURO AREA	23.6/17.7	25.1/18.8	25.7/19.3	26.1/19.6
OF WHICH:				
GERMANY	24.9/18.7	26.5/19.9	26.6/20.0	26.3/19.7

FRANCE	23.2/17.4	25.1/18.8	26.9/20.2	27.8/20.9
ITALY	24.5/18.4	26.1/19.6	26.6/20.0	26.1/19.6

NB: Rate of exchange USD 1 = EUR 0.75131 (16.3.2005). GDP: Gross domestic product. PPP = Purchasing power parity.

Source: OECD. *OECD in figures: statistics on the member countries*. Paris: OECD, 2001-2004 [yearly publication].

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) shows that the employment rate among people of working age was 74.7% in 2004. The UK's levels of employment are higher than in most EU Member States (see Tables 2 and 3), and unemployment is lower (see Tables 4 and 5).

Table 2. Employment to population ratio by selected age groups (1990 to 2003)			
	15-24	25-54	55-64
1990	70.1	79.1	49.2
2001	61.1	80.7	52.2
2002	61.0	80.6	53.3
2003	59.8	80.9	55.5

Source: OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 edition*. Paris: OECD, 2004.

One of the main long-term trends in the labour market is the increased participation of women in employment (see Table 4). In 2004, 70% of working-age women were in employment compared with 58% in 1984 due to the increasing levels of educational attainment among women and changing social attitudes to women working and better child care provisions.

Table 3. Employment to population ratio by sex and by educational attainment (2002)			
	WOMEN	MEN	ALL
LESS THAN UPPER SECONDARY	47.5	59.1	52.9
UPPER SECONDARY	73.3	84.4	79.4
TERTIARY	85.6	89.7	87.8

Source: OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 edition*. Paris: OECD, 2004.

There has been a steadily downward trend in the number of unemployed people since 1993. Youth unemployment decreased slightly between 2003 and 2004. In 2004, unemployment at 4.8% was below the averages of 8.1% for the EU-15 and 9.0% of EU-25.

Table 4. Unemployment rate by selected age groups (1990-2003)			
	15-24	25-54	55-64
1990	10.1	5.8	7.2
2001	10.5	3.9	3.3
2002	11.0	4.1	3.5
2003	11.5	3.8	3.3

Source: OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 edition*. Paris: OECD, 2004.

Table 5. Unemployment rate of persons aged 25-64 by sex and educational attainment (2002)			
	WOMEN	MEN	ALL
LESS THAN UPPER SECONDARY	6.4	10.4	8.5
UPPER SECONDARY	4.0	4.1	4.1
TERTIARY	2.0	2.8	2.4

Source: OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 edition*. Paris: OECD, 2004.

In order to equip the UK to meet the challenges of the global economy and to secure a well-educated, highly skilled workforce in a knowledge-driven economy, in 2004 the government set public spending plans for the following three years, committing greater investment in learning and skills. By 2007/08 education spending in the UK will be 5.6% of GDP up from 5.4% in 2004/05 and will reach EUR 110.4 billion.

The attached tables (Outputs of Industry) illustrate how the current prosperity of the UK depends heavily on the service sector, such as finance, real estate, retail and communications, primary and manufacturing industries and in relative decline (See here for [Tables 6 and 7](#))

([1]) See: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Source.asp?vlnk=358>

([2]) Throughout the text, the exchange rate used is as of May 2005: GBP 1 = EUR 1.47.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Educational attainment has risen significantly over recent years at all levels of the education system. UK compares favourably in terms of percentages participating in and graduating from higher education. For the different destinations of school leavers please consult the following table.

Table 1: Destination of school leavers in Great Britain and Scotland from 1996 to 2003

	1991		1996		2003	
DESTINATION AT END OF COMPULSORY SCHOOLING	ENGLAND, WALES & NI	SCOTLAND	ENGLAND, WALES & NI	SCOTLAND	ENGLAND, WALES & NI	SCOTLAND
NUMBER OF SCHOOL LEAVERS (THOUSANDS)	583.1	55.2	625.9	57.4	672.8	57.3
OF WHICH (IN %):						
EDUCATION	60	32	68	45	72	52
GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED TRAINING (ENGLAND, WALES, NI) / TRAINING (SCOTLAND)	19	25	13	14	11	5
EMPLOYMENT	8	24	7	23	8	23
UNEMPLOYED OR NOT AVAILABLE FOR WORK (ENGLAND, WALES & NI) / UNEMPLOYMENT (SCOTLAND)	7	9	6		5	16
MISCELLANEOUS		11		14		
UNKNOWN OR LEFT AREA	6		6	4	4	4

NB: Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The figures for Scotland cannot be directly compared with those for England, Wales and Northern Ireland due to the differences in education systems and data collection.

Source: Department for Education and Skills - DfES. Statistics of education: education and training statistics for the United Kingdom 2003. London:

DfES, 2004, Table 4.11. Available from Internet:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000431/edtraining2003final.pdf> [cited 16.5.2005].

Compared to other industrialised countries, attainment by the age of 16 is good, but staying-on rates after the age of 16-17 (level 2 qualification) is poor. Consequently, the proportion of the population having skills particularly at level 3 is lower than in other industrialised countries. For the UK as a whole, the major concern is that circa 10% of leavers at 16 do not enter employment, further education or training; without further intervention they are at risk (for the qualification levels, see the figures that follow). See here for [\(Diagram 1\)](#)

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

The main objectives and targets relevant to vocational education and training in England [1] are as follows:

(a) by the age of 19, all young people are ready for skilled employment or higher education.

Targets:

- By 2008, 60% of those aged 16 achieve the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C (see Glossary);
- Increase the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve at least level 2 by 5 percentage points by 2008, and increase the proportion of young people who achieve level 3 [2];
- Reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by 2 percentage points by 2010.

(b) Tackle the adult skills gap: increase the number of adults with the skills required for employability and progression to higher levels of training.

Targets:

- Improve the basic skills (see Glossary) levels of 2.25 million adults by 2010;
- Reduce by 40% the number of adults in the workforce lacking level 2 qualifications by 2010. One million adults in the workforce need to achieve level 2 by 2006.
- Raise and widen participation in higher education (HE), seen in England by the government as central to lifelong learning. HE will also be expanded in Wales and Northern Ireland.

INITIATIVES

Policies and reforms are developing at a rapid pace. There are significant government initiatives, especially in the terms of improving post-16 sector provisions and raising skills of the workforce:

- [The Learning and Skills Act 2000 \[3\]](#)

This act reformed the funding and planning of post-compulsory education and training in England and Wales through setting up the Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) in 2001, as well as the network of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) UK-wide, underpinned by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA).

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was introduced in 2000 for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. All VET qualifications are subject to quality control for admission. Under this NQF each qualification is classified in one of nine levels (Entry level and levels 1 to 8). Each level denotes a set of outcomes (academic and vocational qualifications). The NQF and vocational qualifications have been reviewed since 2004 in line with the government's skills agenda to create an employer-led qualification system for adults, which responds quickly to changing needs.

- [Qualifications and Credit Framework \(QCF\) and Credit Transfer systems](#)

The UK's VET system is largely outcome-based. This is being extended by the Credit Transfer system, which will be adopted in England under the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) (see also Chapter 0702) by 2006/07. The QCF will include all formally assessed achievements and will articulate with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), with the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), and with Higher Education credit systems in England and Northern Ireland. Moreover it will facilitate credit transfer arrangements with European credit systems.

More demanding national targets have also been set for apprenticeships (level 2 and 3) in order to raise the quality and effectiveness of apprenticeship as the primary vocational option for young people. The age restriction has been lifted so that more adults can benefit from these 'earn and learn' opportunities.

Following the introduction of 'Curriculum 2000', which introduced, amongst others, new vocational A-level qualifications, the government announced its vision for 14-19 education and training in England [4]. For VET, the reform envisaged the introduction of new lines of learning leading to Diplomas in 14 broad sectors. The specialised Diplomas will replace the current system of around 3 500 separate qualifications and provide a vocational route to higher education and skills employment. The first four diplomas will be developed by 2008.

The Skills for Life strategy, a strategy for tackling the basic skills deficit. A learning infrastructure for adult literacy and numeracy, as well as extensive ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programmes for migrant workers and refugees, have been developed at Entry level and levels 1 and 2 of the NQF.

The *White Paper 21st Century Skills Realising Our Potential* (2003) and its sequel of 2005 *Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work* develop government's strategy for ensuring that employers have the right skills to support the success of their businesses. They also envisage some measures to help individuals gain the skills they need to be employable and personally fulfilled.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland allocates each qualification to one of nine levels (Entry and 1 to 8), each related to well understood 'benchmarks' from academic and vocational qualifications. This will form one dimension of the Credit Frameworks, which will also allocate a 'credit rating' to each qualification and unit to indicate the 'volume of learning', recognising that qualifications at the same level do not necessarily require the same amount of work.

(See here for [Diagram 1](#))

SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (SCQF)

Since 2001, mainstream Scottish qualifications have been brought into a single unifying framework known as the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The SCQF differs from the NQF. It is a lifelong learning framework with 12 levels, which can embrace all forms of learning, including informal learning, provided the learning has clear outcomes and can be assessed by a method that is quality assured. In the SCQF qualifications are described in terms of the level and credit value. The credit value describes the amount of learning achieved in credit points, and the level tells you how demanding it is.

This policy development formally brings vocational and general qualifications into one framework. The SCQF has been developed to help people of all ages and circumstances to access appropriate education and training over their lifetime. Moreover it enables employers, learners and the public in general to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Six key performance indicators have been identified in Scotland to monitor the achievement of the lifelong learning policies outlined in *Life through Learning, Learning through Life* [5].

Six Key performance indicators have been identified in Scotland to monitor the achievement of the lifelong learning policies outlined in 'Learning through Life; Life through Learning'. These are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Performance indicators for Scotland
THE REDUCTION IN THE PROPORTION OF 16–19 YEAR OLDS NOT IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT;
AN INCREASE IN SUPPORT TO 16–19 YEAR OLDS FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES TO STAY ON AT SCHOOL AND/OR FE COLLEGE, THEREBY RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AND RETENTION RATES OF THIS GROUP;
AN INCREASE IN GRADUATES AS A PROPORTION OF THE WORKFORCE;
A REDUCTION IN THE PROPORTION OF THE WORKING AGE ADULTS WHOSE HIGHEST QUALIFICATION IS BELOW SCQF LEVEL 5;
A REDUCTION IN THE PROPORTION OF 18–29 YEAR OLDS WHOSE HIGHEST QUALIFICATION IS BELOW SCQF LEVEL 6; AND
AN INCREASE IN THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE IN EMPLOYMENT UNDERTAKING TRAINING.

(See here for [Diagram 2](#))

One of the changes being implemented is the merging of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Councils (SHEFC) and Scottish Further Education Funding Councils. The former distributes public money for teaching and research into higher education institutions (HEIs) in Scotland and the latter distributes public money to further education colleges in Scotland. The merger will give greater comparability and transparency in the way that different types of institution and levels of courses are funded in tertiary education.

([1]) DfES. *Public spending review 2004: the white paper public service agreement 2005-2008*. London: DfES, 2004.

Available from Internet:

www.edexcel.org.uk [cited 13.5.2005].

([2]) For the qualification levels, diagram 1 and 2.

([3]) *Learning and Skills Act 2000*. London: HMSO, 2000. Available from Internet:

www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000021.htm [cited 13.5.2005].

([4]) DfES. *White Paper: 14-19 Education and Skills*. February 2005. Available from Internet: www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/14-19educationandskills/index.shtml [cited 3.5.2005].

([5]) Scottish Executive. *Life through Learning, Learning through Life. The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland*. February 2003, p. 70. Available from Internet: www.scotland.gov.uk [cited 3.5.2005].

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

In general, the devolution of governance in the UK means that the government and institutional frameworks differ between England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales, all of which have extensive autonomy. The institutional framework is complex, the table below shows the allocation of responsibilities in broad terms, but the details may differ across the four nations of the UK.

The general pattern is as follows:

- Overall policy for vocational learning and skills is the responsibility of the Learning or Education Department of each national government, which also deals with school education.
- The funding, provision and management of learning opportunities within the learning and skills sector (see definition below) in each nation is delegated to a funding council (LSC in England), which determines priorities and the allocation of funding, as well as overseeing data collection.
- Regional and local bodies advise on the provision of learning opportunities to meet local needs, within the overall national policy and funding arrangements, but individual colleges have considerable autonomy.
- Inspection of the quality of provision is the responsibility of an independent body in each nation, as is research, evaluation of initiatives and staff development.
- Approval of qualifications for use in publicly funded provision is the responsibility of an 'accrediting body' for each nation, although those for England, Wales and Northern Ireland work closely on accreditation issues.
- Training programmes for the unemployed are the responsibility of the UK Department of Work and Pensions, working with the governments of the devolved administrations.
- Sector Skills Councils, responsible for identifying skills needs in economic sectors and for defining the occupational standards on which occupational qualifications are based, work across the UK, as does their co-ordinating body, the Sector Skills Development Agency.
- Awarding bodies develop and award a wide range of qualifications. Awarding bodies are private companies in their own right, although they are subject to regulation by accreditation bodies e.g. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) (England), Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) (Wales), and

Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
(CCEA) (Northern Ireland).

The learning and skills sector comprises further education colleges (including both general and specialist colleges and also Sixth Form colleges), post-compulsory education in school sixth forms, government funded work-based learning for young people (including Apprenticeships) and adult and community learning. The sector also has responsibility for workforce development issues, guidance for adults and education/business links.

Vocational Higher Education, whether undertaken in universities, in other institutions of higher education or in further education institutions, is the responsibility of the higher education funding and quality agencies.

Table 1: Allocation of VET responsibilities				
	ENGLAND	WALES	N IRELAND	SCOTLAND
OVERALL POLICY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS	Department for Education and Skills (DfES)	Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS)	Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI)	Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (SEETLLD)
FUNDING OF PROVIDERS IN THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SECTOR (COLLEGES OF FURTHER EDUCATION, ADULT LEARNING AND WORK-BASED LEARNING PROVIDERS); DETERMINING NATIONAL PRIORITIES	National Learning and Skills Council (National LSC)	Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS)	Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI)	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC)
DETERMINATION OF PRIORITIES AT REGIONAL LEVEL AND RATIONALISATION OF PROVISION	Local Learning and Skills Councils (local LSCs) via the Strategic Area Review (StARs) process. Liaison with	Welsh Assembly (WA) regional offices via Regional Statements of Needs and Priorities and in consultation with Community		Scottish Enterprise (SEn) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) working with Local Enterprise Companies (LECs)

	Regional Development Agencies (RDAs).	Consortia for Education and Training		
INSPECTION OF PROVISION IN COLLEGES AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI); for those aged 16-19 this is undertaken jointly with the school inspectors Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)	Estyn (HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales)	DENI (Department of Education, Northern Ireland) on behalf of DELNI	HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors, Scotland, as for Scottish schools
RESEARCH AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT	Learning and Skills Network (LSN) (formerly LSDA)	Dysg (Division of DELLS, formerly of LSN)	Learning and Skills Network, Northern Ireland (LSDA NI) (NI arm of LSN)	Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU)
APPROVAL OF QUALIFICATIONS WHICH MAY BE SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC FUNDING	QCA	DELLS – but NVQs are the sole responsibility of QCA	CCEA– but NVQs are the sole responsibility of QCA	SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority)
EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND THE NEW DEAL (FLEXIBLE PROGRAMME OF ADVICE AND TRAINING FOR THE UNEMPLOYED)	DWP	DWP in conjunction with Wales Employment Advisory Panel	DELNI	DWP in conjunction with Scottish Executive

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS AND THE LICENSING OF SECTOR SKILLS BODIES	SSDA In the occupational standards programme, SSDA works in conjunction with SQA and QCA through the Projects and Standards Approval Group (PSAG)
DEVELOPMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC ECONOMIC SECTORS, TOGETHER WITH WORK TO IDENTIFY AND REDUCE SECTORAL SKILLS GAPS AND INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	SSCs (25), with special arrangements for some more specialised areas
IMPROVEMENTS IN PRODUCTIVITY AND SKILLS	(DTI) Department of Trade and Industry
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION, IMPROVEMENTS IN COMPETITIVENESS, BUSINESS EFFICIENCY AND INVESTMENT.	RDAs – responsible to the DTI
SETTING REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND TARGETS FOR IMPROVING THE SKILLS BASE.	Frameworks of Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESAs)

Notes:

Local education authorities (LEAs) in England and Wales, Education Authorities (EAs) in Scotland and Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in Northern Ireland now play little part in post-compulsory education, although they continue to have a role in school education.

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

No single piece of legislation provides the basis for the legal framework for education and training in the UK. Governance and system development has been regulated in a series of laws, each tackling different aspects of education and training (see Annex)

Devolution of powers to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has required legislation to define the boundaries of responsibility of each of devolved administration. Other legislation has covered:

- Reforming the organisations and structures for planning and funding provision.
- Giving colleges in the further education sector independence from local authority control, allowing them to control their own budgets.
- Revising the arrangements for approval of qualifications and the organisations responsible for that approval, as well as attempting to improve the flexibility and relevance of the qualifications.

- Making provision for training for the unemployed.

Detailed regulations (for example lists of approved qualifications) do not form part of the legislation itself; instead the law provides for the government minister (acting on advice from the relevant advisory body) to issue lists or regulations from time to time.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION SINCE 1944

The 1944 Education Act established the post-war settlement for education in England and Wales; not, however, for VET. New legislation was a rarity until the 1980s. This act does not apply to Scotland.

1969 OPEN UNIVERSITY ESTABLISHED

1987 Establishment in England of National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) to approve the new National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), set up as competence based qualifications. NCVQ and its activities did not apply to Scotland.

1988 EDUCATION REFORM ACT

The most fundamental legislation since 1944, which:

- Introduced a national curriculum and a compulsory system of summative assessment of young people's attainment at each key stage of compulsory education (not in Scotland);
- Established Local Management of Schools (LMS), (not in Scotland);
- Removed polytechnics from local authority control.

1990 ENTERPRISE AND NEW TOWNS (SCOTLAND) ACT

- Established SEn and HIE.

1992 FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION ACT AND THE FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT

- Removed the 'binary' divide, unifying polytechnics and universities into a single system of independent, incorporated universities;
- Gave further education (FE) colleges independence, giving them incorporated status.

1996 EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT

- Established the SQA which replaced the Scottish Exam Board (SEB) and the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC).

1997 REGULATIONS (UK)

- Established the New Deal, for unemployed people claiming benefit to actively train and seek work.

1997 SCHOOLS STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORK ACT (ENGLAND AND WALES)

- Encouraged schools to become 'specialist';
- Gave more regulatory powers to the Secretary of State;
- Set up education development plans (EDPs) and targets geared to school improvement;
- Merged the previous School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) and NCVQ to establish the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and, for Wales, established ACCAC;
- Set up Education Action Zones (EAZs) to encourage multi-agency approaches in deprived areas.

1998 THE EDUCATION (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER

- Sets out the arrangements for assessment and pupils performance, performance and management of schools, financing of schools and establishes the Northern Ireland CCEA

1998 TEACHING AND HIGHER EDUCATION ACT (ENGLAND AND WALES)

- Requires students to contribute to university fees, on a means-tested basis;
- Entitles employed 16/17 year olds to time off for training.

1998 SCOTLAND ACT; 1998 GOVERNMENT OF WALES ACT; 1998 NORTHERN IRELAND ACT

- Enacted the elected Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive giving Scotland legislative powers, the elected Assemblies for Wales and Northern Ireland, giving extensive responsibilities for education and training to the devolved administrations.

2000 LEARNING AND SKILLS ACT (ENGLAND AND WALES)

- Established the Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs);
- Established the Connexions programme, a new advice and guidance service for young people in transition;
- Reformed funding and inspection arrangements, and changed the basis for the approval of qualifications (pre-19 and post-19).

2002 EDUCATION ACT (ENGLAND AND WALES)

- Secondary schools are incentivised to become 'specialist' schools
- Ministers create powers for curriculum innovation;

- Schools enabled to form companies and federations;
- Provision made for private companies to bid to set up new schools.

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The extent of social partnership in the UK is generally limited and it is not a widely understood concept. Traditionally, training in the UK is employer-led on a 'voluntarist' model. Nevertheless, stakeholders' participation in formulating VET is characterised in the different ways that industrial relations operate, through different models and at different levels of formality.

While the public perception of industrial relations is coloured by conflict-based models, there has in practice been a high level of consensus between social partners on the benefits of training. In spite of different approaches and policies on the part of employers and trade unions, particularly over financing of training and degree of control, vocational training tends to be an area in which there is a high degree of cooperation.

Traditionally, workplace qualification and training were seen as the domain of the employers. In the past two decades, the state has become increasingly involved and there are strong signs that collaboration between employers and employees' organisations is increasing.

Three models represent social partnership arrangements in the UK:

- Collective bargaining;
- Consultation;
- Participation in formal structures.

Collective bargaining within the qualifications system tends to be limited to mainly localised negotiations on access to training and qualifications, including apprenticeship arrangements. The last two tend to be a feature of training policy at national or sectoral level and the design, development, implementation and evaluation of the system.

At national level, consultation is the primary mechanism. Participation occurs more at sectoral level. All three models include formal and informal mechanisms. These, and different levels of involvement, come into play in different parts of the system: VET policymaking, strategic planning, design, implementation and evaluation.

Union learning representatives have recently been enacted for workplaces. While it remains to be seen how this innovation will operate, it is clear from a number of recent lifelong learning initiatives that trade unions are, increasingly, seen as an important stakeholder in developing workplace learning. In September 2004, the TUC proposed new plans for a Union Academy, which will offer working people learning where and how they want it, commissioning courses from colleges, universities and other providers. Set up, owned and run by unions, the Union Academy aims to transform access to learning for people at work. In Scotland, the STUC is looking to develop union learning in a similar way and is looking at the feasibility issues for the establishment of a Scottish union learning institution.

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

Schooling is compulsory from age 5 to 16 (4 to 16 in Northern Ireland). All publicly funded schools must provide the National Curriculum. Depending on the Key Stage of compulsory education ([1]), the National Curriculum comprises different compulsory subjects, with core subjects like English, mathematics, science, ICT, etc., included throughout the studies. At age 16 most pupils take public examinations, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (level 2) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Standard Grade in Scotland ([see Glossary](#)). GCSEs are normally taken in a range of single subjects, and a certificate is issued listing the grade achieved in each subject. After completion of compulsory education in secondary schools, young people may choose to continue in school, move to a sixth-form college ([2] or a further education (FE) college, ([3]) enter employment with training such as an apprenticeship, or enter employment without apprenticeship.

Students remaining in education at a school or a college may choose between general ('academic') and vocational subjects or take a mixture of the two. Normally, the upper secondary phase lasts two years, from age 16 to 18 or 19. The dominant qualification is General Certificate of Education (GCE) A-levels (level 3). A-levels are 'elective' single subject qualifications, which students choose on the basis of GCSE qualifications, interest and intended destination. Students are encouraged to study up to five subjects in the first year of post-secondary education and upon completion; they are awarded the GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) qualification. Those who continue in the second year, study more demanding units in three of these five subjects in order to obtain the full GCE A-level on successful completion (graded A to E, A being the highest).

School- and college-based vocational qualifications and pathways are developing. The General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) introduced in the 1990s will be phased out by 2007, and vocational GCSEs and vocational A-levels have been introduced since 2000.

(See here for [Diagram 1](#))

(See here for [Diagram 2](#))

The qualifications framework and programmes of study in Scotland differ from the rest of the UK ([see NQF and SQF](#)). The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework provides a range of academic and vocational courses and qualifications covering hundreds of subjects ([4]) for learners of all ages in schools and colleges. In secondary schools students aged 15-16 normally take Standard Grades (see Glossary) but some now take National Qualifications at Access, Intermediate 1 or Intermediate 2 levels at secondary schools. Students aged 17-18 follow National Qualifications courses at one of five levels from Access to Advanced Higher. Students can start at the level, which suits best for their abilities and can progress on to the next level. Each of the units counts as a qualification in its own right, which allows students who don't pass the whole course to get the credit for the units successfully achieved. Pass grades are awarded at A, B and C. Higher and Advanced Higher can be used for entrance into higher education or a workplace. National Qualification courses are also offered at FE colleges. Scottish colleges have a major role in higher education through their extensive programmes of HNCs and HNDs, from which students can progress to the second and third years of degrees at universities.

In the UK, a young person with special educational needs (SEN) or disability has the right to receive a broad and balanced education. In England, a SEN code of practice was

published in 2002. As of 2004, more children with SEN attend mainstream schools and better provisions are envisaged at special schools for those with most severe and complex needs. Similar legislations have been adopted by the devolved administrations.

The table below shows the highest qualifications held by people of working age (data for England).

Table 1: Level of Highest Qualification Held by People of Working Age (data for England)							
HIGHEST QUALIFICATION HELD BY PEOPLE OF WORKING AGE (1), BY GENDER, AGE, ETHNICITY, REGION AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND FOR EMPLOYEES OF WORKING AGE (1) BY OCCUPATION, 2004							
		PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE OF WORKING AGE QUALIFIED AT EACH LEVEL					
Personal and economic characteristics	All people of working age (thousands) (1)	NVQ Level 5 (2)	NVQ Level 4 (3)	NVQ Level 3 (4)	NVQ Level 2 (5)	Below NVQ Level 2 (6)	No Qualifications
BY GENDER							
Males	18622	6	21	23	21	16	14
Females	17657	5	21	15	22	20	16
BY AGE							
16-19	3045	*	1	21	36	21	21
20-24	3613	2	18	34	22	16	8
25-29	3543	6	31	19	19	16	8
30-39	8786	7	25	16	21	21	10
40-49	8307	6	23	17	20	19	15
50-64	8985	5	20	17	19	16	24
BY ETHNIC ORIGIN (7)							
White	33078	5	21	20	22	18	15
Non-white of which:		6	19	16	21	20	19
Mixed	264	6	22	23	22	15	12
Asian or British Asian	1562	6	18	15	20	19	23
Black or Black British	792	5	20	17	22	22	14
Chinese	154	12	21	15	17	20	15

Other ethnic group	410	8	18	11	20	23	20
BY UK COUNTRY							
United Kingdom	36279	5	21	19	22	18	15
England	30367	5	21	19	22	19	14
Wales	1744	5	19	20	24	15	18
Scotland	3126	5	25	21	19	15	15
Northern Ireland	1041	5	18	17	24	11	25
BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY							
Employees (7,8,9) of which:	2351	6	25	20	22	18	9
Managers & senior officials	3368	8	36	21	18	13	4
Professional occupations	2968	28	55	8	6	3	1
Associate professional & technical	3264	6	46	18	17	10	2
Administrative & secretarial	3218	2	18	20	30	25	6
Skilled Trades occupations	2029	1	9	38	27	16	10
Personal Service occupations	1875	1	17	22	28	22	10
Sales and Customer Service occupations	2095	1	10	22	30	24	14
Process, plant & machine operatives	1775	*	4	18	26	31	20
Elementary occupations	2905	-	5	17	24	28	26
Self-employed (10)	3304	5	22	23	22	15	13
ILO unemployed	1343	3	12	16	24	25	20

(11)							
Inactive (12)	7920	2	11	17	20	18	31

Numbers and percentages may not add up to totals due to rounding

DfES estimates from the Labour Force Survey, Spring 2004 (13,14)

Legend to Table 1

Sample size too small for a reliable estimate.

1. Working age is defined as males aged 16-64 and females 16-59. These figures include unpaid family workers, those on government employment and training programmes, or those who did not answer, who are excluded from the economic activity analyses below.

2. Includes higher degrees and other qualifications at Level 5.

3. Includes First degree, Other degree and sub-degree higher education qualifications such as teaching and nursing certificates, HNC/HNDs, other HE diplomas and other qualifications at Level 4.

4. Vocational qualifications include those with RSA Advanced Diploma, BTEC Nationals, ONC/ONDs, City and Guilds Advanced Craft or trade apprenticeships and other professional or vocational qualifications at Level 3.

Academic qualifications include those with more than one GCE A level or SCE Highers/Scottish Certificates of Sixth Year Studies (CSYS) at Level 3.

5. Vocational qualifications include those with RSA Diplomas, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC Firsts or trade apprenticeships and other professional or vocational qualifications at Level 2. Academic qualifications include those with one GCE A level, five or more GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent or AS examinations/SCE Highers/CSYS at Level 2.

6. Vocational qualifications include those with BTEC general certificates, YT certificates, other RSA qualifications, other City and Guilds or other professional or vocational qualifications at Level 1. Academic qualifications include those with one or more GCSE grade G or equivalent (but less than five at grades A*-C) or AS examinations at Level 1.

7. Apart from rounding, figures may not sum to grand totals because of questions in the LFS which were unanswered or did not apply.

8. Employees are those in employment excluding the self-employed, unpaid family workers and those on government employment and training programmes.

9. The split into employees and self-employed is based on respondents' own assessment of their employment status.

10. Self-employed are those in employment excluding employees, unpaid family workers and those on government employment and training programmes.

11. Unemployed according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) definition.

12. People who are neither in employment nor ILO unemployed.

13. Users of these data should read the LFS entry Annex A, as it contains important information about the LFS and the concepts and definitions used.

14. More up-to-date information may be available through the DfES Research and Statistics Gateway www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

([1]) Key Stage 1 of compulsory education: ages 5 to 7; KS 2: 7 to 11; KS 3: 11 to 14; Key Stage 4: 14 to 16. See Diagram 1 of 0401).

([2]) Six-form college/school sixth form: post compulsory educational establishment where students prepare for their GCE A-level examination during the final two years of secondary schooling (when students are about 16 to 18 years of age).

([3]) Further education (FE) college – full time or part time educational establishment for persons over compulsory school age of 16. Further education courses are generally up to the standard of GCE A-level or NVQ level 3. FE often provides an entry to university or/and full employment.

([4]) The framework was reviewed in 2002, with more subjects on offer (i.e., philosophy, politics, care and engineering).

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

From September 2004 there is a statutory requirement for schools in England to make provision for work-related learning for all pupils, including opportunities for:

- Learning through work (for example, through short periods of work experience);
- Learning about work and careers education;
- Learning for work, by developing enterprise and employability skills (for example, through working on key skills and schemes such as the UK charity Young Enterprise) ([1]).

Through the introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects, the government promotes the parity of esteem between vocational and more traditional academic subjects.

Vocational GCSEs are available in 8 subjects: applied science, applied IT, applied business, applied art and design, engineering, manufacturing, health and social care, leisure and tourism, with other subjects under development. Vocational GCSEs give young people the opportunity to explore a particular vocational area as part of a balanced learning programme.

They offer a more applied approach to learning. A vocational GCSE is equivalent to two academic (general) GCSEs and enable progression to further education, training or employment.

In Wales, in 2003 a six-year pilot of new Baccalaureate qualification began, which has a common core curriculum on Wales, Europe and world studies (including a language module), work-related education, personal and social education and key skills.

The government's announcement of the development of 14 specialist diplomas each at three levels is intended to make available a consistent set of school- and college-based diplomas, and to make vocational provision coherent for young people in their last years of compulsory schooling, at levels 1 and 2.

Young Apprenticeships (introduced in 2004) offer an opportunity for motivated 14-16 year olds to combine practical application of skills and knowledge with studying for vocational qualifications. This allows the learner a flexible programme involving a college, training provider or employer, and is intended to lead on to an apprenticeship at the age of 16. Pupils are based in school and follow the core National Curriculum subjects, but for two days a week (or equivalent) they also work towards nationally recognised level 2 vocational qualifications. The learning experience includes up to 50 days' experience of work over the two years of the programme.

Similarly, the Increased Flexibility Programme for 14-16 year olds programme was introduced in 2002 to provide enhanced work-related learning through partnerships of local providers and businesses ([2]). By the end of 2003, 40 000 young people in England had participated and 300 partnerships were established.

	ENGLAND	WALES	NORTHERN IRELAND	SCOTLAND
NUMBER OF SCHOOL LEAVERS (THOUSANDS)	608.8	37.7	26.3	57.3
OF WHICH (%)				
EDUCATION	72	74	70	52
GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED TRAINING*	7	8	19	5
EMPLOYMENT	11	7	5	23
UNEMPLOYED/ NOT AVAILABLE FOR WORK	8	6	2	16
UNKNOWN OR LEFT AREA	4	5	4	4

* See Chapter 5.

NB: Figures for Scotland are not directly comparable due to differences in education systems and data collection.

Source:

Department for Education and Skills - DfES. *Statistics of education: education and training statistics for the United Kingdom 2003*. London: DfES, 2004, Table 4.11.

Available from Internet:

www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000431/edtraining2003final.pdf

[cited 16.5.2005].

([1]) Young Enterprise is run through direct and in-kind funding support from local and national businesses and organisations. It aims at young people aged 4-25 in full or part-time education, teachers/tutors of enterprise education and volunteers who can also develop business skills while delivering learning. <http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk>.

([2]) www.dfes.gov.uk/qualifications/mainSection.cfm?SID=64&ssID=190

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland upper secondary education begins at age 16. Programmes are normally two years in duration, but a number of students take three years and the phase is generally considered to be ages 16 to 19. Upon completion of the compulsory secondary education, the main routes for young people at this stage are to:

- Continue in full-time general or vocationally related education in a school or college;
- Move on to a work-based training programme, usually an apprenticeship;
- Start work by becoming employed full-time or part-time or doing voluntary work.

In 2003-2004 73 per cent of 16 year olds and 58 per cent of 17 year olds were in post-compulsory education either at school or in full-time further education in England. During the same period the average number of learners on Modern Apprenticeship was 104,900 representing over one-third of the year average for the total number of learners on work-based learning for young people.

At the same period in Northern Ireland, the proportion of pupils at the end of compulsory education continuing their education stayed at 70 per cent, 12 percentage points higher than in 1991. In Scotland the percentage of all school leavers continuing their education fell to 50 per cent in 2004, 18 percentage points higher than in 1991. In Wales, this figure stood at 74 per cent – 12 percentage points higher than in 1991.

The main providers of upper secondary education are:

- School sixth forms (not available in all areas of the country). Traditionally these have a strong focus on general education. Recent local and national initiatives have encouraged partnerships and collaborative agreements with local colleges of further education; elsewhere school sixth forms offer only a narrow range of vocational courses, focusing on those which do not require expensive specialist facilities
- Sixth form colleges. These provide mainly full time courses to students aged 16-19; much of their offer is academic, but they also offer a small range of vocational courses, especially AVCEs
- Colleges of further education; this category includes tertiary colleges, specialist colleges (mainly in land-based provision and art and design) and colleges which cater for people who have learning difficulties or disabilities, or both. All of these offer a wide range of courses, for adults as well as young people. Most offer academic courses

(such as A Levels), but their focus is much more strongly vocational.

A current development is for FE colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to specialise in particular sectoral areas of VET, such as engineering, as Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) designed to meet local skills needs.

In Scotland, fewer young people aged 16-18 are educated in FE colleges but continue in upper secondary education at school to age 17-18.

A number of policy concerns dominate throughout the UK:

- Participation and qualification levels lag behind those found in other advanced economies; Social inequality in achievement of qualifications remains marked;
- Because of inequality between social classes in access to higher education, there are initiatives to try to 'raise the aspirations' of young people from classes and neighbourhoods which do not have a tradition of HE participation
- Vocational courses have low status compared to general qualifications;
- 16 to 19 year olds on academic courses in the UK study fewer subjects than in most other European countries, and this makes it difficult for the learner to acquire a broad, balanced and coherent range of knowledge and skills. However, in Scotland pupils have traditionally studied a broader based curriculum;
- A persistent systems issue is that 16-19 education is driven more by qualifications and assessment issues than by learning needs.

A qualifications drift has taken place, as employers expect higher levels of qualifications from entrants to the labour market and jobs become more complex. Unless specific qualifications are required – e.g. for a career such as nursing, the law, teaching or engineering - general qualifications are often taken as a sign of 'trainability'. Licences to practice requirements are not common in the UK, so vocational qualifications are often not seen as a necessary requirement for labour market entry.

ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

As a means of quality control, most IVET courses supported by public funding must lead to recognised qualifications. It is therefore convenient to describe provision in terms of the qualification(s) to which it leads.

Access to A Level and AVCE courses requires five 'good' (grade A*-C) passes in GCSE or equivalent. Pupils who have not reached this level at age 16 may spend an extra year trying to improve their results or may choose a less demanding alternative.

Progression from A levels and AVCEs may be to employment, but is more often to general or vocational higher education. Options for progression may be limited by the subjects taken, with mathematics and science required for progression in scientific and

technical subjects. AVCEs are accepted for entry to some general degree courses, but progression options are likely to be more limited than from A levels.

Although government policy focuses on those qualifications which have been developed through its initiatives or which it regulates most closely, there are a large number of other approved qualifications whose influence is also significant, as the following table shows.

Table 1: Learners (in thousands) aged under 19 in FE sector colleges in England (including sixth form colleges) in Autumn 2003, by highest level of main qualification and qualification type			
LEVEL	E & 1	2	1
GCSE / GCE		17.4	168.5
GNVQ / AVCE	9.5	25.9	53.0
GNVQ Pre-cursor		18.5	74.2
NVQ	11.0	33.9	7.5
Other	57.5	53.8	56.8
Total	78.0	149.4	360.0

Source: Learning & Skills Council/DfES Statistics First Release ILR/SFR03, further education and work based learning for young people – learner numbers in England on 1 November 2003, Wednesday 31 March 2004

Within school- and college-based pathways, a range of qualifications is available. The main strands are as follows.

Vocational Certificates of Education (VCEs)

The Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) is an A-level award designed for those wanting to study a broad area of work and the application of a subject. Specifications have been revised to have the same structure as GCEs and will be known as GCEs in 10 applied subjects from September 2005. These are applied art and design, applied business, applied ICT, applied science, engineering, health and social care, media, travel and tourism, leisure, performing arts. Students study a number of units, some of which are mandatory. The total number of units required varies between levels. About two thirds of the units are externally assessed, one third internally. Progression – which is dependent on attainment in AS- and/or A-level – is to higher education including

foundation degrees (See Chapter 0406), or to apprenticeship, or to training and/or professional qualifications.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

NVQs are designed for people to gain recognised qualifications for specific occupations. They are offered mainly at levels 1, 2 and 3 (See diagram 1 and 2 of 0201). They offer progression routes to further education and training or into the labour market. NVQs were designed as qualifications recognising work-based competences, but are often achieved through study in FE colleges.

Key Skills

Key Skills qualifications are available to students across all post-16 routes. Key Skills qualifications (levels 1-3) comprise communication, application of number and information technology (IT). Also available at levels 1-3 are the wider key skills units: working with others, improving own learning and performance and problem solving. Assessment comprises a portfolio and (except for wider Key Skills) external tests. They are available and designed to be taken in tandem with the other qualifications described here.

BTEC introductory, first and national qualifications

BTECs (Business and Technical Education Council) are designed for study in occupational areas such as aeronautical engineering and horticulture. They offer a mixture of theoretical and practical work and can be taken at levels 1, 2 and 3. Progression routes can be into the labour market or onto more advanced vocational courses, including to BTEC Higher National Diploma/Certificate, foundation or other degrees at level 4 or professional qualifications.

OCR national awards, certificates and diplomas

OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts) Nationals are a new suite of qualifications designed mainly for 16- to 19- year olds. They are available at levels 1, 2 and 3. Progression routes are similar to the BTEC awards.

City and Guilds GVQs and IVQs

City and Guilds offers more than 500 qualifications (through its 8,500 centres worldwide) across sectors at different levels, General Vocational Qualifications (GVQs) and International Vocational Qualifications (IVQs), in particular. There are two types of IVQs, Craft and Technician and they are available at three levels, Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma.

WALES (THE WBQ REFORM)

Reform is under way in Wales. The Welsh Baccalaureate (WBQ) is at developmental stage. The WBQ will initially be a post sixteen qualification at levels 2 and 3 of the National Qualification Framework (ISCED 2 and 3). In the future a level 1 qualification may also be developed. It will be awarded to students who complete a programme consisting of the Welsh Baccalaureate Core Certificate, the key skills certification and optional studies drawn from existing qualifications. WBQ comprises three components:

- The Core (comprising those teaching-learning programmes that give the Welsh Bacculaureate its character);
- The Options (which are the students' main courses and programmes and provide them with a stable base);
- The tutorial/mentoring system that link programme and student.

The optional studies element will be assessed in line with the existing requirements of examining and awarding bodies. The Core will involve students in the preparation of a portfolio of evidence for assessment. Pilot schemes began in September 2003, with a further wave in September 2004.

Participation

The Table below provides data on participation levels for 16, 17 and 18 year olds. Notably, participation in the UK is lower than in most comparable countries, and there is considerable dropout at 17.

Table 2: Further Education - Learners (000's) on council-funded provision for 2003/04 by age band and key LSC programmes		
AGE	TYPE OF PROGRAMMES	2003/04
BELOW 19	Skills for Life	251
	Full level 2	117
	Full level 3	261
	Total learners	701
19 PLUS	Skills for Life	206
	Full level 2	162
	Full level 3	125
	Total Learners	3413
ALL AGES	Skills for Life	457

	Full level 2	279
	Full level 3	386
	Total learners	4114

Source: Table 7. National Statistics, Statistical First Release 14 December 2004. ILR/SFR05.

Table 3: Participation. 16 and 17 year olds participating in post-compulsory education ¹ and Government-supported training 1995/96, 1999/00 and 2001/02 ² Percentages ³												
	ENGLAND			WALES			SCOTLAND ⁷			NORTHERN IRELAND ⁸		
	1995/96	1999/00	2001/02	1995/96	1999/00	2001/02	1995/96	1999/00	2001/02	1995/96	1999/00	2001/02
	16 YEAR OLDS											
AT SCHOOL	34	35	35	37	38	39	67	69	71	46	48	49
FULL-TIME FURTHER EDUCATION	37	36	36	33	33	33	9	12	14	30	29	29
PART-TIME FURTHER EDUCATION	7	6	5	10	6	6	19	9	8	11	9	11
GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED TRAINING (GST)	11	8	7	12	7	8	10	9				
ALL IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION AND GST ⁵	80	79	78	82	78	80	86	90				
17 YEAR OLDS												
AT SCHOOL	26	28	28	28	29	31	40	38	41	35	38	40
FULL-TIME FURTHER EDUCATION ⁴	32	30	30	28	28	28	10	11	12	29	27	26
PART-TIME FURTHER EDUCATION ^{4,6}	9	8	6	8	9	9	20	11	11	14	8	12
GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED TRAINING (GST) ⁵	12	11	10	15	12	11	14	14				
ALL IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION AND GST	69	68	67	70	69	70	63	63				

1. Excluding higher education.
2. Data for Scotland refer to 2000/01. 3
3. As a percentage of the estimated 16 year old and 17 year old population respectively.
4. Including sixth form colleges in England, and a small element of further education in higher education institutions in Great Britain.
5. Figures for England exclude overlap between full-time education and Government-supported training.
6. Figures in the United Kingdom rows refer to Great Britain only.
7. The estimates of 16 year olds at school exclude those pupils who leave school in the Winter term at the minimum statutory school-leaving age.
8. Participation in part-time FE should not be aggregated with full-time FE or schools activity due to the unquantifiable overlap with these activities.

Source: Table 3.2 Statistics of Education: Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom 2000, 2003 and 2004 editions.

Key skills (England, Wales and Northern Ireland): A common complaint of employers is that young people entering employment do not have the basic skills of literacy/communication and number or the attitudes needed for employment. This was the starting point for the Key Skills initiative. Key skills qualifications are available to students across all post-16 routes. Key Skills qualifications (levels 1-3) comprise communication, application of number and information technology (IT). Also available at levels 1-3 are the wider key skills units: working with others, improving own learning and performance, problem solving. Assessment comprises a portfolio and (except for wider Key Skills) external tests.

Work experience: Most students on vocational courses and many on general courses undertake a short period of unpaid work experience, as enrichment and to learn about a particular working environment. This is often facilitated through local education/business partnerships.

SCOTLAND

A new National Qualifications (NQs) system was introduced in Scotland in 1999. One of the main aims of the new system was to bring together academic and vocational qualifications in a single coherent system that promotes parity of esteem and increased employability. There are five levels of awards (Access, Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher and Advanced Higher). Students usually study NQs in fourth, fifth and sixth year of secondary education though a few schools may offer the qualifications at an earlier stage. Schools will not offer the whole range of NQs at every level but will match provision to the needs of students. Schools will work in partnership with other learning centres. NQs offer progression routes into further and higher education and employment. From 2004, all NQs are credit-rated and levelled in the SCQF.

In Scotland, a number of local authorities are using flexibility within the curriculum to deliver work-based vocational learning programmes through the strategy for Enterprise in Education.

Core Skills (Scotland)

Core Skills (Scotland) help people achieve success in many situations in life and work. They provide a basis for learning throughout life, for working effectively, and for handling problems and dealing with issues. Employers, colleges and universities value, use and develop core skills. Core Skills have been part of the learning experience of pupils and students for many years. All learners can gain recognised National Qualifications for their core skills and these qualifications may contribute to Scottish Group Awards. The Core Skills are: Communication; Numeracy; Problem solving; Using information technology and Working with others.

ALTERNANCE

By the late 1970s, the traditional pattern amongst young people not aiming for higher education was to combine employment with 'day release' at a college of further education. With the increase in full time attendance in post-compulsory education, numbers of part time students have dwindled, but they remain a significant minority. In Autumn 2003, 75,800 students aged 19 and under were enrolled on part time courses at general colleges of further education, as compared with 362,300 of the same age group on full time courses). Many of the qualifications taken in full time courses are equally available to part time students, although the latter would normally need to spread their study over a longer period of time.

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

THE POLICY CONTEXT

By the late 1970s, apprenticeship was in substantial decline; they were limited largely to male-dominated, traditional manufacturing industries. Early attempts to address the problems of youth unemployment, such as the 1981 New Training Initiative, focused on outcome-based qualifications, notionally independent of the location, duration and mode of learning.

The design of Modern Apprenticeships in the mid 1990s ran counter to this tendency to focus exclusively on outcome-based qualifications. It placed curriculum structures, as opposed to qualifications structures, back on the agenda for initial VET. The frameworks for each occupational area specified the level, duration and nature of learning in each sector. At first, with strong public advertising campaigns, participation in schemes grew, but then stabilised. Completion rates were lower than expected.

These problems of non-completion and poor growth persist, even though independent evaluations judge the learning opportunities in Apprenticeships to be rich and potentially of high quality. (In England the name Modern Apprenticeship was dropped in May 2004.)

THE NEW GENERATION OF APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships provide work-based training in a broad range of sectors to people who are learning new skills and gaining recognised qualifications while they are working. They normally last between one and three years. Since its start in 1994, one million apprentices have joined the programme. Apprentices can enter higher education or employment depending on the successful completion of the corresponding apprenticeship training.

60 Apprenticeships (at level 2) and Advanced Apprenticeships (equal to two good A-levels or level 3 qualification) are available in over 80 different industries (retailing, engineering, car manufacturing, construction, banking, to name a few), hotel and catering

and business administration being the main sectors where starters for apprenticeships are. Over the next five years, 50% of British Gas engineer recruits will be apprentices. Relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC) produces a framework for each apprenticeship qualification. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) manages and funds apprenticeships as a national programme through its network of training providers.

An apprenticeship is a mixture of work-based training and education, which includes the following basic elements:

- a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), an occupationally specific qualification delivered and assessed mainly in the workplace;
- Key Skills, e.g. communication, application of number and ICT at an appropriate level;
- a Technical Certificate, providing the underpinning knowledge of the technical or business areas associated with the job and delivered at a FE college (see Glossary).

There is no single set time to complete Apprenticeships and they vary widely in content and size. Apprenticeships at level 2 take a minimum of 12 months while Advanced Apprenticeships take a minimum of 24 months. Apprenticeships were originally intended for young people, but in May 2004 the upper age limit of 25 for Apprenticeships was removed in England.

Apprentices receive pay (see Section 10.2.1) and most have the status of employees of the organisation where they work. They typically spend one day per week at college studying the technical certificate and the remainder of their time in training or work with their employer.

Apprentices have a contract and also an individual learning plan, which employers develop with the help of local learning providers, who also handle assessment and quality control and help businesses recruit a suitable apprentice. Selection takes account of school qualifications (especially for more technical occupations) and motivation.

Table 1: Starts in the ten most frequently taken Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships in England (2000-2004) (in thousands)		
	APPRENTICESHIPS	ADVANCED APPRENTICESHIPS
2000/01	104.1	72.4
2001/02	108.3	54.0
2002/03	115.7	47.3
2003/04	136.5	55.9

Source: *Learning and Skills Council - LSC. Further education, work-based learning for young people and adult and community learning: learner numbers in England: 2003/2004*. London: LSC, 2005. Available from Internet: www.lsc.gov.uk [cited 16.5.2005].

In Wales, the age limit on Apprenticeships was removed in 2002. The Modern Skills Diploma for Adults aims to raise skills levels in business, extending the apprenticeship model to those aged over 25. The diploma programme provides structured training at level 4 for people in or out of employment. Modern Apprenticeships (MA) were introduced in Northern Ireland in 1996; arrangements are broadly similar to those in England.

Though similar, arrangements in Scotland differ somewhat. Training includes on- and off-the-job training, study for a SVQ level 3 (SCQF level 6 – [Diagram 1](#)) or above and Core Skills in numeracy, communications, IT, problem solving and working with others at a minimum level of Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4). Training providers must achieve the Modern Apprenticeship standards defined in the Scottish Quality Management System, the quality assurance mechanism used by the Local Enterprise Companies (LECs). Training providers make a contract with LECs on agreed training provision and related funding. There is no upper age limit for taking part in the apprenticeship programmes.

Skillseekers training (Scotland) includes on- and off-the-job training and study up to level 3 (SCQF level 6), for 16-24 year olds in employment or on a training placement (train for a job through work experience). Funding is provided by government and is paid to training providers as a contribution towards training costs, on the young person's achievement of specific milestones of the training plan. Training usually lasts two years. The enterprise network [1] sets funding levels that reflect the age of the individual and importance of occupational sector to local economy.

Table 2: Work Based Learning by young people, starts (in thousands) by programme				
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03**	2003/04
ADVANCED APPRENTICESHIP	72.4	54.0	47.3	55.9
APPRENTICESHIP	104.1	108.3	115.7	136.5
NVQ LEARNING	50.1	54.1	40.6	26.6
ENTRY TO EMPLOYMENT*	26.3	31.1	35.7	61.1
WBL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	252.9	247.6	239.3	280.0

*Entry to Employment was previously referred to as Life Skills and includes Work Based Learning Below Level 2.

**These figures are under review.

Source Table 5: Starts (in 000's) on WBL provision at the end of each quarter year from October 2000 to July 2004 by programme. Statistical First Release, ILR/SFR05 14 December 2004

SCOTLAND

Though similar, arrangements in Scotland differ somewhat. Training involves a balanced programme of activity, including on- and off-the-job training, study for a SVQ Level 3 (SCQF 6) or above and Core Skills in Numeracy, Communications, IT, Problem Solving and Working with Others at a minimum level of Intermediate 1 (SCQF 4). Other sector specific qualifications may be included to meet business needs. Training providers must achieve the MA standards defined in the Scottish Quality Management System, the quality assurance mechanism used by the Local Enterprise Companies (LECs). Training providers make a contract with LECs on agreed training provision and related funding.

Skillseekers (Scotland) training includes on- and off-the-job training and study up to Level 3 (SCQF level 6), for 16-24 year olds in employment or on a training placement. Funding is provided by government and is paid to training providers as a contribution towards training costs, on the young person's achievement of specific milestones. The enterprise network sets funding levels that reflect the age of the individual and importance of occupational sector to local economy.

([1]) Scottish Enterprise is a government-funded network of a government development agency Scottish Enterprise National and 12 Local Enterprise Companies (LECs), which was set up in 1991 to provide a more fully integrated economic development agency.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

ENTRY LEVEL

Entry level qualifications are designed for learners working below GCSE level because they lack skills to operate at higher levels. They provide access to NVQ, GCSE and other level 1 qualifications. They are occupationally specific. There are vocational 'taster-courses' that are designed for transition from compulsory schooling to the post-16 phase. Basic qualifications are available in areas such as life or independent living skills, literacy and numeracy.

ENTRY TO EMPLOYMENT (E2E)

Entry to Employment (E2E) is an entry to level 1 work-based learning programme for young people (aged 16-18) who are not yet ready to enter an Apprenticeship, employment or structured learning at level 2. Each programme is flexible but students must undertake learning in three core strands of the curriculum: basic and/or key skills, vocational skills and development (in formal and informal environments), personal and social development. Although not qualification driven, E2E must provide learners with an entitlement to work towards external qualifications (or units of it) and awards, appropriate to their ability and potential across all three strands. The E2E students are not restricted by time limit to complete the programme. Learners are recruited through referral from Connexions, a guidance service (see Section 9.1), or directly from the provider or support agencies (Social Services, Youth Offending Teams, etc.). The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) works in partnership with the Sector Skills Councils, local providers including voluntary organisations and awarding bodies on this programme in the context of local needs.

NEW DEAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

New Deal is a government's programme to help people move into and remain in work. The New Deal for Young People is for those aged 18 to 24 and claiming Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA). It aims to give young people the skills, confidence and motivation to help them find work. Participants enter a Gateway of intensive jobsearch and specialist

help, and those still claiming JSA at the end of this, have a choice of options: full time education and training; training/work placement on the voluntary sector; or training/work placement through the Environment Task Force.

Participants can access one or a combination of options. In addition, an employment subsidy is available at any stage of the programme, providing an incentive for employers to employ a New Deal participant. An initiative, StepUp, builds on the New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 Plus by providing transitional jobs for those who have not secured sustained employment through New Deal.

[1] Scottish Enterprise is a government-funded network of a government development agency Scottish Enterprise National and 12 local enterprise companies (LECs), which was set up in 1991 to provide a more fully integrated economic development agency.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

The UK does not have a clearly defined sector of initial vocational and training, which can be termed 'post-secondary (non tertiary)'. Courses and qualifications at level 4 and above of the National Qualifications Framework are considered to be part of Higher Education (described in 0407), even where they do not lead to a traditional degree. IVET courses and qualifications at level 3 of the NQF form part of the offer of further education colleges or other parts of the 'learning and skills sector' and are described in 0403 (IVET at upper secondary level) or 0404 (Apprenticeship training).

The table below indicates the number of students gaining HE qualifications, including sub-degree qualifications, by type of course and subject group.

Table 1: Students obtaining higher education in the United Kingdom by type of course and subject group, 2002/03 (thousands)						
		POSTGRADUATE				
	SUB-DEGREE 4	FIRST DEGREE	PHD AND EQUIVALENT	MASTERS AND OTHERS	TOTAL	TOTAL HIGHER EDUCATION
MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY	0.1	6.1	0.9	1.7	2.7	8.9
SUBJECTS ALLIED TO MEDICINE	27.8	22.3	0.8	5.8	6.5	56.6
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	1.5	23.2	1.9	3.8	5.7	30.5
VET. SCIENCE, AGRICULTURE AND RELATED	1.2	2.7	0.3	0.9	1.1	5.0
PHYSICAL SCIENCES	1.0	12.1	1.8	2.7	4.5	17.8

MATHEMATICAL AND COMPUTER SCIENCES	6.2	22.5	0.6	7.8	8.5	37.2
ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY	4.0	18.8	1.7	6.7	8.3	21.1
ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING AND PLANNING	1.8	6.3	0.1	3.2	3.3	11.4
SOCIAL SCIENCES 5	9.2	35.9	1.2	30.1	21.3	66.5
BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES	11.0	38.7	0.5	27.1	27.6	77.3
LIBRARIANSHIP AND INFO SCIENCE	0.8	7.2		3.0	3.0	11.0
LANGUAGES	2.5	19.7	0.7	3.8	4.6	26.8
HUMANITIES	1.0	13.1	0.7	3.4	4.1	18.2
CREATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN	3.9	26.1	0.3	4.8	5.0	35.0
EDUCATION 6	7.6	9.3	0.5	32.1	32.6	49.6
COMBINED, GENERAL	14.8	9.3		4.8	4.8	28.9
ALL SUBJECTS	94.4	273.4	11.8	131.9	143.7	511.5

Source Table 4.8 Statistics of Education: Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom 2004 edition.

There were 2.4 million (1.0 million of whom part-time) higher education students in the UK in the academic year 2003-04, compared with 1.1 million in 1990-01. Amongst popular subjects studied by full-time students were business and administrative studies, social studies, and subjects allied to medicine. There was also an increased intake of students in applied sciences, mathematics and engineering compared with 2002-2003.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

In the UK there is no separate identification of 'vocational' higher education. Most institutions offer both vocational and general courses, although in differing proportions. There is a wide choice, with some 50,000 degree and non-degree courses available through the common application body (UCAS).

Key policy concerns include:

- Raising participation levels; the aim is that 50% of each age cohort should participate in higher education to degree or sub-degree level before age 30, a threshold already achieved in Scotland and Northern Ireland
- Expanding shorter, sub-degree level courses, including Foundation Degrees
- Widening participation by under-represented social groups;
- Funding the expanding sector within the constraints of resources; this has led to the scrapping of grants for living expenses in favour of student loans and to the contentious decision to allow HE institutions in England to increase tuition fees
- Developing a clear link between HE learning and the skills needed in employment;

The sector includes universities, colleges of HE, and specialist institutions, eg for art and agriculture. Higher education courses are also increasingly offered in further education colleges. All universities in the UK have independent governance as chartered institutions, benefit from state funding through national funding councils and are subject to quality control for both teaching and research activity. The UK has 91 universities.

The Open University (OU) operates on a different basis compared to other universities. It has been offering degrees and other qualifications through distance learning since the 1970s. The OU is a major national institution that has also developed non-traditional pathways to HE qualifications.

Government funding for universities is channelled through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), the Department of Employment and Learning Northern Ireland and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), to support teaching programmes and a core of research funding. Much research is separately funded across the UK by the Office of Science and Technology and through research Councils.

In Scotland, a merger of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) and the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) is planned. Currently, SHEFC distributes public money for teaching and research into higher education institutions (HEIs) in Scotland and SFEFC distributes public money to further education colleges in Scotland). The merger will give greater comparability and transparency in the way that different types of institution and levels of courses are funded in tertiary education.

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Widening participation is a key aspect of UK policy. Universities are funded for work that broadens their social intake.

Although A levels are the traditional route to Higher Education for young people and good grades are essential for the more prestigious universities and courses, many alternatives are accepted, including vocational qualifications at a suitable level. Access programmes, normally offered in the further education sector, prepare mature students who lack the necessary educational background for entry into HE. There is renewed interest in extending access arrangements to younger entrants.

Some HEIs provide foundation courses for students who do not possess the relevant entry qualifications for their chosen degree course.

Increasing numbers of adults take higher education courses at both sub-degree and higher levels. Flexible learning arrangements, including part-time degrees and open learning make it easier to combine study with work. Credit may be given for other qualifications (eg professional qualifications or HNDs), reducing the study time required for the degree. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) awards credit for demonstrated learning that has occurred outside formal qualifications and can apply to university entry, as well as to other forms of learning.

The UK higher education sector has a number of sub-degrees HE qualifications and a three-level system of graduate qualifications: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate. These reflect closely the structures contained in the Bologna process.

SUB- DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS

Until the introduction of Foundation Degrees in 2001, the most usual sub-degree HE qualifications were the Higher National Certificates and Diploma (HNCs and HNDs), which are vocational qualifications in their own right. HNDs are normally offered as full time, two year courses or through a longer part-time route, with HNCs normally two years part time. Well-developed articulation arrangements are in place for HNC/D students to progress to degree courses. A wide range of HND courses are on offer, particularly in Scotland, with some involving a combination of college and workplace learning.

Higher Education Certificates (one year) and Higher Education Diplomas (two years) are also offered and may serve as qualifications in their own right or as stepping-stones to a first degree. Higher Education Diplomas are widely taken as part of the education and training of nurses.

FOUNDATION DEGREES

Introduced in 2001 in England and Wales, Foundation Degrees are a key part of the government's strategy for higher education. They are shorter than Bachelors degrees, mainly in applied and vocational subjects, and designed to be taught in further education colleges. They are intended to solve skills shortages, preparing more HE students for the world of work and widen participation. Features are:

- Employer involvement;
- Skills/knowledge application in the workplace;
- Credit accumulation and transfer;
- Progression within work and/or to an honours degree.

BACHELOR DEGREE

Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Education (BEd) and Bachelor of Science (BSc) courses usually last three years. Some courses last four years, involving placements in industry or periods abroad; these have the same academic standing as three-year courses. Most courses are modular in structure, with a compulsory common core. Courses usually include a project or dissertation based on independent research.

In Scotland it is normal for students to achieve an Ordinary Degree after three years and a more specialist Honours Degree after four years and several of the older universities award the MA as a first degree instead of the BA.

MASTERS DEGREES (MA AND MSc ETC)

These are post-graduate courses and may take one-year full time or two years part time. They are usually self-funded; entry is dependent on results at bachelor level. There is a greater component of independent working, including a dissertation or thesis based on independent research. Some Masters degrees, such as MEng, are first degrees available for more able students. They are at a level between honours degree and Masters degree.

POST-GRADUATE CERTIFICATES (EG PGCE)

Some post-graduate courses are below Masters level and are intended to provide preparation for a specific occupation, following completion of a general degree. One of the best-known examples is the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), which prepares graduates for a career in teaching and is a pre-requisite for Qualified Teacher Status for those who do not have B Ed as their first degree.

DOCTORATE (PHD)

Entry onto a PhD is dependent on results at either Masters or Bachelor level. PhDs are funded but it is up to the student to gain that funding. They take at least three years to complete, the first year (or first two years) of which may consist of an MPhil (Masters of Philosophy) qualification. Part time PhDs may take the candidate considerably longer to complete.

PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT

Possession of a relevant first degree is essential for entry to further training and employment in some professions; this is true for doctors, dentists and veterinary surgeons. For engineers there is an alternative, but much less used route; for accountants and lawyers, postgraduate courses following an unrelated first degree are much more common.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTS, IN THE LIGHT OF NATIONAL TRADITIONS

In the UK, the decision on access to further education beyond statutory school age is left to the individual except in cases where a job requires certain entry qualifications (an individualistic approach). Although government places increasing importance on upskilling the workforce, training policies are left to employers (a voluntarist approach). The UK performs comparatively well on short, workplace training courses, but overall levels of qualification compare unfavourably with a number of other EU countries.

In recent years, vocational education has received greater attention from policy-makers. Governments in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have identified priorities in lifelong learning and adult learning, in particular. For example, the Lifelong Strategy for Scotland ([1]) emphasises the 'cradle to grave' idea of lifelong learning and widening access to learning for all citizens. In Wales, the Assembly's government's strategy ([2]) for the promotion of lifelong learning emphasises broadening learning pathways.

The government has set priorities for lifelong learning in the UK. These are as follows:

- Developing skills and knowledge for a productive workforce through fostering creativity, innovative thinking and enterprise;
- Increasing and widening participation in learning including basic skills (see Glossary);
- Raising standards in teaching and learning.

The 2001 Budget report set out the government's belief that although voluntary approaches have secured increased participation in work place training, they have not been sufficient given the scale of the problem: the UK lacks the broad foundation skills needed for sustainable development and the distribution of skills is uneven across the population. Since the Learning and Skills Act of 2000, the government outlined its plans in two consecutive Skills White Papers. In particular, the latest one published in April 2005 ([3]) outlines a series of action plans to raise the skills levels. Emphasis is placed on:

- Putting employers' needs first by ensuring easy access to high-value training;
- Helping employers use skills to achieve a more ambitious longer term business success;
- Motivating and supporting learners;
- Enabling colleges and training providers to be more responsive to employers' and learners' needs;
- Building up a national Skills Alliance based on a partnership between government, trade unions and employers.

Underpinning all these reforms will be the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) ([4]) that is being developed to provide a simple qualification structure for individuals and employers.

In its White Paper, the government has recognised weakness in leadership and management skills in SMEs, particularly at middle management level. The National Employer Training Programme (NETP) will carry forward core approach to Employer Training Pilots (ETPs) (see section 0504) on low skills and will also include support for leadership and management development in SMEs, with a focus on coaching and on-the-job development. It will support over 17,000 SME managers by March 2008.

In its White Paper *21st Century Skills* of 2003 ([5]), the government introduced a new entitlement to free learning to anyone without a good foundation of employability skills. This would enable them to get the training needed to achieve a level 2 qualification ([6]), and will take effect from 2006/07. There is also an increased government support (in terms of funding and access) for higher level skills at technician, higher craft or associated professional level (level 3 qualification) ([7]), in areas of sectoral or regional priority.

Flexibility exists at many points in the UK education systems, helping people who lack formal qualifications or training earlier in life to achieve qualifications later on.

Nevertheless, barriers to learning are particularly strong for those who are socially excluded or at risk.

In line with the key principles of the 14-19 reform and Skills Strategy, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was amended and extended in 2002 to prohibit discrimination against disabled people in relation to employment and vocational training.

Considerable research into the individual, social and economic barriers to continuing participation have highlighted the need for a major change. Approximately 9% of each age cohort still leaves school unqualified and without progressing to further education, training or a job with training. Moreover some seven to eight million adults are identified as lacking in basic skills. As such, finding ways that encourage large numbers of people to be involved in learning remains a key policy issue. Alongside the existing mechanisms for anticipating future skills on national level, SSCs and awarding bodies respectively review the labour market needs and uptake of qualification. Many employers' organisations conduct their own surveys of members, their perception of skills shortages in particular.

AIMS AND TARGETS TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION FOR SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS OR SKILLS

The National Skills Task Force Final Report: Skills for All (DfEE 2000) (not Scotland) identified the following as the main UK skills gaps and shortages:

- Basic skills – literacy and numeracy;
- Transferable skills;
- Mathematical skills;
- Intermediate level skills – specific occupational skills in many craft and associate professional occupations;
- Specialist ICT skills;
- Major adult skills gaps – notably, the large proportion of the adult workforce with no level 2 qualifications.

The Report proposes the following targets for 2010:

- To reduce the proportion of adults with low numeracy and literacy levels from 20% to 10%;
- To increase the proportion of 25 year olds with a level 3 qualification from 41% to 70%;
- To increase the proportion of the adult workforce with a Level 2 qualification from 68% to 80%.

For current government targets see section 2.

CLASSIFICATION OF TYPES OF ADULT LEARNING

Lifelong learning in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is often taken to refer to learning that takes place after the young person has finished formal education and training. In Scotland lifelong learning has a broader 'cradle to grave' definition. The usual definition of 'continuing' in the UK context refers to learners over 19 years of age. Classifications vary. The table below shows commonly used classification. The National

Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) identifies several different forms of learning under two headings:

Table 1: Taught learning/Self-directed learning	
TAUGHT LEARNING	SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING
Leading to qualifications Leading to skills that can be used in jobs Courses for driving, arts, crafts or leading to any practical skill Evening or other adult classes; Learning from packages provided by a provider; Any other taught instruction	Studying without taking part in a courses; Supervised training while actually doing a job; Time spent keeping up to date with developments; Deliberately improving skills or knowledge without taking part in a course

A distinction is often made between formal, informal, and non-formal learning, whether in the workplace or community or using ICT as the medium. For workplace learning, the usual IALS etc. categories are used.

As the different sections of this overview indicate, a plethora of learning opportunities are available to the motivated learner. The Internet is increasing the possibilities exponentially. Access, however, remains unequal.

In Scotland, the main pathways for continuing education and training include undertaking work-based vocational qualifications or Professional Qualifications (such as Continued Professional Development). Many Scots undertake learning in the community; through the library services of local authorities, and in voluntary organisations. Adult Education can be undertaken either in the community, through voluntary organisations, in companies and businesses, further education colleges and in higher education institutions. Responsibility for policy advice on community learning and development has been transferred from the Scottish Executive (SE) to Communities Scotland, the SE's agency for housing and regeneration. In its new guidance on community learning and development, which was published in 2004, the SE included national priorities for community learning and development.

([1]) Scottish Executive. *Learning through Life: Life through Learning. The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland*. February 2003. Available from Internet: www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/lism.pdf [cited 3.5.2005].

([2]) National Assembly for Wales. *The learning country: a paving document: a comprehensive education and lifelong learning programme to 2010 in Wales*. Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales, 2001. Available from Internet: www.wales.gov.uk [cited 13.5.2005].

([3]) DfES. *White Paper: Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work*. March 2005.

([4]) www.qca.org.uk. See also Section 2.2.2 and Glossary.

([5]) DfES. *21st century skills: realising our potential*. London: DfES, 2003. Available from Internet: www.dfes.gov.uk [cited 13.05.05].

([6]) A full level 2 refers to any qualification equivalent in standard and breadth to 5 GCSEs at A*-C or National Vocational Qualification at level 2 (see Fig. 2 and 4).

([7]) A full level 3 refers to a standard equivalent to two A-levels or a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 (see Fig. 2 and 4).

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

GENERAL/LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

Training in the UK has traditionally been 'voluntary' on the part of employers, rather than 'regulated' by the state, or 'negotiated by' the social partners, thus there is little legal obligation for employers to train staff, except where licensing of organisations or individuals is a requirement. Except in the construction and engineering industries, firms do not pay training levies. Although government places increasing importance on up-skilling the workforce, training policies are left to individual employers. The UK performs well comparatively on short, workplace training courses, but overall levels of qualification compare unfavourably with a number of other advanced EU countries.

The extent of collective agreements vary by industry and sector, although training has tended to be a matter left more to the employer. Unions are taking a stronger interest in training than previously. But the link between training, access to a job, salary level and progression is less clearly defined or regulated than in countries where a social partnership approach structures these arrangements.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

The main bodies responsible for developing and implementing national policy for training are undergoing major reforms, with the creation of the national and local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) (in England only) and the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), (UK-wide), which leads and licenses the new Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). Each is referred to elsewhere in this overview. The main bodies involved include:

- Department for Education and Skills, The Welsh Assembly, The Assembly of Northern Ireland, the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- Learning and Skills Councils;
- SSDA, Sector Skills Councils (former National Training Organisations);
- Government Offices for the Regions;
- Basic Skills Agency;
- National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education;
- Learning and Skills Development Agency (England);
- Local education authorities;
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development;

- Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (and Local Enterprise Companies -LECs).

PARTICIPATION RATES

In England the government target to increasing adult (aged 16 to 69 outside continuous full-time education) participation in learning as measured by the National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) series from 74% to 76% in 1997 was met in 2000 and now stands at 76.4%.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

The regulatory authorities QCA in England, the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) in Wales and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland need to know that learners on the qualification will still receive the safeguards they would expect from any other accredited qualification. To this end, the awarding body in the partnership needs to provide the regulatory authorities with a copy of the partnership agreement that clearly states where the division of responsibility for the qualification lies. This is usually a summary of the remit between the two organisations and will guarantee the quality assurance of the qualification and the protection and safeguard of learners should one organisation remove itself, either voluntarily or otherwise, from the partnership. Where the recognised awarding body does not quality assure the qualification itself but devolves this responsibility to the partner, it needs to conduct audits to ensure that proper quality assurance is taking place.

Certification and qualification bodies enforce, maintain and improve standards and seek performance through quality criteria. They all have internal quality assurance processes, alongside other mechanisms to ensure that high standards are maintained.

External regulator: To provide complete assurance to end-users, the certification and qualification bodies obtained external verification of their own processes through direct accreditation as a certification body by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS). UKAS is the only national accreditation body recognised by the UK government to assess organisations providing certification services judged against internationally recognised standards (EN45011 and ISO/IEC17024) that demonstrate the competence, impartiality and performance capability of our assessment processes. UKAS audits the bodies yearly to ensure that these processes are fully in accordance with the standards.

There is an established framework of quality assurance mechanism at both University and School Level. The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) is responsible to the Academic Board for maintaining quality systems including the appointment of external examiners and the validation, annual monitoring and review of programmes. Procedures are set out in the ASC Handbook, with details illustrating the quality assurance cycle.

While much initial training is government-funded, the employer funds most workplace continuing training. Much continuing training is provided in-company or through specialist consultants or agencies. Most community and leisure learning provision, while it may be part-funded by a body such as the local authority, carries a financial cost to the individual. At the same time the public further and higher education establishments are major training providers. A wide range of private training organisations is involved. The following list of mechanisms and providers indicates many of the important ones, but is not exhaustive.

EMPLOYERS

The IES Report on Adult Learning in England indicates that over 80 % of firms with 25+ employees provide off the job training, and over 90% of those with 200+ employees. Much of this training concerns induction, health and safety – and four out of five employers provide job specific training. The most common form of trainers is training companies, followed by further education colleges, then equipment providers. Most on the job training is provided by a line manager, supervisor or an experienced colleague, followed by specialist training staff. Increasingly, IT based packages are used for training.

Considerable differences exist between employers in the same industry or sector. The type and quality of training also varies. About 40 % of employer-funded training leads to qualification or part qualification, and a considerable proportion related to induction rather than medium term skills development.

The above Report categorises employers by their approach to learning as: non-trainers; ad hoc or informal trainers; formal, systematic trainers; and, learning organisations.

Investors in People (IiP) are a nationally recognised business standard that encourages employers to invest in training. IiP UK is an executive non-departmental public body set up in 1993. The award maintains a national standard. The IiP award indicates that a company or workplace has a high commitment to develop all employees, reviews training for all employees regularly, takes action to train and develop employees effectively, and evaluates the outcome of training and HR development.

Training is available through a wide range of private and public providers. This includes:

- Further education colleges;
- Higher education providers;
- Local authority adult provision;
- The Open University;
- National extension college;
- National open college network;
- BBC education and other TV media;
- Home Office, National Health Service and other major public sector organisations;
- Private consultancies and training agencies;
- Trade unions;
- Churches and voluntary organisations;
- The growing availability of public and private web-based provision.

The further education sector in the UK (2004-05) consists of 465 colleges (381 in England), of which 102 are Sixth Form Colleges providing mainly full time academic courses to students aged 16-19. The remainder of the sector comprises general further education colleges, tertiary colleges, specialist colleges (mainly in land-based provision and art and design) and colleges that cater for people who have learning difficulties or disabilities, or both. All of these provide both initial and continuing vocational education

and training, catering for both young people and adults and normally with a range of both short and long courses.

The UK government welfare to work policy is delivered through a number of training programmes targeted at specific groups of unemployed and vulnerable (New Deal, Ambition Programme, etc). Since 2001, in England work-based learning for long-term unemployed adults has been delivered through Jobcentre plus under the DWP. The LSCs in England are also running a residential training programme for unemployed disabled adults, to secure their employment or self-employment. Trainees receive an allowance and their residential costs are met by the DfES. Over 50 courses of vocational training are available, many leading to NVQs. Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) is responsible for inspecting a wide range of work-based learning including adult training for unemployed, prisoners and other vulnerable groups.

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Retraining is more accurately understood as part of the national skills agenda, than as a specific response to decline in particular areas or industries.

Large-scale retraining programmes tend not to be the approach taken by government, nor in the regions or localities. Very large numbers of people have retrained to participate in tertiary occupations rather than manufacturing, as the latter has continued to decline. The labour market tends not to be highly regulated, thus people can move from occupation to occupation in a more fluid way than in countries where labour market entry is regulated for most occupations.

The Regional Development Agencies have an important role. England has 9 RDAs, and devolved government in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also leads on regional development. The role of RDAs is to provide effective and well co-ordinated regional economic development and regeneration, and to enable each region to increase its competitiveness. London now has an elected mayor, though the powers are limited, and the North East may experiment first with an elected regional assembly.

In England, the Learning and Skills Council leads on the national, regional, and local skills agenda. The National LSC has two main committees: an adult learning committee and a young people's learning committee. It has a clear responsibility to develop the national skills strategy and to lead strategically in each local area to raise skills levels, participation in education and training for those aged 16 and over, and to improve local provision.

Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) focus on meeting employers' skills needs at craft and technical level. Initially aimed at further education colleges, the programme has been extended to include work based learning providers. There is a developing network of over 150 CoVEs across the English regions, covering a wide range of key economic sectors. CoVEs should demonstrate links with schools and progression to employers to ensure that the developing network is tightly focused on meeting local employers' skills needs.

THE NEW DEAL

New Deal is a key part of the Government's Welfare to Work strategy. It is an active labour market policy designed to move people into work quickly, and provide those who need it with extra help to improve their employability.

The New Deal for Young People (NDYP) and New Deal 25+ are mandatory programmes for those who are unemployed for six and eighteen months respectively. New Deal for Partners, New Deal 50+, New Deal for Disabled People and New Deal for Lone Parents are voluntary programmes.

As well as providing Personal Adviser support, the New Deal consists of:

- Activation through incentives, e.g. working family tax credit;
- Activation through sanctions, e.g. young people must meet criteria for seeking and applying for jobs and taking training opportunities;
- Help through training and improving vocational skills;
- Help through job search support/counselling and improved job matching;
- Help through subsidies, including subsidised placements.

Since April 2002, in England and Wales, state provided work-based learning for long term unemployed adults has been delivered through the Jobcentre Plus, under the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Scotland delivers its Adult training through Training for Work. The LSCs in England are also running a residential training programme for unemployed disabled adults, to secure their employment or self-employment. Trainees receive an allowance and their residential costs are met by the DfES. Over 50 courses of vocational training are available, many leading to NVQs. Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) is responsible for inspecting a wide range of work-based learning including adult training for unemployed, prisoners and other vulnerable groups.

In spring 2005, 25.8 per cent of employees who were classed as disabled and work-limiting disabled had received job-related training in the last thirteen weeks, compared with 30.6 per cent of all employees. The economically inactive tend to receive job related training of a longer duration than that received by employees.

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

A RANGE OF APPROACHES TO WORKPLACE LEARNING

Government, the CBI and the trade unions are encouraging a range of approaches to workplace learning. To raise the profile of workplace learning and to involve the trade unions in a more focused way, legislation now enables the election or appointment of learning representatives by trade union branches. The Union Learning Fund has been set up with government funding through the TUC, to encourage an innovative approach whereby unions extend the training they give, for example to tackling basic skills weaknesses among their members. In Scotland the Scottish Executive funds the Scottish Union Learning Fund (SULF) as part of the strategy to tackle skills issues.

EMPLOYER TRAINING PILOTS (ETPs)

The ETPs encourage employers to train low-skilled employees. They were launched in 2002 and reimburse employers the cost of granting low-skilled employees paid time off

work to pursue education and training courses. By the end of 2005, an estimated 18 000 employers and 80 000 employees, who lack basic skills or vocational qualifications at level 2 were trained.

BUSINESS LEARNING ACCOUNTS (BLAs)

The Scottish Executive is in the process of piloting 300 Business Learning Accounts (BLAs) to stimulate learning in small businesses. The scheme provides businesses with the tools to link training needs with business growth and funding to support the businesses' own investment.

UNIVERSITY FOR INDUSTRY/LEARNDIRECT, AND SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY FOR INDUSTRY/LEARNDIRECT SCOTLAND

Learndirect and Learndirect Scotland stimulate demand for learning by providing easily accessible information and advice to potential learners about all kinds of opportunities. Learndirect Scotland provides learners with advice on learning opportunities available throughout Scotland, including information on childcare facilities. Its network of over 460 Learndirect Scotland branded learning centres takes learning into the community, making access to learning easier and more flexible. These learning centres are located in libraries; shopping centres, leisure centres and other locally based facilities. Learndirect Scotland is also working closely with businesses, providing advice on training needs and to identify appropriate courses.

For adults:

ADULT LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN SCOTLAND

While research suggests that in Scotland 800,000 adults may have low levels of literacy and numeracy, the report 'Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland' contains recommendations for transforming Scotland's literacy service. Since 2001, £51 million (€71 million) of new funding has been invested and 71,000 new learners have been helped.

Learning Connections, the national research and development unit created within Communities Scotland, offering consolidated national advice. In 2004, a national awareness raising campaign – The Big Plus – was launched to help reduce low levels of literacy and numeracy and encourage people to seek support in improving their reading, writing and number skills.

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The strategy of government relies on encouraging individuals to take up learning and training opportunities, with a strong focus on the learner's needs rather than on the institutional interest of the providers. The 'New Deal' system of placing requirements on young jobseekers is the clearest exception to this rule, where conditions must be met before there is an entitlement to benefit.

The following is an illustrative list of initiatives and priorities that are intended to improve access to continuing training, but is not intended to be exhaustive:

For young people:

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES (EMAs)

Piloting of EMAs in England and Scotland suggests that education maintenance allowances (EMAs) targeted at young people from less well-off backgrounds and linked to course attendance and progression requirements can be a factor in improving levels of participation and retention, particularly in deprived areas. Recent legislation has prepared the way for EMAs to become a national scheme across the UK, from 2004/5.

RIGHT TO TIME OFF TO STUDY

(UK-wide) gives a statutory right to certain 16 and 17 year olds who are in employment (part or full-time, permanent or temporary) to paid time off work for study or training. The employer must provide 'reasonable' paid time off for the young person to study or train towards an approved qualification.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY LEARNING

The UK's devolved administrations sponsor initiatives and schemes to encourage learning in the community. Research suggests that many such schemes may overcome the barriers that more formal learning raises.

BRINGING LEARNING CLOSER TO THE LEARNER

BECTA is responsible for ensuring that providers make maximum use of ICT, and to ensure that opportunities to learn are tailored to the needs of a wide range of people. 'UK on line' is a government-funded campaign to ensure that organisations and individuals make best use of Internet learning, and to encourage people to make maximum use of the learning potential of ICT.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNTS (ILAs)

This initiative was an innovative scheme intended to widen participation in learning and encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own learning. An individual could open an ILA and access a range of discounts on the costs of learning provided they make a contribution of at least €37 themselves. A wide range of learning was eligible for support under the initiative giving account holders the broadest choice possible. There were, however, concerns about the quality of some of the learning receiving support and following allegations of fraud the scheme was closed in November 2001. A similar scheme of Bursaries is available to teachers in their third and fourth year: they decide how to spend the money on their own personal/professional development. The ILA scheme resumed in Wales in 2004. In Scotland, a new scheme is under review, which will initially target low-income learners and will allow the learner up to £200 (€340) support per year.

Flexibility exists at many points in the UK education systems, such that people who are highly motivated to learn and to gain qualifications can usually find a way into the systems. In school-age qualifications and, increasingly, degrees and other higher education qualifications, access is open irrespective of age. There is a long tradition of people who lacked formal qualifications or training earlier in life achieving qualifications flexibly later on. Nevertheless, barriers to learning are strong for many people, particularly those who are socially excluded or at risk, and distribution of qualifications and access continue to show marked inequalities. Bridging the Gap, (not Scotland) published in 1999, is an influential research study showing how patterns of social deprivation and exclusion from access to initial and continuing education and training are closely linked.

Considerable research into the individual, social and economic aspects of barriers to continuing participation have highlighted the need for a major change. This has had

some influence on government policy. In a scenario where approximately 9 % of each age cohort still leaves school unqualified and without progressing to further education, training or a job with training, and where some seven or eight million adults are identified as lacking in basic skills, finding ways that encourage large numbers of people to be involved in learning remains a key policy issue.

In spring 2005, 14 per cent of people of working age had received job-related training in the last four weeks. Employees were more likely to receive job-related training than self-employed, the unemployed or the economically inactive.

Access courses to HE are recognised by the Quality Assurance Agency for higher education (QAA) through their inclusion in a national scheme. A Student who successfully completes an Access course is awarded a certificate bearing the QAA Access logo.

QAA regulates the national recognition of Access courses. It is responsible for assuring the quality of recognised Access courses, and the adequacy of standards of student achievement on these courses. QAA has established a scheme through which it can meet these responsibilities, The QAA Recognition Scheme for Access to Higher Education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (the recognition Scheme).

The QAA Recognition Scheme is not applicable in Scotland. The Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) initiative works in partnership with further education colleges and higher education institutions within Scotland, to co-ordinate their access initiatives and develops progression pathways. Students who successfully complete SWAP programmes – and gain a positive tutor reference – are guaranteed a place on an appropriate higher education course (HNC/D or degree) either in either in a Further Education College or Higher Education Institution.

Articulation arrangements also exist for learners progressing from Higher National Certificate/Higher National Diploma's to degrees. Under these arrangements learners undertake an Higher National Certificate or Higher National Diploma's and articulated onto the second or third year of a specified degree programme. The amount of credit offered, for learning at Higher National level, and level of entry to the degree programme by higher education institutions depends on the specific demands of the course, which the learner wishes to join. A comprehensive outline of the existing Higher National-degree articulation routes is available at www.napier.ac.uk/mapping/college.aspx

This overview indicates elsewhere many of the initiatives that government and others have taken. Five such policies are cited below:

- 'Work-Life Balance' policies;
- The expansion of higher education;
- Emphasis on developing Foundation Degrees (NB not in Scotland);
- The reform of management and administrative frameworks for VET;
- An emphasis on e-learning, community and workplace learning. The intention is to put the learner at the centre.

The UK's system allows for flexible access, although the evidence is that many experience the barriers to learning as strong. In terms of workplace learning for example, there is little emphasis in several sectors on progression beyond qualifications at level 2

or 3. Even qualifications included in the National Qualifications Framework often lack units that would of themselves encourage successful applicants to progress to more advanced qualifications, or to preparation for management.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

Within the UK, pre-employment initial vocational education and training (IVET) may be undertaken at secondary school, or at a Further Education (FE) college, or with other training providers (for indication of range, see below). There are two forms of IVET.

- General vocational education is undertaken either at school (for those aged up to 18) or at a FE college (for those aged 16+). Successful completion may lead to direct employment or to further training, within a FE college or with another training provider.
- Programmes of specific training are undertaken at FE college and allow entry to a particular trade or profession (such as hairdressing, construction trades, accountancy, etc.). This form of VET is a blend both of initial training (IVET: meeting pre-entry requirements) and continuing training (CVET: providing the recognised vocational qualification for practice within a particular trade or profession).

Thus, teachers in state secondary schools will deliver initial vocational education only, through the study of vocational subjects. Teachers within FE colleges may also teach those same subjects. College teachers may also be involved in work-based training to both pre-employment students and in-employment trainees. This training may be counted either as IVET or CVET (or with elements of both, as described above). The range of VET programmes will be offered to full-time attending and part-time attending students/trainees at varying levels of qualifications from initial to advanced.

Within the UK, there is no unified VET structure and provision is profuse. Historically, VET has developed in an ad hoc way, rather than through central planning. Nonetheless, VET provision can be summarised according to the various contexts within which it takes place.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Some secondary schools provide pre-employment vocational education for 16-18 year-olds. At age 14, students may choose to follow a two-year programme, which includes vocational courses alongside compulsory academic subjects leading to a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) for each course successfully completed. Currently, eight vocational GCSE subjects exist, with more planned for introduction in September 2004. Advanced level (A-level) General Certificates in Education are also available in vocational subjects with examinations taken at 18 or older. Neither GCSEs or A-levels contain a work-based component.

More specific General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ, introduced in 1993) are also available for students in the 16-18 age-range, either at foundation or intermediate level. They can be undertaken in one of 14 vocational areas. GNVQ qualifications will be withdrawn from 2005-07 and replaced by similar awards offered by alternative

examination bodies. In Scotland, students work towards qualifications approved by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

All teachers in secondary schools, including those teaching vocational subjects, must hold the recognised teaching qualification of a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Entry requirements include the holding of a degree in the subject to be taught. The PGCE is obtained via a one-year period of training, based at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) that includes practical teaching experience supported by education studies. Following certification, and a satisfactory year of probation on first appointment, the successful trainee is awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). For further details, see section 060201 of the Detailed Thematic Analysis on training of VET teachers and trainers: Pre-service training for IVET teachers.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN FE COLLEGES (BOTH IVET AND CVET PROVISION)

At age 16, students may transfer from secondary school to 6th form or FE college choosing from a mix of academic and vocational studies. Again, vocational GCSEs, A-levels and GNVQ qualifications are available as well as a mix of professionally accredited certificates and diplomas. Students at FE colleges may attend full- or part-time. Many of the latter would be in employment and released by their employers to attend their college-based training in varying patterns from one day per week to block periods of several continuous weeks. Students aged 16-18 may also be pursuing a modern apprenticeship (MA) scheme, which formally combines employment-based training with training provided either by a college or other training provider.

Collectively, FE colleges make up the largest sector of VET providers within State provision for both pre-employment and in-employment training for all, including adults, from the age of 16 upwards. Colleges differ in size and emphasis and the range of trades, crafts, and professions catered for, but all essentially offer a common curriculum of nationally-recognised qualifications. Some colleges are designated by their specialism, as is the case of colleges for agriculture and/or horticulture.

Vocational teachers in FE colleges may be appointed without a teaching qualification. Their vocational/trade qualifications, plus substantial experience in their specialist area has been, and continues to be, the requirements for appointment to a teaching post in further education. Recently, however, a new requirement that such teachers, whether newly-appointed or already in post, obtain a full teaching qualification has been introduced (for details, see entry National standards for teacher training programmes in Section 060102 of Detailed Thematic Analysis on training of VET teachers and training: Development of policies for VET teachers). Training towards a full teaching qualification is provided by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for both pre-service and in-service trainees. Pre-service training consists of a one-year full-time programme, which includes assessment of practical teaching abilities, together with a range of supporting educational studies. The same programmes are available to in-service teachers on a part-time basis, over (usually) two years.

FE colleges also employ "learning support workers." This term covers a wide range of titles and roles, including student advisory responsibilities. Further details are in the entry Learning Support Workers in 0602: Types of Teachers and Trainers in IVET.

OTHER TRAINING PROVIDERS (BOTH IVET AND CVET PROVISION)

There is a diverse range of provision within the post-compulsory education and training sector in addition to 6th form and FE colleges. This includes VET within enterprises, voluntary organisations, the prison service, uniformed services (police, armed services, emergency services), health and care services. There are, for example, many

independent colleges (e.g. secretarial colleges for secretarial and administrative training). There are also many private language training schools. None of these private or independent colleges require government approval, but about 100 of them are registered with the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education.

There are also numerous private training providers contracted by employers and local authorities to deliver specified training programmes (e.g. courses in human resource development and qualifications in particular occupational areas). Nationally, there is significant in-house training provided by employers. In-house trainers may work for an employer organisation and may be dedicated full-time to provide training; or they may be employed to undertake such training duties alongside other work. Other trainers may be contracted by the organisation to provide training or to assess employees' levels of competence. Many workplaces offer employees the opportunity to achieve formal recognition of their level of competence through the work-based route of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs or SVQs, Scottish Vocational Qualifications), which are designed to assess job-specific skills. Performance is assessed on-the-job at five different levels of standards as set by the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for that occupational area of employment.

Once appointed, trainers within all publicly funded enterprises included in this broad range of provision may also undertake programmes to achieve a full teaching qualification (Certificate in Education or Post-Graduate Certificate in Teaching). Such trainers will undertake, through part-time study, the same programme as those working in FE colleges (see above, and entry National standards for teacher training programmes in Section 060102: Development of policies for VET teachers.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

IVET operates in a range of settings. Vocational subjects (at pre-employment levels) are offered in secondary schools (14-18), 6th form colleges (16-19), Further Education (FE) colleges (16+). VET for specific vocational areas is provided by FE colleges and other training providers, including trainers employed within their own commercial/industrial/service organisations. In addition to mainstream teachers, schools employ classroom assistants and FE colleges employ learning support workers who undertake a variety of tasks. Categories of employment for teacher/trainers in each sector are:

- Secondary schools: vocational subject teachers with Qualified Teacher Status; classroom assistants;
- Further Education colleges: vocational teachers, with part or full teaching qualification; learning support workers (with varying roles and qualifications);
- Other training providers: vocational trainers, with or without part or full teaching qualification, but with an Assessor Award for those working in publicly-funded training enterprises.

For further details of these IVET categories, see section 0601 of the Detailed Thematic Analysis: Types of teachers and trainers in VET.

The tables attached identify data relating to VET provided in both secondary schools (IVET) and FE colleges (IVET and CVET). Some figures presented within tables cannot be disaggregated (for example, it is not possible to show number of vocational subject teachers within total teacher numbers in secondary schools or FE colleges, or to show

FE college teachers' split of duties between IVET and CVET). Data for other CVET training providers (i.e. outside of state provision) are not available. In the absence of data, brief commentaries have been supplied (below). Where information is in the public domain, data has been presented for each of the four countries comprising the UK. The source of information is presented with each table.

[Statistics on teachers in secondary schools in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland](#)

[Statistics on teachers in further education colleges in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland](#)

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Classroom assistants employed in secondary schools provide various support to the qualified teacher under whose direction they work. They may be involved in the preparation and duplication of learning materials, work with individual students or small groups of students, and be involved in the day-to-day welfare of students and general supervision of conduct and progress. There is no nationally-agreed salary scale for such classroom assistants. Remuneration is determined individually by each employing local authority.

LEARNING SUPPORT WORKERS IN FE COLLEGES

There are no national data available to determine the number, salaries, qualifications, and gender balance of those employed as learning support workers within tertiary education. A research report (NATFHE: The routes and employment of learning support workers in further education colleges, September 2003) established the following information from a sampling of advertised vacancies in 36 colleges. A learning support worker may be appointed as: learning support assistant, instructor, assessor, learning mentor, development officer, tutor facilitator, education support worker, advice and guidance worker, learning facilitator - among other descriptions. They may be appointed to full-time posts, permanent or fixed-term; or part-time, hourly paid. Salaries for these posts ranged between £10,000 and £28,000 per year (EUR 14-40000 approximately). Hourly rates varied from £6.53 to £25 (EUR 9.40-35.70 approximately). A wide range of qualifications was required for these posts, according to the nature of the duties to be covered. Some qualifications were very specific (such as a 'signing' qualification to support deaf students, or a specialist dyslexia support qualification); other posts required an Assessor Award or qualification in a particular vocational area. Only one post, of those surveyed, required a full initial teaching qualification.

OTHER TRAINING PROVIDERS

Salaries for those employed as trainers within 'other' training providers (e.g. within enterprises, voluntary organisations, uniformed services, independent secretarial and language colleges, etc. see entry Other training providers: Section 0601.) are not subject to any national scale. They will vary and will be related to the nature and extent of individual responsibilities and the range of duties undertaken. There is no census to determine how many trainers are employed in this sector, nor any data relating to subject and age distribution.

Statistics relating to VET teachers in the UK

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AND SALARIES (FOR FE TEACHERS ONLY)

- A scheme to attract new recruits to train for pre-service entry to tertiary teaching has operated for several years, and has recently been extended to cover the academic years 2004-05 and 2005-06. Funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), each student during the year of Post-Graduate Certificate in Education or Certificate in Education training currently receives a bursary of £6000 (approximately EUR 8,600). From 2005, intending teachers of Mathematics will receive a bursary of £7000 (approximately EUR 10,000).
- Following successful completion of the award and appointment to a college, new entrants teaching in shortage subjects can also apply for a "Golden Hello". This is a one-off payment (of up to £4,000 approximately EUR 5,700) for teachers of: Mathematics, Science, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Engineering, English (including Drama), Modern Languages, Construction, Design and Technology. This scheme also is administered by the DfES.
- There are two types of reward available to teachers who stay in the profession. For those who prove excellence in teaching they may be recognised for Advanced Practitioner status. For further details see Section 060202 of the Detailed Thematic Analysis on training of the VET teachers and trainers. In-service continuing training and development for IVET teachers. Apart from this recognition, there is the standard progression route through promotion from the main lecturer grade.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

CVET provision is offered by Further Education (FE) colleges and by a range of other providers. This range, of other providers, includes CVET within enterprises, voluntary organisations, the prison service, uniformed services (police, armed services, emergency services), health and care services. It includes also independent colleges (e.g. secretarial colleges for secretarial and administrative training) as well as many private language training schools. None of these private or independent colleges require government approval, but about 100 of them are registered with the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education,

A major part of the total CVET provision is supplied by numerous private training providers contracted by employers and local authorities to deliver specified training programmes (e.g. courses in human resource development and qualifications in particular occupational areas). Nationally, there is significant in-house training provided by employers. In-house trainers may work for an employer organisation and may be dedicated full-time to provide training; or they may be employed to undertake such training duties alongside other work. Other trainers may be contracted by the organisation to provide training or to assess employees' levels of competence.

CVET TEACHERS IN FE COLLEGES

All CVET teachers in FE colleges will hold appropriate craft or trade or professional qualifications, together with significant work experience. Many will hold a part or full

teaching qualification, though some will have been appointed without any training as a teacher. All CVET (and IVET) teachers in FE colleges must now undertake training towards a full teaching qualification (see section 060205 of the Detailed Thematic Analysis on training of VET teachers and trainers: Issues of interest).

Those teaching CVET in FE colleges are paid on the same salary scale as IVET teachers. Most VET teachers in FE will in fact contribute to both IVET and CVET provision, and data available within the UK makes no distinction between CVET and IVET teachers in this category. Salary scales and tables relating to VET provision in FE colleges are reproduced below. It should be noted, however, that it is not possible to determine from the total numbers employed in FE those who are employed as vocational teachers, either CVET or IVET.

LEARNING SUPPORT WORKERS IN FE COLLEGES

Within FE colleges are numbers of learning support workers They will hold qualifications appropriate to the specific roles for which they have been appointed.

There are no national data available to determine the number, salaries, qualifications, and gender balance of those employed as learning support workers within tertiary education. A research report (NATFHE: The routes and employment of learning support workers in further education colleges, September 2003) established the following information from a sampling of advertised vacancies in 36 colleges. A learning support worker may be appointed as: learning support assistant, instructor, assessor, learning mentor, development officer, tutor facilitator, education support worker, advice and guidance worker, learning facilitator - among other descriptions. They may be appointed to full-time posts, permanent or fixed-term; or part-time, hourly paid. Salaries for these posts ranged between £10,000 and £28,000 per year (EUR 14-40,000 approximately). Hourly rates varied from £6.53 to £25 (EUR 9.40-35.70 approximately). A wide range of qualifications was required for these posts, according to the nature of the duties to be covered. Some qualifications were very specific (such as a 'signing' qualification to support deaf students, or a specialist dyslexia support qualification); other posts required an Assessor Award or qualification in a particular vocational area. Only one post, of those surveyed, required a full initial teaching qualification.

OTHER TRAINING PROVIDERS.

CVET trainers are appointed on the basis of their craft, trade, or professional qualifications. Few, on first appointment, will hold a teaching qualification. Those involved in assessing the work and competences of their trainees will either hold, or be expected to obtain, a recognised Assessor Award if they are employed in publicly-funded training enterprises. Although no dates have been attached to the policy, it is the government's stated aim to move to a position where CVET trainers employed in this sector of provision will also obtain a full teaching qualification (see section 060305: Issues of interest).

Salaries for those employed as trainers within enterprises and organisations grouped in this category of provision are not subject to any national pay scale. Their salaries will vary from organisation to organisation, and will be related to the nature and extent of individual responsibilities and the range of duties undertaken. Given the diverse spread of such providers (see section 0601: Types of teachers and trainers in VET), there is no census to determine how many trainers are employed in this sector. Nor, therefore, is there any data relating to subject and age distributions.

[Statistics on teachers in further education colleges in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland](#)

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

MECHANISMS FOR SKILLS ANTICIPATION

The UK's Qualifications Frameworks (see section 2) include vocational qualifications – National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and, for Scotland, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). The introduction of the UK-wide Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) in 2002 heralded the intention on the part of government that the anticipation of training and qualifications needs should be driven largely by labour market needs: what skills balance is likely to be needed in future? How may occupational profile changes lead to new training qualifications / needs? How best can the needs of employers be met? Traditional labour market forecasting techniques have been refined and more holistic approaches are being adopted.

NVQs and SVQs are vocational qualifications based on National Occupational Standards through a process of functional analysis, now led by the Sector Skills Council (SSC). Standards are specified in the form of units, aggregated to meet qualifications needs of specific occupations, which are identified by a parallel process of occupational mapping. SSCs are required to take into account future labour market requirements. The recent shake-up of sectoral arrangements aims to improve their capacity for undertaking labour market analysis in anticipation of emerging sector skill requirements.

In England, the Treasury has moved recently towards placing a requirement on government departments to evaluate as well as implement all major initiatives. Evaluation is now frequently included in the development plans, with international tendering for major evaluations. Routine monitoring of qualifications is undertaken by the QCA. The developing Sector Skills Councils and awarding bodies respectively review the labour market need and uptake of qualifications. The amount of data in the system is increasing, with national databases increasingly being refined by the DfES. This allows routine monitoring of trends in the system, as well as the uptake of specific qualifications. The renewal of qualifications admitted to the national qualifications framework is determined by a 're-accreditation cycle' in which qualifications are subject to review on an agreed cycle - typically 3 years. On average, new qualifications are developed over an 18 months' cycle.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate is responsible for appraising and reporting to Government on the quality of training provision; this is done through visits to training settings and can include commentary on the performance of specific initiatives and reforms.

Relevant labour market data comes from a variety of national sources including the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Employment Survey (AES), and from national, regional or sectoral surveys, and skill audits. Strong emphasis is now placed on identifying and planning skill development programmes to meet local labour market needs. Quantitative methods include mechanistic/extrapolative techniques, behavioural/econometric models, surveys of employers' opinions and skills audits. Qualitative approaches include Delphi techniques, case studies, focus groups and holistic modelling approaches, such as scenarios. The Skillsbase database provides a wide range of labour market information.

In Scotland, Futureskills Scotland (which is managed by Scottish Enterprise in collaboration with Highlands and Islands Enterprise) conducted an annual survey in 2003 to provide evidence about skill shortages, skill gaps and training, based on information from more than 3000 Scottish workplaces. There are 2.1 million employees in Scotland.

In the 2003 Survey, the employers surveyed, representing some 2.2m employees, showed 69,000 vacancies, a vacancy rate of 3%. The Analytical Services Division of the Scottish Executive's Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department manages a programme of research in support of policy development in further and higher education, vocational education and training and lifelong learning. For the corresponding agencies in Wales and Northern Ireland, see Section 3.1.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR, AND EVALUATION OF, REFORMS

The QCA is the government agency responsible to DfES for implementing qualifications reform in England (and for certain vocational qualifications, in Wales and Northern Ireland also), through mechanisms such as the design of the review of national framework and the criteria for inclusion, and the approval of awarding bodies. QCA is leading a review of the UK's vocational qualifications, in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council, the Sector Skills Development Agency and the relevant bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In Scotland, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) was established by a partnership of national bodies: the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) through its Scottish Office, the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) and Universities Scotland, supported by the Scottish Executive and other stakeholders in the HE sector. These bodies are known as the Development Partners. The Research Branch in the Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department manages a programme of research in support of policy development and review in further and higher education, vocational education and training and lifelong learning. The programme is focused on 6 main themes, youth transition from education to the labour market, widening access to further and higher education, learning and employability, participation in adult education and lifelong learning, the New Deal in Scotland, and learning and teaching in post-school sectors. Research organisations, universities, HM Inspectorate, Scottish Enterprise, and other national bodies also make an important contribution to educational research and evaluation of reforms.

While public education and training policy falls under the responsibility of government there is some participation by other stakeholders (employers, trade unions, education and training interests) in the structures established for purposes of consultation, scrutiny and review. In Scotland the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive make it a priority to involve other stakeholders.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The UK's VET system is largely outcomes-based. Training providers have flexibility to plan learner-centred delivery systems to meet users' needs. The same qualifications are offered in both the initial and the continuing VET and the flexibility offered by the outcomes approach has been greatest in providing adult learners with access to individually targeted learning and assessment. Young people, increasingly since the advent of modern apprenticeships (MAs), tend to follow more standardised learning programmes.

The modular or unit structure of N/SVQs and most other vocational qualifications provides a high degree of flexibility, opening up possibilities for modular delivery and credit transfer. The number of people gaining individual units, often through job-focused in-company training, is increasing in some sectors. Many providers of education and training use mixed-mode delivery incorporating elements of conventional and open or distance learning.

In theory candidates may be awarded qualifications on the basis of accreditation of prior learning (APL) evidence alone. In practice this has proved difficult because of the substantial requirements for verification. However, the availability of direct access to assessment for those able to show that they have sufficient learning to be assessed without having to follow a complete learning programme is another factor contributing to flexibility.

STRATEGIES TO BRIDGE DIFFERENT TYPES AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Governments in England have sought to bridge the gap between general education and vocational training by achieving parity of esteem between different types of qualifications. Achieving this remain elusive, and is a major policy drive for the current review of 14 to 19 curriculum and qualifications and for the review of the national qualifications framework. The existing national qualifications framework defines three pathways in which a clear relationship was traced between three separate types of provision – traditional general education provision, school and college-based vocationally-related education, and work-based vocational provision. The new framework is likely to contain a number of lines based on areas of knowledge, skill and competence, blurring the line between general and occupational, and encouraging transfer and mixed learning programmes

This policy has encountered a number of problems, and increasingly public policy has recognised a need to enable young people to be able to choose learning programmes combining elements of general and vocational education rather than having to follow one learning pathway to the exclusion of others. Currently a major review of vocational qualification is under way across the UK. Working in partnership with LSC, SSDA, and the regulatory and funding agencies for Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, QCA is leading the development of a joint programme of work to improve the vocational qualifications system to ensure it meets future needs. In Scotland, reforms such as the new National Qualifications system introduced in 1999 are designed to achieve a more unified approach to different types of education and training. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) merges general and vocational pathways by highlighting routes for progression. The framework is designed to widen educational opportunities and encourage 'parity of esteem' for academic and vocational qualifications. It will make the qualifications available more understandable and show their relative value.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVED IN CURRICULA DEVELOPMENT

In the UK, NVQs and SVQs are largely based upon national occupational standards, or statements of the outcomes to be achieved to meet the requirements for certification. These are mainly developed by Sector Skill Councils (SSCs), which are employer-led bodies and normally include trade unions representatives on a minority basis together with representatives of relevant professional bodies and training organisations from the sector.

Because curricula are not usually nationally prescribed (the assessment requirements for qualifications normally being independent of delivery), curricula tend to be developed mainly by the organisations providing the education and training, for example by colleges, training organisations and employers at a decentralised level. However, for programmes such as modern apprenticeship, SSCs are increasingly involved in developing and disseminating curriculum models.

THE PLACE OF BASIC SKILLS AND KEY COMPETENCES IN THE LEARNING CULTURE

Key or core skills units are available at all levels of the NQF and SCQF in communication, number, information technology, problem solving, working with others, and developing own learning/skills. Key skills units in communication, number, information technology, problem solving, working with others and developing own learning skills are available at all levels of the NQF. They may be certificated as freestanding key skill qualifications. Key and core skills were widely seen as a potential bridge between different types of qualification provision and are a compulsory element of all modern apprenticeship programmes. Implementation of key skills programmes and assessment remains problematic.

Where students learn in a school-or college environment, securing sufficient direct experience of workplace learning and the professional competences and identities that are learnt this way is often a difficulty. A new framework of specialised diplomas is being developed in England, and workbase learning is to be a clear feature of these new qualifications.

In Scotland, key or core skills units are available at all levels of the NQF and also in the national qualifications and higher national qualifications with the SCQF. Numeracy, information technology, problem solving and working with others can be gained at different levels up to and including SCQF level 6.

INTEGRATION OF NEW METHODS AND TECHNOLOGIES INTO CURRICULA

NVQ and SVQ criteria required national occupational standards to reflect the ability to respond to new technologies and innovations in working methods and forms of work organisation. This reflects the high degree of emphasis placed on facilitating flexibility and mobility in employment and ensuring that qualifications do not become out-dated too quickly. Standards for vocational qualifications are generally reviewed at 3 to 5 yearly intervals.

Curricula must be based upon the standards, and it is a matter for VET providers to ensure that curricula are kept up-to-date in line with industry requirements. In practice the close relationship between providers and employers is often assumed to ensure that training delivery keeps pace with industry requirements, although there is some evidence that training tends to follow, rather than lead, innovative practices in industry.

The SCQF will also assist in making clear the relationships between Scottish qualifications and those in the rest of the UK, Europe and beyond, thereby clarifying opportunities for international progression routes and credit transfer.

The Scottish Further Education Unit aims to support key developments and innovations in teaching and learning in the further education sector in Scotland. In England the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) provides a base for developing and disseminating best practice and innovation to the Learning and Skills Councils and to the further education sector. Both place strong emphasis on engaging professionals with the outcomes of research, and creating a research culture that meets practitioners' needs.

The National Grid for Learning, and National Grid for Learning Scotland, seek to use ICT to the maximum to raise standards and achievement, extend opportunity, create a highly ICT literate workforce and to ensure that ICT learning opportunities are of a high standard.

There is a growing use of ICT and eLearning in VET in the UK scores quite highly in most of the European and international comparisons in this regard.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

AN OVERVIEW OF COMPETENCE BASED QUALIFICATIONS

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are similar, though the qualifications frameworks in which they are located differ. See section 2. A review of vocational qualifications in the mid-1980s recommended the introduction of NVQs, with the aim of:

- Improving the coherence of the national system of qualifications by removing duplicate qualifications, which were similar in aim and function but were expressed in a different form. The NVQ criteria proposed that all vocational qualifications should meet standard quality criteria in their design and operation and be clearly located in the five-level framework for NVQs;
- Improving the availability of qualifications in sectors which previously lacked them – e.g. retail and distribution, the lower level occupations in health and social care;
- Allowing competence to be recognised independently of the location, duration and/or nature of learning, thus allowing assessment of existing competence in the labour force.

The solution adopted was to establish a clear and coherent system of vocational qualifications that were to be directly relevant to the needs of employment and the individual. These National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs and SVQs) should be a statement of competence clearly relevant to work and intended to facilitate entry into, or progression in, employment, further education and training. Assessment would cover:

- Skills to specified standards;
- Relevant knowledge and understanding;
- The ability to use skills and to apply knowledge and understanding to relevant tasks.

More than 750 NVQs are available across the eleven defined areas (such as transportation, providing business services). They vary by title and level. NVQs cover levels 1-5, which equates approximately to the ISCED levels. Although the development of NVQs and SVQs has not brought the envisaged coherence to the system of vocational qualifications, it has provided a framework of competence-based qualifications. A review of vocational qualifications in the UK is currently under way (2203-2004).

Although the development of NVQs and SVQs has not brought the envisaged coherence to the system of vocational qualifications, it has provided a framework of competence-based qualifications. A review of vocational qualifications in the UK is currently under way (May 2003).

The main institutions involved in regulating and administering NVQs are:

- *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA):* QCA ensures that NVQ qualifications meet particular criteria

and are broadly comparable across different sectors. QCA accredits (formally recognises) proposals for NVQ awards developed by sector bodies and awarding bodies, and quality assures and audits the activity of awarding bodies.

- *Sector bodies:* The new Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) overseen by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) will identify, define and update employment-based standards of competence for agreed occupations. These are approved against criteria by a group made up of the regulatory authorities and the UK administrations. National Occupational Standards form the basis for NVQs. NVQs are accredited against NVQ criteria by QCA.
- *Awarding bodies:* Awarding bodies have a dual role. With sector bodies, they are jointly responsible for the assessment methods of NVQs based on the assessment strategy of the sector bodies, and they are also responsible for the implementation of individual NVQs. They approve centres that wish to offer assessment for NVQs. Awarding bodies monitor the assessment process and award NVQs and unit certificates. They undertake external verification to ensure that candidates are being assessed fairly and consistently across all centres.
- *Assessment centres:* Organise the assessment of people seeking to qualify for an NVQ. Training Providers and Further Education Colleges: Many candidates pursuing the NVQ route to qualifications will gain their qualification at work or through a programme provided by a further education college or some other training provider.
- *Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA):* In Scotland the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accredits all Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS - A 'CLOSED' CREDIT FRAMEWORK

NVQs are based on national occupational standards that are designed in a unit format. When a key occupational function is described and analysed it is broken down into the smaller functions of an occupation. A function is described in a unit of a standard. Some functions appear in several different occupations and therefore when qualifications are designed the same unit may appear in different qualifications. This creates a unit credit that can be transferred from one qualification to another. Units can also be accumulated from different awarding bodies as NVQ units are based on the same national occupational standard. This is a closed system in as much as only unit credits can be accepted. There is no strong incentive for describing each unit by level or for ascribing size, because there is a common understanding that a unit represents competence in a named occupational function. The precise function is the only piece of information necessary for employment purposes.

The objectives geared to the development of NVQs have not yet been fully realised, and some of the design specifications for NVQs have been adjusted as implementation has

progressed. The original uncompromising outcome-focus of the NVQ qualifications persisted from 1986 to the mid-90s, when evaluations and feedback from users highlighted the problems of a lack of emphasis on knowledge and understanding.

The focus on outcomes was throughout the 90s re-enforced by outcome-related government funding for Further Education – i.e. colleges and training providers received a substantial proportion of the funding for VET on the basis of the attainment by candidates of the qualifications. In the 80s and 90s, government reform in VET was dominated by qualifications reform. The New Training Initiative included three objectives: reform of adult training, reform of youth training and reform of apprenticeship. With the emergence of severe youth unemployment in the mid-80s - coupled with youth-oriented social unrest - the development of specifications for learning programmes for adults and apprentices was given low priority in favour of the development of national qualifications and the development of short-duration training programmes for unemployed young people.

The emphasis on qualifications-led reform of training arrangements has remained, although the late 90s saw emphasis placed on the development of apprenticeships, with Modern Apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3 being strongly emphasised in the reports of the National Skills Task Force (1999-2002), the Cassells Review of Apprenticeships (2002) and the current skills strategy. Unlike the qualifications-oriented reform dominating policy in other parts of the system, Modern Apprenticeships have been built around programme specifications, which include both qualification requirements (completion of Key Skills, Technical Certificates and NVQs at the appropriate level), and requirements relating to duration, and locations of learning.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Arrangements for the recognition of non-formal learning are linked to the outcomes-orientation of NVQ qualifications and outcomes-based non-N/SVQ qualifications. Since the design philosophy and assessment model for these qualifications emphasise assessment approaches and content which are notionally independent of the mode, duration and nature of learning, the use of prior achievement/learning to gain credit is intended to be both intrinsic to the assessment approach and easily done. Any learner, employed or not, who can provide evidence which meet the demands of the evidence requirements for a qualification can be awarded credit. However, the burden of providing evidence and the practicalities of assessment of non-formal/informal learning are considerable. Examples of good practice do exist but the problems of cost and complexity are widely reported. The importance of non-formal and/or informal learning is, however, clearly acknowledged in employers' increasing use in selection of accounts of experience, rather than formal qualifications, as evidenced in QCA research on trends in the use of qualifications.

In Scotland national standards-based vocational qualifications are based on pre-determined standards that are publicly available. They focus on what the individual can do and are therefore a means of certifying positive achievement. They do not depend on fixed syllabuses, fixed location or fixed time. Therefore they fit with the development of a flexible and coherent qualifications framework that can give recognition to non-formal/informal learning. The accreditation of prior learning enables individuals to gain recognition and certification based on evidence of what they know and can do, often acquired without the benefit of formal instruction. Recognition of both formal and informal learning is important to aid progression into both further or higher education and further learning.

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) assists students to gain vocational, academic or continuous professional development recognition or credits for prior learning and experience. APL was strongly promoted in the early 1990s, and became established as a non-traditional entry route to further and higher education, though often not to the most prestigious courses.

Typically, a portfolio evidencing the learning is produced, indicating the level and areas of expertise, then the level and content of the learning that will be assessed. APL is most likely to apply to a mature applicant.

Most recently, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has taken a strategic interest in the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. Pilots are being conducted, for example, to develop ways in which the informal learning at youth centres can be recognised, thus helping social excluded young people on a pathway towards achieving qualifications. Also, LSC is experimenting with a system for providing informal recognition of the learning outcomes of adult part-time courses that do not of themselves lead to a qualification.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Implementation Plan (October 2002) details the future developments of the SCQF. One target is to develop and agree a set of guidelines on recognition of prior learning and experiential learning (APEL) which would then allow credit rating and levelling of learning in terms of core, generic skills rather than subject-specific learning.

The SCQF commissioned a project on recognition of prior learning (summary at www.sqcf.org.uk). Links will be made with the EU-funded Refine Project to ensure that the guidelines complement other European developments in relation to RPL.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The aim of government policy is to develop careers services available to all and to provide an easily accessible source of information, advice and guidance (IAG) to both young people and adults. ICT is considered to be an effective medium providing that ways can be found to provide equal access to disadvantaged and excluded groups. The government has also recognised the importance of providing effective training for providers of IAG services.

The reform of the framework IAG operates within is intended to provide a more effective level of service. The principles underlying the reforms are that:

- Local services should be free of charge at the point of entry;
- The initial priority for public funding is the provision of a basic information and advice service. Other services may be provided, but they may need to be offered on a fee-paying basis;
- New services will be built on the basis of what already exists;
- Delivery will be through 75 partnerships, drawing together as far as possible all relevant organisations on a local level;

- Particular attention is being given to the engagement of socially disadvantaged, the disabled or otherwise excluded groups.

All providers of IAG services that are funded through Connexions partnerships require accreditation against the National Quality Standards for Learning & Work. This applies to both public and private sector organisations. The Guidance Council (GC) has developed the standards. The GC promotes and advises on the provision of good quality guidance and the Guidance Accreditation Board (GAB) handles the accreditation process. The Common Inspection Framework through inspections by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) (not Scotland) provides a quality assurance for standards and provision of guidance services.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the government's approach is concentrated on one set of provision for young people, another for adults. The government funds University for industry (Ufi) Ltd to develop and maintain the learndirect www.learndirect.co.uk national information and advice service. Mainly targeted to adults, and advertising widely on TV etc. learndirect is accessed via a telephone helpline or on-line. The national Learning and Skills Council has an Adult Learning Committee and takes, inter alia, responsibility to oversee and part-fund effective guidance services for adults. The Connexions service, www.connexions.gov.uk an amalgamation of local careers services, is geared to providing a more unified approach to meeting the advice and guidance needs of young people in the years of transition between schooling and the labour market. In addition, all secondary schools must provide a careers programme for all their pupils as part of the national curriculum, and further education colleges and universities have advice centres and careers programmes available for their students.

For employees, advice and guidance may be part of the human resource function. This is particularly the case for the growing number of organisations that have a system of professional or performance appraisal, and is likely to be linked to professional development and in-service training. 'Investors in People' is a scheme that has government support – it coaches and badges firms and organisations in both the public and private sector, encouraging best practice in staff development and training.

In Scotland, the UK's first all age guidance organisation Careers Scotland (CS) was established in 2002. CS provides a range of important information, advice and guidance on education, training and employment opportunities. The service is available to people of all ages and is delivered through a network of local Careers Centres or through the interactive website at www.careers-scotland.org.uk.

Guidance and counselling can also be provided in the workplace, by Trade Unions or through Learndirect Scotland who act as brokers between learners and learning providers.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

The intention is that all adults and young people should have easy access to career guidance and counselling at times of greatest need. Young people in transition are all expected to receive advice and guidance through facilities made available at the place of learning. (As part of the New Deal, young unemployed are given guidance and must demonstrate a quota of job applications to qualify for benefit. Emphasis is placed on 'one-stop shops' in the local community and through Internet access – either through the home or through facilities in local libraries, etc.)

While a variety of sources of advice and guidance are available, we can summarize the main sources of advice and guidance for different target groups as follows:

- Young people in Education - Connexions/school or college
- Young people at risk of exclusion - Connexions/New Deal
- Young people at work - Connexions/Human Resources provision
- Adults at work - Human Resources, etc. / University for Industry
- Adults not in employment - University for Industry (Ufi)
- Jobcentre Plus
- Careers Scotland
- Learndirect
- Employment agencies

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

All have career programmes for guidance services, working with the Connexions service.

CONNEXIONS

The Connexions service is an integrated support service for all 13 –19 year olds in England. The aim of this initiative is to improve advice and support to young people in transition. As well as direct delivery of advice and guidance, Connexions is intended to improve the responsiveness of other agencies delivering services to young people: the emphasis is on involving young people. Connexions Direct is a pilot to develop an on-line version, with access to advice on a help line.

THE JOBCENTRE PLUS

The Jobcentre Plus provides jobseekers with access to any vacancy held by Jobcentre Plus, anywhere in Britain (currently around 300,000 at any one time) and to vacancies held by others, including private employment agencies and other European Employment Services. It also provides personalised advice to jobseekers. This service has made progress in delivering a modern e-business service to jobseekers and employers, service delivery partners and Jobcentre Plus staff.

CAREERS SCOTLAND

Careers Scotland's service is available to people of all ages through local Careers Centres or the interactive website at www.careers-scotland.org.uk. Key target groups and related services are set out in the following table.

Table 1: Key target groups and related services		
TARGET GROUP	JOB-RELATED IAG	FURTHER LEARNING-RELATED IAG

SCHOOL PUPILS (ALL AGES)	Appropriately focused career education that supports the Scottish Executive's Enterprise in Education strategy.
16-17 YEAR OLDS	As above. CS is the key point of entry for young people in this group who have additional support needs: their aim is to progress them to mainstream learning, training or employment. All job vacancies for this group are referred to CS by JobCentre+.
ALL AGES	Develop individuals' career planning skills; provide guidance on employment and training opportunities to enhance future career prospects.
16-24 YEAR OLDS NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING	Specific projects providing one-to-one support to remove barriers and progress young people into employment or training.

LEARNDIRECT/LEARNDIRECT SCOTLAND

learndirect is the brand name for services offered by Ufi Ltd., which has developed from the concept of the University for Industry. The learndirect national advice line uses trained and qualified advisers offering free, impartial advice using a database of over 600,000 UK learning opportunities. Learndirect also offers access to learning at a time, place and pace to suit the individual learner through a range of bite-sized, mostly on-line courses available at a network of around 2,000 learning centres, at home or in the workplace. Learndirect Scotland (the brand name for Scottish University for Industry) provides learners and businesses with advice on learning opportunities available throughout Scotland. It has a database of over 60,000 learning opportunities and has a network of over 460 learndirect Scotland branded learning centres.

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

A wide range of employment agencies is to be found on the high street, or through electronic links. Some of these serve a general function as employment agencies, while others operate in particular sectors or labour market niches

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

Wide ranges of professionals are involved in guidance and counselling.

This ranges from teachers in schools, most of whom will specialise and undergo in-service training and trained careers advisers at school, college or HE, to Jobcentre Plus personnel, and to advisers in small agencies whose training and credentials may vary.

The sectoral body with responsibility for standards and qualifications in this field, is the former Employment NTO, has developed professional development packages and competence frameworks. These are now operational. All providers of IAG services funded through Connexions partnerships require accreditation against the National Quality Standards for Learning & Work. This applies to both public and private sector organisations. The Guidance Council (GC) has developed the standards.

The professional standards cover a range of issues:

- The breadth of content - information at local, national and international level covering as appropriate housing, child care, health including sexual health and substance misuse, benefits and other financial support, discrimination, learning entitlement, job search, job vacancies and the labour market, occupations, education and training, and other career and personal development opportunities and leisure opportunities;
- The range of formats and languages;
- Other access issues;
- Impartiality;
- The need for a range of support to be available for those young people needing it in order to gain benefit from the information e.g. translation services.

Full qualification links academic study with vocational, evidenced based practice, through the NVQ level 4 in guidance. The guidance qualifications framework is still developing.

In Scotland, Careers Advisers must have a post graduate qualification (part 1) and successfully complete on the job assessment (part 2) to achieve the Qualification in Careers Guidance.

No specific targets have been set, in Scotland, for the training of other non-teaching educational staff. However, Further Education colleges are required to submit strategic plans, which include information on the action they intend to take to develop staff, to the Funding Council each year.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

In the UK funding of VET has undergone substantial changes in the past decade. The government takes a proactive role and encourages individuals and employers to take more responsibility for training to improve their own prospects and the country's competitiveness and productivity as well as more efficient use of public expenditure on education and training.

With the White Paper 'Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work'[1] made public in March 2005 the Government is making a commitment to deliver publicly-funded skills training in a way that is directly led by the needs of employers.

Government funding is mostly acquired from general tax revenue, alongside some other sources, in particular, concentration on private funding initiatives (PFI). Enterprise pays,

both in real funds and in-kind, the biggest portion of the overall VET bill for Continuing Vocational Training (CVT), while the state is the major contributor to Initial Vocational Training (IVT). Individuals contribute through fees less than 1% of IVT and CVT. While employers are largely responsible for their own CVT, public funding is available through Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) for basic skills and learning which is generated by trade unions.

In England the LSCs are responsible for passing on funding for all government-supported VET including provision of adult and community learning (ACL), but with the exception of Higher Education, and the education of all post-compulsory education in the public sector. A regularly monitored measure for value for money has been developed to secure value from providers through its planning and funding regime. The 14-19 White Paper 2005 [2] called for FE colleges to set improvement targets in their three-year development plans and to agree them with the LSC. A proportion of the funding is then conditional on setting and meeting those targets.

The 2004 Spending Review delivered significant additional resources, in particular:

- Total spending on education in England will be €16.8 billion higher in 2007-08 than in 2004-05, an average growth rate of 4.4 per cent per year in real terms over this period;
- Capital investment in education will rise from €1.12 billion a year in 1997-98 and €7 billion in 2004-05, to €9.8 billion a year in 2007-08; and
- Increase average per pupil funding to at least €7,700 by 2007-08; more than double the 1997 figure.

In 2001-02 the Department for Education and Skills allocated €11 billion to the LSC to support the delivery of post-16 training to around 6 million learners through some 400 colleges and 2,000 training providers. In 2003-04 the LSC managed a budget of over €11.2 billion, reflecting its new responsibility for school sixth form funding (1,800 schools).

Table 1: Education and training spending in the UK as a proportion of GDP					
1996-97	2000-01	2004-05 (OUTTURN)	2005-06 (ESTIMATE)	2006-07 (ESTIMATE)	2007-08 (ESTIMATE)
4.9%	4.6%	5.4%	5.6%	5.7%	5.8%

Source: HM Treasury, Financial Statement and Budget Report, Chapter C 'The Public Finances' p274

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/

The Scottish education sector involves a partnership between government and other organisations. The Scottish Executive guides the system and oversees funding of further and higher education via the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Since 2001, £51 million

(€71 million) of new funding has been invested and 71,000 new learners have been helped.

In Wales, the National Assembly has devolved responsibility for the funding of education and lifelong learning. Although the key objectives are broadly consistent with those for England, there are a number of significant differences in structures and the way that programmes are offered and funded. Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) under the Welsh Assembly has a responsibility for post-16 education and training in Wales (excluding higher education) has implemented a new National Planning and Funding system, which will strengthen the link between the learning needs and the learning delivery and will ensure that schools, colleges and training providers are funded on an equitable basis.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DELNI) is responsible for the funding of both further and higher education. Apart from direct financing, funding is provided to colleges and students through a number of special initiative “earmarked” budgets, which are designed to widen access, increase participation, address skills shortages and enhance the role of the sector in supporting economic development.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In England, funding flows from the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) to Learning and Skills Council and then to training providers. The LSC funds post-16 education in secondary schools, via the LEAs, and funds directly all other state-funded programmes. The LSCs consult with the range of partners regarding the most appropriate mode of delivery for training provision, taking account of quality, access and strategic planning priorities.

[Please see diagram 1](#)

The majority of funding for school-based IVET (whether undertaken at a further education – FE – college or school) originates from the central Department for Education and Skills (DfES). There are some slight variations on the funding sources depending on the provider.

Publicly funded secondary schools in England and Wales receive their funding from local education authorities (LEA) based on the funding formulae (number of students, their age, students with special education needs etc). LEAs raise funds through local taxation. Local authorities and education institutions also receive a small proportion of direct funding from DfES or the Welsh Assembly Government. Schools can also raise some funds through voluntary contributions and renting out premises.

In 2002, the LSC became responsible for funding school sixth forms. The LSC does not fund them directly – it funds the LEAs, which include the allocation within their school's budget shares. Most schools are within the authority of local governments and are funded on the basis of a formula with the majority of the weighting given to a student number.

For FE colleges, their sources of budgets are the following:

- 70% from the Learning and Skills Council – subject to funding agreement with their local LSC,
- 10% from students' fees,

- 10% from other sources (including the European Union and training provision for companies) and,
- 10% from diverse sources such as sales of materials and interest on their investments.

This breakdown cannot distinguish between what the FE college spends on providing school-based IVET or for other VET programmes provided privately (e.g. to enterprises), for adults, etc. (i.e. there is no budget hypothecation). Specifically for IVET, however, an FE college receives funds from its local LSC, which in turn receives money from the DfES as a grant. The DfES receives money from the Treasury. The Treasury allocates money from general taxation. The LSC gives colleges a three-year indicative budget. Money goes as a grant to FE corporations, HE institutions offering FE, special designated institutions (which are not FE colleges) or adults education services. Providers get annual allocation from the LSC, which are paid in scheduled monthly amounts and settled at the year-end following an audit.

The size of LSC grant to colleges is conditional on a funding agreement specifying various targets. LSC reserves the right to reduce the amount it pays over if the funding agreement is not met. How that college decides to spend the funds is largely at its discretion so long as it delivers the quantity of training to which it has agreed. Colleges have to report on what they spend their money on in terms of student retention, student recruitment, achievement and value for money. Accountability focuses on what they have produced in return for funding. A similar situation broadly pertains in schools.

In *Scotland*, the Scottish Executive provides funding for the 46 Scottish Further Education colleges through the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC). The SFEFC funds the 42 incorporated (self-governing) colleges directly, and Orkney and Shetland colleges through their local authorities. All the colleges also receive fees from their students and from organisations and firms for which they supply education and training.

All central government funding for education in *Wales* is provided by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). The WAG decides the sums to be spent on its various areas of activities, including education, and distributes resources to local authorities, the DELLS, responsible for post-16 learning. In *Northern Ireland*, virtually all schools have delegated budgets under which school governors determine spending priorities.

FUNDING IN THE DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS

In *Wales*, the National Assembly has devolved responsibility for the funding of education and lifelong learning. Although the key objectives are broadly consistent with those for England, there are a number of significant differences in structures and the way that programmes are offered and funded. DELLS have a responsibility for post-16 education and training in *Wales*.

Skillseekers – all work-based learning programmes for young people between 16 and 24 years of age come under this brand name

In *Northern Ireland*, the Department for Employment and Learning is responsible for funding Jobskills, the training scheme for young people. The programme comprises three strands: Access, for young people with essential skills or special skills needs that require additional support; Traineeship (the equivalent of FMA in England); and Modern Apprenticeship, (the equivalent of AMA in England).

Training in each of the strands focuses on the delivery and attainment of national vocational qualifications at levels one, two, or three respectively. Training is provided by approved Training Organisations (TOs), which can include further education colleges, local and national employers and community organisations, and is funded by the Department. Trainees receive a training allowance, paid through the Training Organisation.

Colleges' of Further Education in NI main recurrent funding is provided through the FE Funding Formula, which is based on the measurement of student activity and achievement called a Student Powered Unit of Resources (SPUR). This ensures that all colleges are funded on the same basis.

The Scottish Executive's strategy for Enterprise in Education includes provisions for work-based vocational learning linked to a relevant qualification for young people aged over 14. The SE has provided £42m (€58m) in 2003-2006 to support this and the other strands of the strategy. There are examples of schools vocational programmes in a number of local authority areas that have been developed and are being funded by authorities through their allocation of this funding.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

An identifiable characteristic of adult education opportunities in the UK is the range and flexibility of provision. A wide range of adult part- and full-time courses is available through publicly funded further education and adult education colleges in the community, as well as distance learning courses, such as the qualifications provided by the Open University. Increasingly, study programmes and guidance are available on-line. The government's priority of developing e-learning is a reflection of the determination to place the learner at the centre, by bringing learning opportunities to points of easy access for the learner. A wide range of courses is also available through private sector provision. It is commonplace, for example, to see small training centres on the high street advertising continuing education and training or career change opportunities in areas such as caring professions, or part-qualifications for aspects of ICT.

At work place, an enterprise can train its own employees, using substantially its own funds. The training might be in-house, by a private provider or by a further education college. There are a number of government programmes, which supply different types of funding.

Employed individuals can undertake CVT with their own funding plus some government support or with public funding by enrolling at a further education college.

A key principle of publicly funded continuing vocational education and training in the UK is to focus on stimulating demand and creating a framework which best serves the individual. One important organisation is the University for Industry (Ufi), which stimulates demand amongst both adults and businesses. The Ufi acts like a training broker providing access to ICT under its brand name learndirect, with 6,000 online centres. The online network provides learning opportunities to people at home, at workplace and at over 1,760 centres throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland. learndirect Scotland has over 300 learning centres.

Adult education and training courses are available in a range of different institutions. The mode and length of study vary depending on the type of course and the institution. Courses may be full or part-time and may last from a day or two for employer-based courses to several years for a first-degree course.

Adult education and training is provided by further education institutions; approved (private) training providers, including autonomous professional institutes, training companies and individual employers; higher education institutions; adult education centres run by LAs; and Workers' Educational Association (WEA) centres (see 10010402).

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), a government funded body responsible for raising the standards of education and training for young people and adults in England inspect and report on the quality of learning provision they receive. ALI also shares knowledge and good practices across the sector through its network of training providers and other partners.

ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

Adult education and training is offered by community learning and development services of local authorities, voluntary organisations, commercial and industrial firms, colleges of further education, and higher education institutions, including universities. A number of adults also attend secondary schools for part of the time and take particular classes with the pupils. Adult education units are also active within Her Majesty's Prisons (HMPs). Most of community and leisure learning provision, while it may be part-funded by bodies, such local authority, carries a financial cost to the individuals, apart from some disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

The duty to secure the adult and community-learning sector rests with LSC in England and the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in Wales. These bodies agree adult learning plans with LAs.

As part of a common funding approach:

- Adult learners continue to make a substantial contribution to the costs of their learning where they are able to do so.
- Sufficient public funding is available to encourage providers to offer and increase learning opportunities to disadvantaged learners at no cost or low cost.

Trade unions through their learning representatives encourage the low skilled employees to engage in training and to support those with higher skills to maintain their continuous professional development. In England LSC makes financial provision for supporting learning among TU members through Learning fund (with an estimated budget of €19.6m in 2004-05) at work place, at FE colleges and other providers. A Union Academy has been established with the government financial support to provide course from basic skills to MBAs.

In Northern Ireland, it provided by the further education sector, supplemented by the work of a range of non-statutory providers. General adult education courses include language, physical education/sport/fitness/ and practical craft skills, such as embroidery or woodwork.

Adult education in Scotland is a statutory duty of education authorities and is generally known as community learning or community education. General responsibility for promotion, development and oversight of community learning and development lies with Communities Scotland. The Development Centre for Community Learning and Development, and Adult Literacy and Numeracy at Communities Scotland supports and

disseminates best practice and provides the national validation and endorsement role form professional training in this area.

The Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS) has responsibilities for providing further training for professionals in the National Health Service (NHS) and also for educating the general public on health issues, for example on the misuse of drugs. All 32 of Scotland's local authorities have sections within them, which are the main providers of community learning, and development and which are responsible for Community Learning Strategies and Plans. Staff is based in local communities and play a key role in identifying learning and development needs. Much of their work involves collaborative action with other agencies and with community organisations. It has been estimated that, in an average week in the academic year 1999-2000, local authorities employed approximately 1,200 professional staff in community learning and development and some 11,500 temporary/part-time staff. Well over 20,000 volunteers were also involved in the course of the year. Local authorities co-ordinate the development of community learning strategies and plans as well as co-ordinating local action on adult literacy and numeracy with partners from FE colleges, the voluntary sector and other providers. Voluntary organisations play an important part in adult education at both national and local levels. The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) has for many years provided a service similar to that provided by the Continuing Education departments of the universities. Other voluntary bodies offering adult education include the churches, the Scottish Community Drama Association (SCDA), Linking Education And Disability (LEAD) and the English Speaking Union (ESU). There is also a wide range of voluntary organisations involved in those aspects of community learning which are not normally grouped in Scotland under the heading of adult education.

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Training for the unemployed (TfU) is training for persons aged 18 and over who are actively seeking work and are registered as unemployed. Those persons aged 16-17 who are unemployed are classified as IVT as they are not entitled to claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA).

There are some active labour government training initiatives for unemployed, the New Deal and Work-based learning for Adults (WBLA), in particular.

THE NEW DEAL INITIATIVE

[The New Deal for Young People \(NDYP\)](#) and New Deal 25plus are mandatory programmes for those who are unemployed for either six and eighteen months out of the previous twenty-one months respectively. [New Deal for Partners](#), [New Deal 50+](#), the [New Deal for Disabled People](#) and [New Deal for Lone Parents](#) are voluntary programmes. In the light of the Skill Strategy, the government in 2004 launched a New Deal for Skills programme in order to boost skills of those actively searching for work. New Deal for Skills aims to develop vocational or sector specific skills in unemployed and help them progress from lower to higher skilled work. It also provides coaching services and has introduced a validated record of skills achieved and other relevant measures.

New Deal is delivered by a network of local partners – including employers, local authorities, training providers, career services and other agencies that can offer practical help. They plan New Deal locally, on the basis of their knowledge of the local job markets.

The programmes and funding for training for unemployed people are closely related to Jobseeker Allowance (JSA) and other qualifying Working Age Benefits. As well as providing payments of JSA or the appropriate New Deal Allowance, the New Deal consists of:

- Activation through incentives, e.g. working tax credit and child tax credit (*);
- Activation through benefit sanctions, e.g. young people must meet criteria for seeking and applying for jobs and taking training opportunities;
- Help through training and improving vocational skills;
- Help through job search support/counselling and improved job matching;
- Help through subsidies, including subsidised placements.

(*) Tax credits were introduced in 2000 to provide additional incentives to people who enter work. The employer through payroll pays these credits. Working families tax credit tops up the earnings of working families with children, while Disabled person's tax credit gives support to working people with disability. Both can include a tax credit to help working parents with the costs of childcare.

A 16-hour rule has been established which allows unemployment benefit recipients to participate in VET up to a maximum of 16 hours per week.

See here for [Diagram 1- New Deal spending 2000-2008](#)

See here for [New Deal programmes in more detail](#)

THE WORK-BASED LEARNING FROM ADULTS INITIATIVE

Others facing particular disadvantages in the labour market qualify for work-based learning for adults (WBLA) provided through LSC as soon as they become unemployed. Such disadvantaged include people with disabilities and single parents. Through LSC, WBLA also supports employed people with training not normally provided by the employer. This will lead to a qualification at NVQ level 2 or equivalent (the employee will initially be an unemployed WBLA participant placed by the Employment Service).

Also available is job-based short-term training to help people gain or improve work-related skills to enable them to find other work. There is longer occupational training for those who need extra skills and/or work experience to find employment. And self-employment help is available for those wanting to set up their own business.

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

Further education colleges are involved in training for unemployed people in a variety of ways, but for most colleges TfU is not central to their mission. The potential contradiction between JSA and access to training has already been noted but nevertheless more than 100,000 students (7% of the total) on LSC-funded courses were unemployed and claiming JSA or Working Age Benefits. The funding of this group would amount to some €144.5 m per year. Because they are unemployed it is unlikely that any of the group would pay fees. In addition, some of the New Deal training programmes are placed in further education colleges.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

The national priorities for funding training are closely linked to the priorities of the central government and the devolved administrations' main objectives for education and training.

The establishment of the Learning and Skills Council in England is particularly significant in this respect. The LSC is charged with developing and implementing a coherent skills strategy for the country. It is also the body that funds all 16+ education (except higher education), as well as work-based and continuing learning. The linking of strategy, funding and the different learning streams is an intentional part of government policy and of the new legislation.

The central government includes the following in its objectives:

IMPROVE THE SKILLS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS AND RAISE PARTICIPATION AND QUALITY IN POST-16 LEARNING PROVISION

- By 2004, at least 28% of young people to start a Modern Apprenticeship by age 22.
- By 2010, 90% of young people by age 22 will have participated in a full-time programme fitting them for entry into higher education or skilled employment.
- By 2010, increase participation in Higher Education towards 50% of those aged 18 to 30.

Also, make significant progress year on year towards fair access, and to bear down on rates of non-completion.

TACKLE THE ADULT SKILLS DEFICIT:

- Improve the basic skill levels of 1.5 million adults between the launch of Skills for Life in 2001 and 2007, with a milestone of 750,000 by 2004.
- To reduce by at least 40% the number of adults in the UK workforce who lack NVQ 2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010.
- Working towards this, 1 million adults in the workforce to achieve level 2 between 2003 and 2006.

In Scotland, the Scottish Executive published 'Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life', its new lifelong learning strategy, in February 2003. The Scottish Executive's vision for lifelong learning in Scotland is to provide the best possible match between the learning opportunities open to people and the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that will strengthen Scotland's economy and society. The strategy identifies six high-level indicators to assess progress towards achieving that vision:

- The reduction in the proportion of 16–19 year olds not in education, training and employment;
- An increase in support to 16–19 year olds from low-income families to stay on at school and/or FE college,

thereby raising the participation and retention rates of this group;

- An increase in graduates as a proportion of the workforce;
- A reduction in the proportion of the working age adults whose highest qualification is below SCQF level 5;
- A reduction in the proportion of 18–29 year olds whose highest qualification is below SCQF level 6; and
- An increase in the proportion of people in employment undertaking training.

These policies fit within an overall strategy to develop the human capital as a resource and as a means of achieving higher levels of productivity and competitiveness. Access to education and training beyond the statutory requirements of school attendance and entry to jobs that have entry qualification requirements is left in most respects to individuals (an individualistic approach) and, as far as training is concerned, to employers (the voluntarist approach). In recent years, adult learning has become more targeted and government in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have become more involved in identifying priorities.

The government sees its role as helping to create a framework of opportunities for people to learn and to overcome the barriers to learning. The approach may vary according to the national, regional and local priorities of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

UK priorities for Lifelong Learning are defined as:

- Developing skills and knowledge for a productive workforce and globally competitive economy;
- Fostering greater creativity, innovative thinking and enterprise;
- Increasing and widening participation in learning;
- Raising standards in teaching and learning, including support for learning facilitators in non-formal and informal learning;
- Improving basic skills in the adult population.

Beyond this, moving to a clear strategy and a coherent set of policies for implementation is more problematic.

Nowadays, state-provided funding is geared to contributing to the achievement of the objectives. The funding regime and mechanism is used as a conscious system driver to attempt to achieve system goals. This began more than a decade ago with the move to fund the main public providers of training at ISCED levels 2 and 3 (the further education colleges) through a mechanism that would reward the achievement of objectives such as successful retention and completion rates, rather than simply fund on a per capita basis the number of students or learners enrolled at a particular date. Though simplified and at a transitional phase, the funding mechanisms adopted by the Learning and Skills Council continue this practice of targeting and rewarding.

A number of issues and problems are to the forefront.

Notably:

- How to incentivise low-skilled and reluctant adults to re-engage with learning: The policy response to this includes the funding of education maintenance allowances, the establishment and funding of the Connexions and learndirect systems.
- How to raise intermediate or technical skills levels among the workforce: State funding of modern apprenticeships, NVQs for younger learners, the expansion of non-degree higher education and the current review of vocational qualifications aim to tackle this issue, although major concerns remain.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

The UK government and the administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland actively participate in the full range of European programmes and initiatives and relating to education, training and lifelong learning. DfES, in consultation with the devolved administrations, has the key responsibility to ensure the UK's full investment in the Lisbon programmes.

NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO EU POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

For lifelong learning, a strong degree of coherence exists between the priorities identified in the UK and the priorities being followed up through the open method of coordination, the Copenhagen declaration and the Maastricht communiqué ([1]).

Building on the strengths of the UK's systems and identifying the key challenges that must be tackled, education and training reforms are now identified under a range of emerging lifelong learning strategies. England ([2]), Scotland ([3]), Wales ([4]) and Northern Ireland are each responsible for their own strategy. While the emerging lifelong strategies show differences, for example in the emphasis attached to the social dimensions of policy, a strong degree of interdependence continues for a range of geographical, cultural, linguistic, economic, historical and political reasons. Although all administrations strive for a knowledge economy and a knowledge society, some policy differences can be seen, for example in the upper secondary phase and in the approach to credit and qualifications frameworks.

Key challenges for VET across the UK are highly consistent with the Lisbon aims ([5]).

Successive UK reform programmes aim to develop an effective skills agenda so as to:

- Achieve cross-government action to tackle skills gaps and shortages;
- Act on the demand side to encourage employers to use skills to develop more ambitious and innovative business strategies;

- Motivate learners to continue in and return to learning, and tackle low skills;
- Make VET responsive to employers' needs;
- Raise the status and quality of initial VET to achieve: a coherent 14-19 phase of learning; a broader range of courses and programmes; high quality vocational options; higher levels of participation and lower levels of early school drop-out; higher levels of qualification, etc.

Taking the UK as a whole, the longer-term strategy is to develop qualifications and learning programmes that engage a wide range of learners, based on the principles of equality and diversity and supported by transparent systems of credit and qualifications frameworks.

Scotland has already implemented such a framework, the Scottish credit and qualifications framework; England, Wales and Northern Ireland are in the process of developing a credit-based Qualifications and Credit Framework (see Chapter 0201).

SCOTLAND

Scotland has the Scottish Qualifications and Credit Framework (SCQF; see chapter 0201). In SCQF two measures are used to place qualifications in the framework. These are the levels of the outcomes of learning and the volume of these outcomes, described in terms of SCOTCAT (Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer) points. The SCQF has 12 levels. Increases in level of demand relate to changes in factors such as:

- Complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding;
- Links to associated academic, vocational or professional practice;
- The degree of integration, independence and creativity required;
- The range and sophistication of application/practice;
- The role(s) taken in relation to other learners/workers in carrying out tasks.

Levels are not directly related to years of study. Over a lifetime of learning individuals will move from higher to lower levels or across levels of qualifications as they take on new learning and acquire new skills.

Each level is described in terms of its characteristic general outcomes under five broad areas:

- Knowledge and understanding - mainly subject based;
- Practice (applied knowledge and understanding);
- Generic cognitive skills, e.g. evaluation, critical analysis;
- Communication, numeracy and IT skills;
- Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

The descriptors are designed to allow broad comparisons to be made between outcomes of learning. It is not envisaged that every qualification will or should have all the characteristics set out in the level descriptors.

The SCQF Implementation Plan (October 2002) details the next stages of development and includes the publication of guidelines on determining the level and credit value of particular programmes of learning (Spring 2003) which will form the basis for further work by bodies other than SQA and Scottish HEIs when undertaking credit rating activity.

The Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC) is Scotland's certificate for recording achievements in qualifications awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The SQC records all the qualifications achieved, individual units, courses and group awards. Every time an individual achieves a new qualification at school, college, and in the workplace, the SQC is updated. Therefore, the SQC provides an accurate and comprehensive record of all the learning success achieved throughout lifelong learning. It also records levels of achievement in the five Core Skills (basic skills/key competencies). The SQC should include SCQF credit rating and levelling from December 2004.

([1]) See UK response to the DGVT questionnaire conducted as part of the Maastricht study.

([2]) See: DfES. White Paper: 14-19 Education and Skills. February, 2005; and Department for Education And Skills - DfES. Skills strategy white papers 2001 and 2005. London: DfES, 2005.

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([3]) Scottish Executive. Learning through Life: Life through Learning. The lifelong learning strategy for Scotland. February 2003.

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<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/lism-00.asp>.

([4]) National Assembly for Wales. The learning country: a paving document: a comprehensive education and lifelong learning programme to 2010 in Wales. Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales, 2001.

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<http://www.wales.gov.uk/subieducationtraining/content/PDF/learningcountry-e.pdf> [cited 13.5.2005].

([5]) The following is adapted from the UK's response to the DGVT questionnaire for the Maastricht study.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As part of the preparations for the UK presidency of the EU – and of the G8 – the DfES recently commissioned a report from the Work Foundation ([1]) on the progress of the UK skills strategy in the light of the Lisbon goals ([2]). The overall conclusion reached is that:

'Britain suffers from a legacy of low levels of basic skills for many workers, moderate educational achievement and an incoherent and insufficiently valued skills training and recognition system. Over the same period, it has sustained a high proportion of Europe's top universities ...

There is good evidence that the UK is moving innovatively within its own cultural and institutional context to remedy these deficiencies while capitalising on its strengths.

Significant progress has been made in creating an emergent comprehensive lifelong learning system ...

The evidence suggests that skills levels are rising. Nevertheless, while the quality of labour entering the labour market has improved, much remains to be done for those at work.'

In terms of some key identified priorities of the current European programmes, the 'scorecard' for the UK can be summarised ([3] see file footnote) as follows:

- The UK performs, on average, comparatively well in international surveys of the basic skills of 15 year olds;
- Large numbers of adults are identified as lacking basic skills; innovative policies are in place for achieving socially inclusive outcomes, but this remains a major challenge;
- The UK has a higher level of early school dropout than the EU target, and lower levels of qualification at upper secondary level. While progress has been made, much will depend on the effectiveness of reform programmes;
- The UK compares well with the performance of most EU Member States in terms of participation in maths, science and technology graduates in higher education;
- The UK scores highly on all of the available indicators of participation in lifelong learning and CVT, already reaching the EU target;
- Government spending on education and training was in line with the EU average in 1999, fell subsequently, and is now rising to a position well above the EU average;
- Employment levels are well above the European average and largely in line with the Lisbon objectives. Low skills and an ageing workforce create continuing pressures for reform;
- Aspects of the Copenhagen process, particularly the development of qualifications frameworks and frameworks for credit, are high on the UK reform agenda.

In terms of mobility of learners, the UK is the most popular destination for VET learners, while UK students participate less in EU cross-national learning and work experience placements than do learners in many other countries. Equally, international continuing professional development opportunities for UK VET teachers, such as those within the Leonardo or Erasmus programmes, are not widely taken up.

It remains true that the Lisbon and Copenhagen frameworks are increasingly, but not yet widely, known in the UK policy and research communities for VET. The publication of the DfES international policy highlights the importance of equipping young people for work in a global economy and stresses the need for learning experience to encompass an international context. In this vein, the UK traditional links beyond Europe will also remain a vital part of international networks and mutual learning communities.

The UK's and the European priorities and objectives for VET are very similar. The UK's policy and research communities are active throughout the EU's policy development and peer learning processes, and synergy certainly exists.

([1]) Work Foundation is a not-for-dividend public interest company, which provides consultancy and undertakes research in companies' performance through improving the quality of working life.

([2]) The following is adapted from Hutton, W. Where are the gaps? an analysis of UK skills and education strategy in the light of the Kok Group and European Commission Midterm Review of the Lisbon goals. London: Work Foundation, 2005, p. 4. Available from Internet: <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/pdf/gaps.pdf> [cited 13.05.05].

([3]) Based on Hutton, W. Where are the gaps? an analysis of UK skills and education strategy in the light of the Kok Group and European Commission Midterm Review of the Lisbon goals. London: Work Foundation, 2005, p. 4. Available from Internet: <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/pdf/gaps.pdf> [cited 13.5.2005]; and Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of VET: final report to the EC: the Lisbon-to-Copenhagen-to Maastricht Consortium, November 2004. Available from Internet: <http://www.efvet.org> [cited 13.05.05].

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