



UK

**Overview of the
Vocational Education and Training System**

2008

eKnowVet – Thematic Overviews



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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in the 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 vocational education and training
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
6. Training VET teachers and trainers
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy
8. Accumulating, transferring and validating learning
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 has been updated in 2008 and its reference year is 2007. The latest versions can be viewed from October 2009 onwards at:

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can also 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:

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01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

At the end of June 2007, the new Labour Prime Minister, Gordon Brown announced the creation of three new government departments: The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) was split into the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). The Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) was transformed into the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

DCSF is responsible for education, children and youth issues - everything affecting people up to the age of 19. This includes children's services, families and schools.

DEPARTMENT OF INNOVATION, UNIVERSITIES AND SKILLS

DIUS is responsible for adult learning, further and higher education, skills, science and innovation - work previously looked after by both DfES and DTI.

Following the 2007 (May) Scottish general election, the Scottish Executive is now known as the Scottish Government.

The Welsh Assembly Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) as from 2007 is called the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS).

In May 2007 the Assembly in Northern Ireland was restored after its suspension in 2002.

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.

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.

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.

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 Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills for policy on education and training, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for welfare of people, training and employment programmes, etc.). The Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive (the administrative organisation for the Scottish Parliament) have wide powers for social policies, including education and training. The Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly also have extensive powers for education and training.

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 through introducing the skills agenda.

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 2007 the UK was home to just over 60 million people. Current projections estimate the UK population to reach 67 million by 2031.

	ENGLAND	WALES	SCOTLAND	N. IRELAND	UK
POPULATION (THOUSANDS)	50 763	2 966	5 117	1 742	60 587
% POPULATION AGED					
UNDER 5	5.8	5.4	5.2	6.4	22.0
5-15	13.2	13.5	12.8	15.4	11.0
16-44	40.4	37.5	39.5	41.3	7.7
45 TO PENSION AGE	21.9	22.9	23.3	20.6	22.0
ABOVE PENSION* AGE UP TO 74	10.9	12.2	11.7	10.0	11.0
75 AND OVER	7.7	8.5	7.5	6.3	7.7

*Pension age is currently 65 for males and 60 for females. From 6 April 2020, the State Pension age for women will be 65, the same as for men
 Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Population Trends No. 132 (Mid- 2005)
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/Population_trends_132.pdf

Due to increased life expectancy and lower fertility rates the UK has an ageing population. The long-term trend has been a decline in the under-16 age group and an increase in those aged 16-64 and those over 65 and over, a process that is now intensifying. In 2007, the proportion of the population over 65 (16%) exceeded the proportion who were under 16¹. At the same time, the proportion over 85 is rising by more than 5% a year; and almost 75% of the UK's 2020 workforce is already in work. The projection also indicates 600 000 fewer 15-24 year olds in 2020.

Table 2: Population by sex and age - [in thousands]

	UNDER 16	16–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–74	75 AND OVER	ALL AGES
MALES									
1971	7,318	3,730	3,530	3,271	3,354	3,123	1,999	842	27,167
1981	6,439	4,114	4,036	3,409	3,121	2,967	2,264	1,063	27,412
1991	5,976	3,800	4,432	3,950	3,287	2,835	2,272	1,358	27,909
2001	6,077	3,284	4,215	4,382	3,856	3,090	2,308	1,621	28,832
2006	5,912	3,696	3,940	4,587	3,876	3,512	2,379	1,792	29,694
2011	5,961	3,846	4,235	4,314	4,292	3,592	2,636	2,018	30,893
2016	6,187	3,647	4,707	4,043	4,487	3,642	3,052	2,324	32,088
2021	6,485	3,490	4,784	4,318	4,217	4,045	3,153	2,761	33,253
2026	6,557	3,670	4,553	4,787	3,957	4,238	3,230	3,322	34,313
FEMALES									
1971	6,938	3,626	3,441	3,241	3,482	3,465	2,765	1,802	28,761
1981	6,104	3,966	3,975	3,365	3,148	3,240	2,931	2,218	28,946
1991	5,709	3,691	4,466	3,968	3,296	2,971	2,795	2,634	29,530
2001	5,786	3,220	4,260	4,465	3,920	3,186	2,640	2,805	30,281
2006	5,625	3,525	3,956	4,675	3,958	3,638	2,650	2,867	30,893
2011	5,682	3,613	4,200	4,375	4,413	3,744	2,883	2,958	31,868
2016	5,909	3,420	4,572	4,092	4,620	3,796	3,323	3,156	32,887
2021	6,202	3,272	4,591	4,321	4,323	4,242	3,438	3,549	33,938
2026	6,271	3,453	4,368	4,691	4,048	4,448	3,512	4,155	34,946

Note: Mid-year estimates for 1971 to 2006; 2006-based projections for 2011 to 2026. Source: Office for National Statistics; Government Actuary's Department; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_social/Social_Trends38/Social_Trends_38.pdf

¹ Details are available at: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?ID=949>

Since the late 90s, although there has still been natural increase, net international migration into the UK from abroad has been an increasingly important factor in population change. Net immigration is now the main factor in the UK population growth, an important part being the number of citizens coming from the new EU Member States.

These demographic, economic and social trends have direct implications for VET in terms of employees' flexibility, occupational pathways, recognition of qualifications and up-skilling amongst others.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Growth in the UK economy has been fairly steady for over a decade, although there were some early signs of economic downturn in late 2007. According to the OECD, although annual average growth has lagged behind the US and considerably behind emerging economies of India and China, it has remained above the EU and G7 average in 2006².

On EU definition, about 22 per cent of the UK workforce is in low paid jobs (compared to 12 per cent in France, or 8.5 per cent in Denmark). 31.3 per cent of the UK's female labour force is low paid. Moreover, according to the OECD data, incidence of low pay and gender wage gap has increased in the last decade³.

Table 1: GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) and Labour productivity per person employed (EU-27 = 100)						
	UNITED KINGDOM			EU 27		
	2000	2004	2007	2000	2004	2007
GDP PER CAPITA IN PPS	119.4	123.8	117.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY PER PERSON EMPLOYED	110.9	113.8	110.3	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Eurostat - GDP per capita in PPS; Eurostat - Labour productivity

In autumn 2007, 29.36 million were economically active in the UK. At the same period, the ILO unemployment rate was 5.2%, which is lower than many other EU member states.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS)⁴ shows that the employment rate among people of working age was 71.5% in 2007 (Eurostat, May 2007), slightly dropping to 74.9% in December 2007. The UK's levels of employment are higher than in most EU Member States.

² See: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Source.asp?vlnk=358>

³ Throughout the text, the exchange rate used is as of May 2007: GBP 1 = EUR 1.2.

⁴ OECD, OECD in Figures: statistics on the member countries. Paris: OECD, 2001-2004 (annual publication) and OECD in Figures 2007, Paris, 2007

Table 2: Employment rates by gender						
EMPLOYMENT RATE BY GENDER						
	UNITED KINGDOM			EU 27		
	2000	2004	2007	2000	2004	2007
TOTAL	71.2	71.7	71.5	62.2	62.9	65.4
MEN	77.8	77.9	77.5	70.8	70.4	72.5
WOMEN	64.7	65.6	65.5	53.7	55.5	58.3

Source: Eurostat - Employment rates by Gender

Table 3: Employment rates by older workers						
	UNITED KINGDOM			EU 27		
	2000	2004	2007	2000	2004	2007
TOTAL	50.7	56.2	57.4	36.9	40.7	44.7
MEN	60.1	65.7	66.3	47.1	50.4	53.9
WOMEN	41.7	47.0	48.9	27.4	31.6	36.0

Source: Eurostat - Employment rate of older workers by gender

However, unemployment rate amongst 15-24 year olds has risen sharply to 13.9% in 2006 (OECD Employment Outlook, 2007), and the share of low qualified (ISCED 0-2) young people (24.4 %) considerably exceeds the EU 27 average of 18.8 % (Table 4). Overall within the labour force, the increase in employment levels since the early 90s has been steeper than the decrease in unemployment levels over the same period.

Table 4: Unemployment rate by educational attainment and age, 2007 q04 – [%]						
	ISCED0_2		ISCED3_4		ISCED5_6	
	UK	EU 27	UK	EU 27	UK	EU 27
y15_24	24.4	18.8	10.8	12.9	6.4	11.4
y25_49	6.7	10.3	3.8	5.9	2.1	3.5
y50_64	3.9	6.8	2.7	5.5	2.2	3.1

Source: Eurostat

Table 5: Long-term unemployment rate by gender, as a percentage of the total active population						
	UNITED KINGDOM			EU 27		
	2000	2004	2007	2000	2004	2007
TOTAL	1.4	1.0	1.3	4.0	4.2	3.1
MEN	1.9	1.2	1.6	3.5	3.8	2.8
WOMEN	0.9	0.6	0.9	4.6	4.6	3.3

Note: Long-term unemployed are unemployed for 12 months and more
Source: Long-term unemployment rate by gender

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 2007 the government set public spending plans for the following three years, committing greater investment in learning and skills. Public expenditure on all levels of education in the UK represents 5.6 per cent of GDP in 2007-08 and reached around EUR 105 billion⁵.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Educational attainment has risen significantly over recent years at all levels of the education system. As far as the 16-18 year olds' participation in education is concerned, their proportion was 77.3 per cent at end 2006, an increase from 76.8 per cent at end 2005 but a decrease from 77.9 per cent at end 1994. The total number of 16-18 year olds in education and training increased by 15,500 to 1.55 million at end 2006, the highest number ever.

UK compares favourably in terms of percentages participating in and graduating from higher education. Although among 25-64 year olds the UK scores highly at tertiary education (ISCED levels 5-6) – 30% in 2007 compared to the EU-27 average of 23%, at lower levels of attainment, the UK does less well in attaining ISCED levels 0-2, which stands at 25% against EU-27 average 29%. The government has introduced some initiatives to narrow the gap in education achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged background and their peers. As to ISCED levels 3-4, the UK scores also lower (40%) than the EU average (47 %). In 2007, the percentage of the working population (25-64 years of age) that had attained at least upper secondary education was 65 per cent in the UK compared with EU 27 average of 76 per cent. (Table 1).

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 qualifications) is poor. Consequently, the proportion of the population having skills particularly at level 3 is lower than in other industrialised countries. 13% of 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and training in 2006 is lower than the EU-25 average (15.3%)⁶.

⁵ OECD Employment Outlook 2007, OECD, Paris, 2007, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/25/39041278.xls>

⁶ Draft 2008 Joint Progress Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme "Delivering Lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation", 31 January 2008

	TOTAL	PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED LEVELS 0-2)		UPPER SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED LEVELS 3-4)		TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED LEVELS 5-6)	
	TOTAL (1000)	TOTAL (1000)	%	TOTAL (1000)	%	TOTAL (1000)	%
EU27	268 116	77 859	29	125 857	47	62 688	23
UK	31 539	8 037	25	12 473	40	9 614	30

Source: Eurostat; EU Labour Force Survey

For the UK as a whole, the major concern is that circa 9.4% (2007)⁷ of school leavers at 16 (down from 10.4% in 2006), do not enter employment, further education or training (NEETs) and without further intervention they are at risk (for the qualification levels, see Table 2). For a 16-18 year old NEET group, the proportion decreased from 10.9 per cent at end 2005 to 10.3 per cent at end 2006.

	HIGHER EDUCATION	GCE A LEVEL OR EQUIVALENT(4)	GCSE GRADES A*-C OR EQUIVALENT	OTHER QUALIFICATIONS	No QUALIFICATIONS
UNITED KINGDOM	19.6	8.6	23.0	12.7	13.5
ENGLAND	19.9	8.2	22.4	13.3	13.2
WALES	17.2	7.7	24.0	11.5	15.8
SCOTLAND	18.5	13.4	27.7	9.3	12.9
NORTHERN IRELAND	17.5	7.3	24.0	7.1	21.7

(1) Males aged 16 to 64 and females aged 16 to 59.

(2) For information on equivalent level qualifications see Notes and Definitions.

(3) Below degree level.

(4) Includes recognised trade apprenticeship.

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics, Released on Regional Snapshot 09 May 2008;

⁷ <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/>

⁸ Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey, online database, 2006, Population aged 25-64, by highest level of education attainment 2005.

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

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

For the last decade, a UK-wide policy objective has been to improve the national skills base of the population throughout their working lives and create sustainable employment in order to compete in the globalised markets. The inter-departmental national skills strategy emphasises the economic and social benefits of skills and their role in supporting more high-quality sustainable jobs. The government has also continuously targeted unemployed and inactive population.

In December 2006, the government published the Leitch Report 'Prosperity for all in the global economy', which proposed a new set of targets to be achieved by 2020:

- participation in full-time education amongst 16-18 year olds to rise to 84%;
- 95% of adults to achieve the basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy, an increase from levels of 85% of literacy and 79% numeracy in 2005;
- exceeding 90% of adults qualified to at least level 2, an increase from 69% in 2005;
- shifting the balance of intermediate skills from level 2 to level 3. Improve the esteem, quantity and quality of intermediate skills: additional 1.9 million level 3 attainments and 500 000 apprentices a year.
- exceeding 40% of adults qualified to level 4 or above, up from 29% in 2005, with a commitment to continue progression.

The government aims to achieve an employment rate of 80%, as a long-term aspiration.

In response to meeting these targets, the government published a series of White papers and other policy documents, which proposed a 'skills revolution' to close skills gaps at every level by 2020, through a demand-led system, where the needs of adult learners and employers are given priority. The reforms envisage, amongst others, legislation on funding entitlement to free training in basic skills and first full level 2 qualifications; institutional reform of planning and funding bodies (replacement of LSC with two new bodies with different remits) and others.

These policy papers have also concern with young people education. A number of early school leavers, although improved lately, still remains quite high compared with other EU member states. To remedy the situation, the government has adopted a strategy to reduce the number of NEETs by building partnerships of schools, career services and families and providing

attractive alternatives to post-compulsory education and throughout impending legislation to raise the education participation age to 18 (England).

To raise attainment and widen participation, especially among disadvantaged, and to engage the interest of disaffected learners, the government is reforming 14 to 19 provision, with increased flexibility in the last two years of compulsory education (work-related learning engagement programmes) and by introducing new Diplomas in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which intend to provide a vocational alternative to general secondary education for 14-19 year olds.

The vocational qualification reform programme aims to make qualifications more flexible through the unit- and credit-based frameworks, which allows for better horizontal and vertical flexibility of the system. The Qualifications and Credit Framework in England underwent tests and trials in 2006, whereas the Scottish CQF is already well developed. The underlying aim of the ongoing reforms is to ensure 'parity of esteem' between vocational and academic education and ensure more flexible pathways for all.

A major aim is to move from a model where institutions respond to government priorities to one where they respond directly to the needs and demands of individual learners, parents and employers. One reason for this is to rebalance the roles and responsibilities of the state, employer and individual, recognising that, when potentially unlimited demand confronts limited public resource, the role of public funding must be clearly defined. Central objectives are: raising social mobility, narrowing attainment gaps and improving performance across the system, and ensuring responsiveness to employer and individual needs.

In summary, the main policy priorities⁹ relevant to vocational education and training in England are as follows:

- Improve the skills of the population throughout their working lives to create a workforce capable of sustaining economic competitiveness, and enable individuals to thrive in the global economy;
- Build social and community cohesion through improved social justice, civic participation and economic opportunity by raising aspirations and broadening participation, progression and achievement in learning and skills;
- Employer engagement is a key focus of the government's reforms set out in World Class Skills. The government seeks to create a demand-led skills system, in which the skills training and the qualifications provided are tailored to the needs of employers;
- Strengthen the capacity, quality and reputation of the Further and Higher Education systems and institutions to support national economic and social needs;
- Achieving a better sharing of responsibilities between the individual, employers and the state.

⁹ DGVET questionnaire 2008 Policy reporting, JIU, DIUS, 2008

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - 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.

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.

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.

The extent of collective agreements vary by industry and sector, although training has tended to be a matter left more to individual employers. For the last decade, the government places increasing importance on up-skilling the workforce and has strengthened sectoral approach to skills policy in the UK by enhancing the role of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). SSCs are tasked with securing increased levels of investment in skills and training. In June 2007, the government launched the Skills Pledge, a voluntary, public commitment by the company's management to support all its employees to develop their basic skills and work towards relevant qualifications (at least level 2).

Unions are taking a stronger interest in training than previously with an increased state support by providing statutory status to Union Learning Representatives (ULR) and establishing Learning Fund. 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.

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 (not 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 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;

2007 EDUCATION AND SKILLS BILL

- Raises the age young people stay in education or training, with a duty on young people to participate in learning post-16 and to achieve higher levels of skill and qualification and on parents to assist their children to participate. By 2013, all 17 year olds, and by 2015, all 18 year olds, will participate in some form of education or training;
- Sets out duties on employers to release young people for the equivalent of one day a week to undertake training elsewhere (where the employer does not provide their own training);
- Introduces a duty on local authorities to ensure that young people participate and to provide the support service currently known as Connexions;
- Requires local authorities to assess the education and training needs of young people aged 16-19 with special educational needs;
- Requires the Learning and Skills Council to secure the proper provision of courses for learners over the age of 19.

2007 FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACT

- Allowed FE colleges to award their own foundation degrees (ISCED level 5B);
- Replaced the 47 local LSCs with nine regional councils;
- Allowed other bodies to lead the strategic direction of the LSC.

0302 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET

There is no official definition of IVET in the UK and it can take place in various settings, which are administered by different bodies. There is no clear cut off between the IVET and CVET.

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 (table 1) 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 until 2010, then to be replaced by two new bodies), 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 UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), which replaced the Sector Skills Development Agency in early 2008.
- Awarding bodies develop and award a wide range of qualifications. Awarding bodies are private companies in their own right (with either

commercial or charitable status), although they are subject to regulation by accreditation bodies, e.g. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)¹⁰ (England), Department for Children, 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.

¹⁰ The regulatory function was taken over from QCA by Qfqual, a new body established in 2008.

Table 1: Allocation of VET responsibilities				
	ENGLAND	WALES	N. IRELAND	SCOTLAND
OVERALL POLICY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS	Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)	Department of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS)	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 Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS)	Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI)	Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
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 Regional Development Agencies (RDAs).	Welsh Assembly (WA) regional offices via Regional Statements of Needs and Priorities and in consultation with Community Consortia for Education and Training		Scottish Enterprise (SEn) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) working with Local Enterprise Companies (LECs)
INSPECTION OF PROVISION IN COLLEGES AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) ¹¹	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)	Dysg (Division of DCELLS)	Learning and Skills Network, Northern Ireland (NI arm of LSN)	Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU)
APPROVAL OF QUALIFICATIONS WHICH MAY BE SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC FUNDING	QCA ¹²	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

¹¹ New Ofsted was established on 1 April 2007 by merging with the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)

¹² In 2008, a new body for regulation and accreditation of qualifications (Ofqual) was formed, taken these functions over from QCA.

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS AND THE LICENSING OF SECTOR SKILLS BODIES	In the occupational standards programme, UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) 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	DIUS (England)
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION, IMPROVEMENTS IN COMPETITIVENESS, BUSINESS EFFICIENCY AND INVESTMENT.	RDAs (England) – responsible to the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform The Welsh Development Agency was merged into the Welsh Assembly Government in April 2006 and is now mainly housed in the Department for the Economy and Transport (DE &T)
SETTING REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND TARGETS FOR IMPROVING THE SKILLS BASE.	Frameworks of Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESAs)

Local authorities (LAs) 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 (IVET).

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.

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. Trade unions are, increasingly, seen as an important stakeholder in developing workplace learning from a number of lifelong learning initiatives, i.e. a network of learning representatives and a Union Academy, which offers 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.

0303 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

See 0302.

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 education¹³, 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. 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 college¹⁴ or a FE college¹⁵, 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) were phased out in 2007, and vocational GCSEs and vocational A-levels have been introduced since 2000.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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).

¹⁵ 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.

The new Diplomas (not Scotland), which combine elements of academic subjects and practical skills have been in development. Diplomas, a new suite of qualifications will be available at levels 1, 2 and 3 in 14 sector areas as a national entitlement as from 2013. The first five Diplomas in construction and built environment; engineering; IT; society; health and development; creative media are being taught to 40,000 students in England since academic year 2008. The numbers of young people, who drop out of education and training at 16, or before completing an upper secondary qualification, is an issue that government reforms are seeking to address.

New diplomas will build on key elements of its VET system's four features:

- The notion of competence, the criteria of assessment being the learning outcomes;
- The use of units of assessment – almost all UK qualifications are modular in delivery and assessment – which creates flexibility for learners, trainers and funding partners;
- The diversity of learning provision – learning need to be adaptable to local circumstances (economic and social) and particularly to the individual;
- The definition of occupational standards systematically using state-of-the-art needs analysis methods and involving stakeholders as much as possible.

The new Diplomas are being developed jointly by the DCSF, UKCES and QCA in consultation with 17 Diploma Development Partnerships (DDPs).

Pre-employment IVET may be undertaken at secondary school, or at a FE college, or with other training providers. 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 could lead to direct employment or to further training, within a FE college or with another training provider;
- Programmes of specific training are undertaken at a FE college and allow entry to a particular trade or profession (such as hairdressing, construction trades etc) This form of VET is a blend of 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).

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.

Further education institutions include sixth-form colleges, tertiary colleges and further education colleges (both general and specialist). Colleges of further education (FE) provide both IVET and CVET, catering for young people and adults. Most offer academic and general courses (such as A-levels), as well as vocational ones and some also offer degree courses, in Scotland, Highers and Advanced Highers.

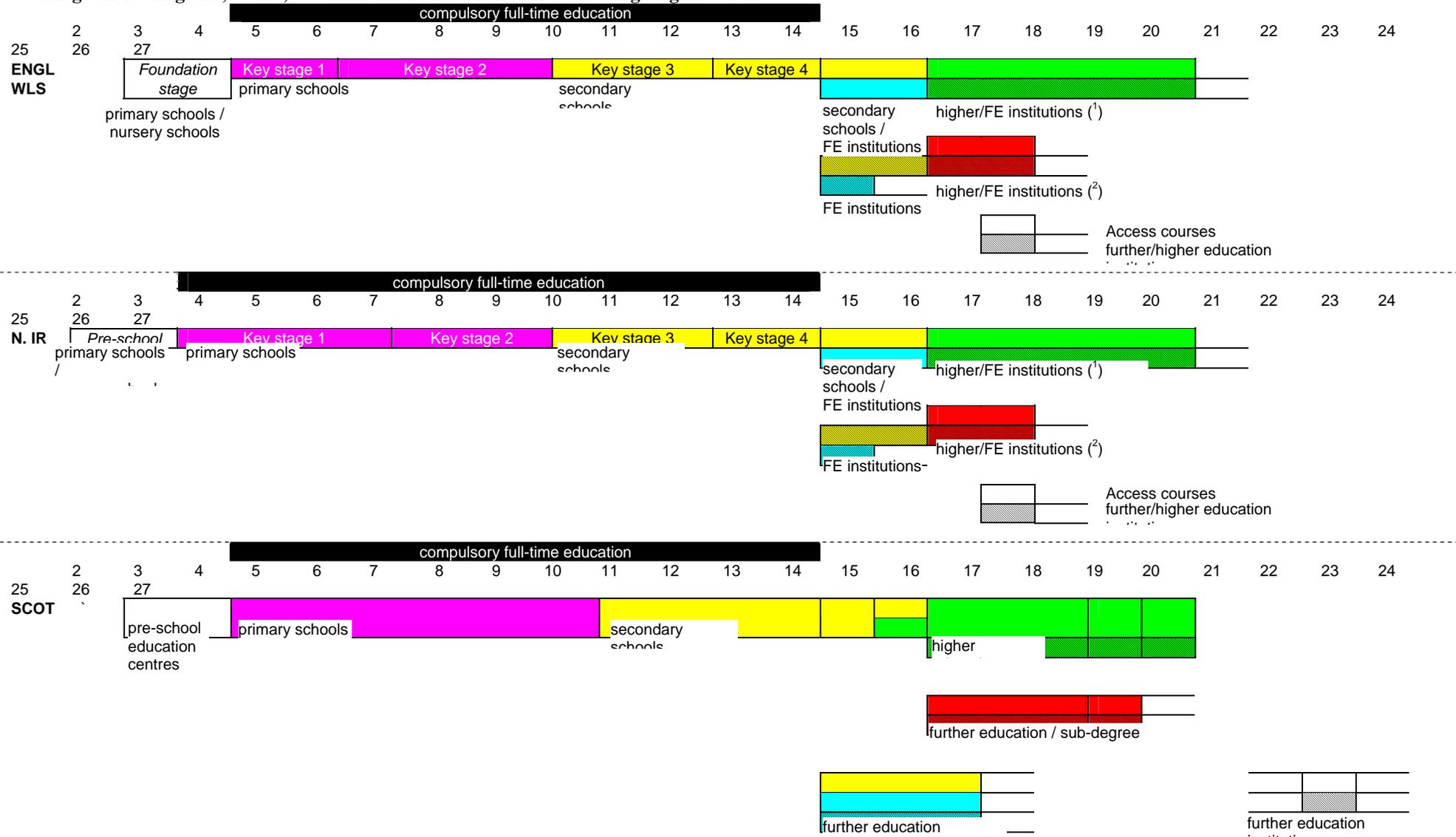
In higher education, universities and other institutions provide initial vocational education. In addition to three- or four-year first degrees, masters and doctorates universities offer a wide range of shorter courses including two-year Higher National Certificates and Diplomas (HNCs and HNDs) and Foundation Degrees.

SCOTLAND

The qualifications framework and programmes of study in Scotland differ from the rest of the UK (see Diagram 1 and Diagram 2). The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework provides a range of academic and vocational courses and qualifications covering hundreds of subjects¹⁶ for learners of all ages in schools and colleges. In secondary schools students aged 15-16 normally take Standard Grades 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.

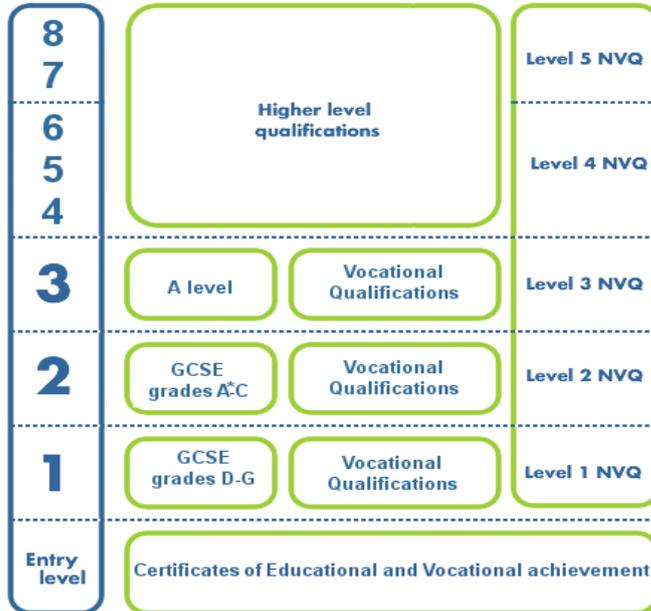
¹⁶ The framework was reviewed in 2002, with more subjects on offer (i.e., philosophy, politics, care and engineering).

Diagram 1 – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland Schooling Organisation



NB: ENGL = England; WLS = Wales; N. IR = Northern Ireland; SCOT = Scotland. Shaded boxes denote part-time or combined school and workplace courses. (1) largely theoretically based. (2) more practical/technical/occupationally specific. Source: Adapted from Eurydice.

Diagram 2 – English National Qualifications Framework (NQF)



0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

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.

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. They offer young people the opportunity to explore a particular vocational area as part of a balanced learning programme and promote parity of esteem between vocational and more traditional academic subjects. GCSEs in vocational subjects 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.

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

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)¹⁷.

The National Curriculum governs 14-16 year olds' learning programmes, which is a broad and balanced programme for most students, although greater specialisation towards vocational options was introduced for some students in 2002. The 16-19 year olds' learning programme is governed primarily by the student's main qualification aim. Learners following work-based training such as an apprenticeship or a FE course for entry to an

¹⁷ 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/>.

occupation, combine training for specific occupations with work. Training providers can be training or HR departments in firms, further education colleges or private training organisations.

In Wales, a six-year pilot of new Baccalaureate qualification is being implemented, 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.

From 2007, the Welsh Assembly government is running five Work-based Learning Pathways pilots in automotive, construction manufacturing, sport coaching (for 14-16 year olds) and care (16-18 year olds for legal restrictions) sectors. The pilots combine core GCSEs in schools with more practical experience. The learner must achieve an industry recognised VQ, normally at level 2. Some of the Pathways are directly linked to the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification.

Young Apprenticeships (introduced in England 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 in England (2002-2007) provide enhanced work-related learning (one to two days per week in vocational learning) through partnerships of local providers and businesses¹⁸. Although the programme ended in 2007, school and colleges have continued to offer programmes based on the curricula developed.

In Scotland, SQA developed Skills for Work courses (2005-2007), following the government's call for 'more skills-for-work options for young people', available for pupils in third and fourth year of secondary school (14-16). Skills for Work courses focus on generic employability skills needed for success in the workplace. A key feature is experiential learning linked to particular vocational areas. The courses are intended to provide progression pathways to further education, training and employment.

All the above programmes offer a flexible progression route to student who can progress at their own pace to further training or education.

¹⁸ <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/qualifications/>

Table 1: Destinations of school leavers by country (2006)				
	ENGLAND	WALES	NORTHERN IRELAND	SCOTLAND
NUMBER OF SCHOOL LEAVERS (THOUSANDS)	751.5	38.8	25.5	56.6
OF WHICH (%)				
EDUCATION	78	76	72	54
GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED TRAINING	6	9	18	5
EMPLOYMENT	6	4	4	26
UNEMPLOYED/ NOT AVAILABLE FOR WORK	7	6	3	13
UNKNOWN OR LEFT AREA	3	4	3	2

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 2006. Table 4.11.

Available from Internet:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000761/Vweb02-2007final.pdf>

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

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland upper secondary education begins 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 and A-levels 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 an apprenticeship scheme, which formally combines employment-based training with training provided either by a college or other training provider.

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.
- 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.

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.

The further education sector in the UK (2006) consists of 476 colleges, 102 of which 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.

At local level excellent Colleges and private training providers can be designated as Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) for the quality of their vocational education in a given occupational area, mainly at level 3. By 2007, 403 CoVEs have been approved in England. The LSC is also planning to launch a national standard of employer responsiveness for Colleges of Further Education.

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 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 [Table 1](#) on LSC-funded learners shows.

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-ilrsfr15final-apr08.pdf>

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. These are known as GCEs in 10 applied subjects: 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 Section 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. 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.

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Functional skills are practical skills in English, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Mathematics that allow individuals to work confidently, effectively and independently in life.

To ensure that functional skills are readily available to the full range of learners, they are being offered as free-standing qualifications at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 during the three-year functional skills pilot that began in September 2007. It is expected that functional skills will replace existing provision. Functional skills will also be constituent qualifications of new Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diplomas or part of the apprenticeship scheme.

The assessment approach will be primarily task-based scenario questions with a limited duration, delivered in a controlled environment. The assessments will support problem solving, skills-based approaches.

QCA has developed, with a range of partners, a set of standards for the functional skills pilot qualifications. The standards determine the knowledge and skills proficiency required at each level. The standards are available by following the "Functional skills standards" link to the left of this page.

In terms of achievement of attainment, QCA is currently working with DCSF and DIUS to confirm the performance points that will be attributed to the functional skills qualifications.

BTEC INTRODUCTORY, FIRST AND NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

BTECs (Business and Technical Education Council)¹⁹ 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)²⁰ 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 GUILDS²¹ 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 WELSH BACCALAUREATE QUALIFICATION REFORM) UPDATE

Reform is under way in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government has set the target that 25% of students in Wales will be following the Welsh Baccalaureate by 2010.

The WBQ was initially piloted from September 2003 in post sixteen qualification at levels 2 and 3 of the National Qualification Framework (ISCED 2 and 3) and is now being rolled out across Wales. A level 1 qualification (Foundation) has also been developed and is presently being piloted in 34 schools and colleges. It is awarded to students who complete a programme consisting of the Welsh Baccalaureate Core Certificate and optional studies drawn from existing qualifications. The optional studies element is assessed in line with the existing requirements of examining and awarding bodies. The Core involves students in the preparation of a portfolio of evidence for assessment including Key Skills and an Individual Investigation. The WBQ comprises two components:

- Core - consisting of four components i.e. Key Skills, Wales, Europe and the World, Work-related Education and Personal and Social Education.

¹⁹ Former awarding body.

²⁰ Awarding body.

²¹ Vocational awarding body, which awards almost 50 per cent of all National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ).

- Options - courses/programmes currently offered e.g. GCSE, VGCSE, AS/A levels, VCE (Vocational A levels), GNVQ, NVQ, BTEC.

A key feature of the WBQ is that of the personal mentor who meets regularly with the student and offers advice and encouragement.

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.

PRE-U COURSE

In 2007, the government approved the pre-U courses for state funding. The course has been devised by Cambridge International Examinations. Thirty institutions, 24 of which are private schools including some of the top schools like Eton, Winchester and Dulwich have already announced plans to offer pre-U's.

This is a two-year course in which students complete three main subjects as in A-levels – they could even opt to choose A-level syllabuses. They also complete a global perspectives and research component which leads to an independent research report on a topic chosen by the student. Above all, students will be assessed at the end of the two-year course, making it more like former A-levels.

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. 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. 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

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. By 2008, 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) in England 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 number²² 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.

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 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.

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.

SCOTLAND

Though similar, arrangements in Scotland differ somewhat. Training includes on- and off-the-job training, study for a SVQ level 3 (SCQF level 6) 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

²² How to use numbers to solve problems.

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 network²³ sets funding levels that reflect the age of the individual and importance of occupational sector to local economy.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

ENGLAND, WALES, NI

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 personal and social development (in formal and informal environments). 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, 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. The programme has been inspected several times, with its strengths (50,000 young people in first year) and weaknesses (mixed quality provision).

²³ 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.

UK 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 job search 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.

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).

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).

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 (e.g. 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 sector includes universities, colleges of HE, and specialist institutions, e.g. 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.

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

Since their introduction in 2001 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, Foundation Degrees have expanded at 25% per annum (20,800 students in 2007). They are shorter than Bachelors degrees, mainly in applied and vocational subjects, and designed to be taught in HE and FE 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 (full-time). 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

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.

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 up-skilling 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.

Since 2002 vocational education has received greater attention from policy-makers with a view to increasing the skills levels of the current and future workforce. 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 Scotland²⁴ emphasises the 'cradle to grave' idea of lifelong learning and widening access to learning for all citizens. In Wales, the Assembly's government's strategy²⁵ 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:

- Achieve cross-government action to tackle skills gaps and shortages;
- Encourage employers to use higher levels of skills in the workforce to develop more ambitious and innovative business strategies;

²⁴ Scottish Executive. Learning through Life: Life through Learning. The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland. February 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/lism.pdf> [cited 3.5.2005].

²⁵ 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: <http://www.wales.gov.uk/subieducationtraining/content/PDF/learningcountry-e.pdf> [cited 13.5.2005].

- Motivate learners to continue in and return to learning;
- Make VET responsive to employers' needs;
- Raise the status and quality of initial VET.

Wales and Northern Ireland have a particular focus on the employability skills of the economically inactive; Scotland is concerned with community learning and unemployed.

Key principles of the government strategy across the UK are increased engagement of learners, parents and employers, the extension of individual choice, the raising of standards for all, and the easing of transitions between the phases of education.

Some specific challenges include the creation of a model of lifelong progression which stresses continuity throughout the education and training process; a less directive approach to quality assurance across all sectors; and a coherent qualifications framework. The Qualifications and Credit Frameworks (QCF) across all levels and sectors aims to provide a simple qualification structure for individuals and employers, promote lifelong learning and facilitative transfer between pathways.

Addressing a 'greying workforce' challenge, the government created an Education and Training Committee, which brings together all the relevant government departments and national agencies. The Committee examines the implications for lifelong learning policy, including the effects of broader educational policy and collection of data on older learners, as well as the implications of age discrimination law for older learners.

ACCESS TO LEARNING

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.²⁶

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.

²⁶ 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.

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.

In its White Paper 21st Century Skills of 2003²⁷, the government introduced a new entitlement to free learning to anyone without a good foundation of employability skills. This enables them to get the training needed to achieve a level 2 qualification²⁸ from 2007. 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)²⁹, in areas of sectoral or regional priority. The further skills strategy document of 2005 put employers' needs at the centre of the design and delivery of training³⁰ and set a new entitlement to free training for young people up to the age of 25 to achieve a level 3 (ISCED 3), while announcing a new programme to support in-company basic training³¹, respectively.

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:

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.

²⁷ DfES. 21st century skills: realising our potential. London: DfES, 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/14-19educationandskills/index.shtml> [cited 13.05.05].

²⁸ 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).

²⁹ 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).

³⁰ White Paper, Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work, DfES, 2005, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy/uploads/documents/Skills WP Part 1.pdf>

³¹ White Paper, Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances, DfES, 2006, <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm67/6768/6768.pdf>

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.

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.

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, often at a workplace. In Scotland the Scottish Executive funds the Scottish Union Learning Fund (SULF) as part of the strategy to tackle skills issues.

PLANNING AND FORECASTING MECHANISMS

The recent shake-up of sectoral arrangements aims to improve their capacity for undertaking labour market analysis in anticipation of emerging sector skill requirements. The developing Sector Skills Councils and awarding bodies respectively review the labour market need and uptake of qualifications with

specific priority being given to employers' needs. 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. 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.

Strong emphasis is now placed on identifying and planning skill development programmes to meet regional/local labour market needs.

Each of the 25 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) - which have been established from smaller scale industrial lead bodies in the UK and are led by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), which replaced the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) in March 2008 - are required by government to develop Sector Qualifications Strategies and a Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) between employers and providers of learning and training in their sector. SSCs are employer led organisations with the role of representing employers' skills needs to government and raising employer demand for skills, also representing the interests of other stakeholders, particularly the unions. The process of developing a SSA involves 5 stages³² and starts with a Skills Needs Assessment (SNA). Within this SSCs are required to forecast employment and skills needs within their sector. This is achieved through two means:

- By using the existing quantitative forecasts for the UK (i.e. Working Futures 2004-2014³³ which provide cross sector, comparable projections at national and regional levels using national sources of information based on the SIC system. These can be supplemented by bespoke, sector specific forecasts for qualifications. A publicly accessible online research database Sector Skills Matrix³⁴ contains the data from all sectors' surveys.
- Qualitative scenarios with sector employers.

The Sector Skills Agreement is now recognised as the mechanism through which employer skills needs in the UK are identified and met.

³² Five stages are as follows: 1. Assessment of current and future skill needs. 2. Assessment of current provision. 3. Analysis of the gaps and weaknesses in current workforce development activity. 4. Assessment of the scope for collaborative action by employers. 5. The development of a costed action plan with key delivery partners.

³³ Dickerson, Homenidou and Wilson (2006) Working Futures 2004-2014: National Report <http://www.ukces.org.uk/pdf/Web%20Working%20Future%202004-2014%20National%20R%20060215.pdf>

³⁴ Sector Skills Matrix <http://www.ukces.org.uk/>

Target groups include the full range of groups that are likely to be represented among the low skills, including NEETs, immigrants, members of some ethnic minorities, those lacking in basic skills.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

The main bodies responsible for developing and implementing national policy for training are undergoing another major reform, the national and local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) in England will be replaced by 2010 by two new planning and funding bodies and the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), (UK-wide), has been transformed into the UK Commission for Employment and Skills in early 2008. UKCES leads and licenses the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). Each is referred to elsewhere in this overview. Other main bodies involved include:

- Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (England), The Welsh Assembly, The Assembly of Northern Ireland, the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- Government Offices for the Regions;
- Basic Skills Agency;
- National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education;
- LSN and QIA (formerly, LSDA);
- Local authorities;
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD);
- Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (and Local Enterprise Companies -LECs).

PARTICIPATION RATES

The UK has a continuing challenge to increase participation in learning among adults, especially those 'hard to reach'. The government's Annual Population Survey (APS) in England measures adults aged 16 to 69 participating in learning of any kind. In 2006, 68.2% of all adults reported participating in some type of learning and 46.6% (14.9 million) participated in taught courses. The Adult Learning Survey, which is carried out annually by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) has shown a downward trend in adult participation for the last three years. The corresponding rates in Scotland remain quite low compared with other parts of the UK.

DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS

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.

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.

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.

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 (2005-06) consists of 476 colleges, 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. According to the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Services) annual datasets, in 2004, FE institutions in the UK supplied 42% of students for higher education³⁵.

There is a long tradition of people who lacked formal qualifications or training earlier in life achieving qualifications flexibly later on. 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

³⁵ UCAS Annual Pivot Tables, <http://www.ucas.com/figures/about/pivot.html>

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 HNC/Ds to degrees. Under these arrangements learners undertake an HNC or D and articulated onto the second or third year of a specified degree programme. The amount of credit offered, for learning at HN 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 HN-degree articulation routes is available at <http://www.napier.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx>

This overview indicates elsewhere many of the initiatives that government and other stakeholders 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 following is an illustrative list of government's initiatives, including financial incentives, and priorities that are intended to improve access to continuing training, but is not intended to be exhaustive:

EMPLOYER TRAINING PILOTS (ETPs) – KNOWN AS 'TRAIN TO GAIN' AS OF 2006

The ETPs, a government initiative of 2002, encourage employers to train low-skilled employees by reimbursing employers the cost of granting low-skilled employees paid time off work to pursue education and training courses. By 2006, 18 000 employers and 80 000 employees, who lack basic skills or vocational qualifications at level 2 were trained.

The nationwide Train to Gain programme, which replaced the ETPs, attracted 169,400 learners in its first full year.

FOUNDATION DEGREES (NOT SCOTLAND)

The Foundation Degree is a vocationally oriented qualification below the level of a BA degree level, which allows for progression to a full degree. They are meant for learners with non-traditional academic background and are designed in conjunction with employers.

BUSINESS LEARNING ACCOUNTS (BLAs)

The Scottish Executive has piloted 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 provide easily accessible information and advice to potential learners about all kinds of learning opportunities. Learndirect Scotland provides learners with advice on learning opportunities available throughout Scotland, including information on childcare facilities. 460 Scottish learning centres are located in libraries; shopping centres, leisure centres and other locally based facilities. Learndirect Scotland works with businesses, providing advice on training needs and to identify appropriate courses.

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, GBP51 million (EUR61 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.

Similar schemes to improve literacy and numeracy levels of adult skills, including Skills for Life, exist across the UK.

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.

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES (EMAs)

EMAs target young people from less well-off backgrounds and are linked to course attendance and progression requirements, aiming to improve levels of participation and retention, particularly in deprived areas. EMAs became a national scheme across the UK in 2004. The grant is up to EUR42 a week for 16-17 year olds from low-income families to stay on in learning.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNTS (ILAs)

An individual could open an ILA and access a range of discounts on the costs of learning provided they make some contribution as well. This approach is fully operational in Wales. In England the scheme was suspended in 2004 (apart from National Health Service NHS) and a new one was piloted in two regions in the year 2007-08 academic year, and funds were made available to buy programmes above level 2. 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.

In Scotland, a new scheme is under review, which will initially target low-income learners and will allow the learner up to GBP200 (EUR 320) support per year.

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

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 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 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. More

than 1.8 million people have found a job through the New Deal since its launch in 1998 (as of January 2008). At the end of 2007 the government published Ready for Work³⁶, which set out its plans for a more flexible personalised New Deal with a strong focus on helping the most disadvantaged jobseekers get and sustain work.

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.

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 Councils 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

³⁶ Ready for Work is available on the DWP website at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfare-reform/readyforwork/>

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.

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.

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.

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.

In 2006, 26.6 per cent of people of working age had received job-related training in the last four weeks in the UK, which compares favourable to the EU average of 9.6%³⁷. Employees were more likely to receive job-related training than self-employed, the unemployed or the economically inactive.

SOCIAL PARTNERS - UNIONLEARNITY

Unionlearn, is the Trade Union Council's (TUC) learning and skills organisation, which was established in 2006 to provide a strategic framework and support for unions' work on learning and skills. Mostly funded by the government, it's a union-led organisation, with a Board comprising 15 senior TUC General Council members. The mission of unionlearn is to increase workers' life chances through opening more learning opportunities to their members, particularly those disadvantaged in the labour market. There are two targets set: that by 2010 there should be 22,000 trained and accredited ULRs and that these will help a quarter of a million employees per year into training.

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.

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.

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

³⁷ Draft 2008 Joint Progress Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme "Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation", 31 January 2008.

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.

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 (Higher National Certificate/Higher National Diploma 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 a 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

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

For VET in the UK, teachers (also known as lecturers within further education (FE)) colleges for employment purposes) are regarded as those working in schools and colleges, whereas trainers are employed mainly in a work-based setting.

Prior to 1999, there were few if any requirements in the UK for trainers and VET teachers to have formal training or hold qualifications to teach, unless they worked in the state-funded sector. The aim now is that all those who perform a teaching or training role in the UK should hold, or be working towards, a full teaching qualification. Teachers within the FE sector 'need two sets of skills – to be expert in their subject and to be trained to teach it'³⁸.

Since late 1990s, training of trainers for further education (including VET) has been a priority within the lifelong learning frameworks. In particular, the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), a SSC, develops, quality assures and promotes national standards for the training of trainers and teachers in the public FE colleges and private training sectors.

In 2007 the LLUK established a VET teacher qualifications and standards framework. The framework includes qualifications for various kinds of teaching and non-teaching staff (in learning support, e-learning, assessment, leadership and management). Since then all VET teachers must register with their new professional body, the Institute for Learning (IFL), which confers full Qualified Teacher in the Learning and Skills Sector (QTLS) or 'Licensed Practitioner' on all those registered with it. The IFL publishes a code of professional practice. There is also a compulsory requirement that for a VET teacher/trainer to stay registered with IFL, they must evidence a minimum of 30 hours CPD over a year. From 2007 all VET Principals and aspiring Principals must successfully complete a standardised (by the LLUK) leadership programme managed by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL).

LLUK is charged by government to implement the new FE Workforce strategy to come, and the newly developed qualifications will form a key part of the strategy.

Moreover, the government has introduced a range of policy measures to incentivise the recruitment and retention teaching staff in profession. For FE teachers these are:

³⁸ Department for Education and Skills – DfES, The future of initial teacher education for the learning and skills sector. London: DfES, 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/ACF4240.pdf> [cited 13.5.2005].

- A scheme to attract new recruits to train for pre-service entry to tertiary teaching has operated for several years. Funded by the government each student during the year of Post-Graduate Certificate in Education or Certificate in Education training currently receives a bursary of GBP 6 000 (EUR 7 200). From 2005, intending teachers of Mathematics receive a bursary of GBP 7 000 (EUR 9 400).
- 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 GBP 4 000 (EUR 4 800) 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 DCSF.
- 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. Apart from this recognition, there is the standard progression route through promotion from the main lecturer grade.

Within the diverse sector of non-government VET provision (private colleges and training providers, in-house training in employer organisation, voluntary organisation, etc.) there is no formal requirement for trainers to hold a recognised teaching qualification.

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). 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.

IVET and CVET trainers are appointed on the basis of their craft/academic/professional qualifications and experience. Only if a provider receives public funding, it is expected that trainers will work towards obtaining a full teaching award, following an in-service route.

Within the UK there is no formal system for in-service, continuing professional development of VET teacher/trainer either working at school or college or work-based trainers.

Broadly, arrangements are similar for England, Wales and Northern Ireland; there are some differences in Scotland.

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 (QTS); 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.

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

In Scotland, Learning and Teaching Scotland provides a wide range of support for teachers. Determined to Succeed, the Scottish Executive's strategy for enterprise in education is providing increased Continuing Professional Development opportunities for teachers to enable them to better contextualise their lessons and link them to the world of work.

In Wales, the recommendations of a WAG commissioned review of initial teacher education, are currently being disseminated and debated. A professional development framework is being developed for teachers to help identify individual development needs, and Welsh Language Sabbatical schemes are being promoted for teachers at all levels. In Wales, a strategic plan is in development to engage all education practitioners in all sectors in effective learning, teaching and professional development, including an International Professional Development programme for FE lecturers.

In Northern Ireland, a major review of teacher education is in progress, to ensure that the profession is best placed to cope with the changes facing the education sector in the coming years, and work has begun to clarify the future roles of Early Years workers and how they might evolve in the light of the new strategy for Early Years provision.

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.

TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

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).

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. In 2001 a new requirement that such teachers, whether newly-appointed or already in post, obtain a full teaching qualification has been introduced. 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.

SCOTLAND

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has introduced a new approach to staff development, which focuses on the professional competence of all college staff. In Scotland, FE lecturers on full-time permanent contracts are encouraged to obtain a qualification, and the SFEFC provides funding to cover the cost of training. Arrangements governing the training of FE lecturers are set out in National Guidelines³⁹. These guidelines make provision for all the competences required from a FE lecturer to be included in a National Index of Initial Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development

³⁹ Scottish Office Education and Industry Department – SOEID, National guidelines on provision leading to the teaching qualification and related professional development. Edinburgh: SOEID, 1997.

Units. These units are intended to cater for the induction, initial teacher training and continuing professional development of all FE lecturers.

FE colleges also employ 'learning support workers'. This term covers a wide range of titles and roles, including student advisory responsibilities. They will hold qualifications appropriate to the specific roles for which they have been appointed. A wide range of qualifications is required for these posts, according to the nature of the duties to be covered, Some qualifications are very specific (such as 'signing' qualification to support deaf students, or a specialist dyslexia support qualification); other posts required an Assessor Award or a qualification in a particular areas. According to the NAFTHE research report, sampling 36 colleges, only one post, of those surveyed required a full initial teaching qualification.⁴⁰

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.

College teachers and work-based trainers responsible for assessing trainees within national vocational qualifications must also possess an Assessor Award⁴¹. Additionally, there is a range of other training qualifications which workplace, industrial trainers and those working in HRD may hold or attain. Such awards are freestanding and may be taken by the individual as part of a trainer's continuing professional development.

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 GBP 10 000 and GBP 28 000 per year (EUR 12 000-33 600). Hourly rates varied from GBP 6.53 to

⁴⁰ NAFTHE: The routes and employment of learning support workers in further education colleges, September 2003.

⁴¹ Assessor Award: Formal recognition (level 3) through a portfolio of evidence of having undertaken formal assessment procedures against specified competences. It relates to assessment of individual learner's work, internal moderation, and external verification.

GBP 25 (EUR from 8 to 30). 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.

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 there is a number 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 GBP 10 000 and GBP 28 000 per year (EUR 14-40 000 approximately). Hourly rates varied from GBP 6.53 to GBP 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

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 Councils (SSCs) 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 developed 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 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 SSCs 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 DIUS. 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 Office for Standards in Education, Children Services and Skills (Ofsted) 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 3,000 Scottish workplaces. 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.

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 apprenticeships, 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.

Since 2002, the reform of vocational qualifications (VQ) has been implemented across the UK. The vision was that a flexible, responsive and easily understood VQ system to meet individual and employment needs should be in place by 2010, with a unit-based credit framework by 2007. The QCF (England) has been tested and trialled. This phase of the vocational qualification reform was externally evaluated and is currently with the ministers awaiting decision for national roll-out (mid-2008).

The QCA, a government agency, in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and the relevant bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is responsible to DCSF/DIUS 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.

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. The possibility of recognising prior learning is being considered to be incorporated into the developing the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland has adopted 'Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Informal Learning' as part of the arrangements for the SQCF.

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.

These frameworks' developments will facilitate transfer and accumulation of qualifications and credits across the four nations of the UK. The work to align the qualification frameworks in the UK with the ETF is underway.

In England, three National Skills Academies (NSAs) were launched in 2006. Led by employers but with Government support these aim to encourage excellence in vocational education at national level, operating as world class centres of excellence in training for their occupational sectors. The intention is to establish twelve by end 2008.

At regional level employers, education and training providers and government agencies come together to develop coordinated approaches to skills issues through Regional Skills Partnerships, and at local level Local Aimhigher Partnerships bring together partners to develop and coordinate initiatives to widen participation in higher education, including vocational routes.

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 (introduction of new Diplomas, in particular) 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 contains a number of lines based on areas of knowledge, skills and competences, 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, UKCES, and the regulatory and funding agencies for Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, QCA is developing a joint programme of work to improve the vocational qualifications system to ensure it meets future needs. In Scotland, reforms such as the new credit-based qualification framework 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 makes the qualifications available more understandable and show their relative value.

Creation of comprehensive national framework of outcome-based qualifications, coupled with Foundation Degrees' proliferation, aim to help bridge the academic vocational divide and ease vertical transition.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

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 work base 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 assists in making clear the relationships between Scottish qualifications and those in the rest of the UK (QCF in England, in particular), Europe and beyond, thereby clarifying opportunities for international progression routes and credit transfer.

The Scottish Further Education Unit supports key developments and innovations in teaching and learning in the further education sector in Scotland. In England the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) 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 e-learning 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 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING FORMAL LEARNING

AN OVERVIEW OF COMPETENCE-BASED QUALIFICATIONS IN THE UK

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are similar, though the qualifications frameworks in which they are located differ. (See 0201). The purpose of developing NVQs and SVQs was to improve 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 and to allow 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 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs and SVQs) are a statement of competence clearly relevant to work and intended to facilitate entry into, or progression in, employment, further education and training. Assessment covers:

- 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. They vary by title and level. NVQs cover levels 1-5, which equates approximately to the ISCED levels. A review of vocational qualifications in the UK is currently under way. A new qualifications and credit (QCF) framework is being developed in England as the successor to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The new structure is designed to update and enhance the current system, implementing a flexible and robust unit-based qualifications framework that promotes credit accumulation and transfer. The new framework will be broader and more inclusive, accurately recognising achievement across the full range of quality general, specialist and vocational qualifications.

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 nor 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 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 and is responsible for developing a new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). QCA accredits (formally recognises) proposals for NVQ awards developed by sector bodies and awarding bodies, and quality assures and audits the activity of awarding bodies⁴².

Sector bodies: The Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), overseen by the UKCES 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).

0802 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING NON-FORMAL/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

⁴² In 2008, a responsibility for regulation and accreditation of qualifications was taken over from QCA by Ofqual, a new agency.

qualifications. Any learner, employed or not, who can provide evidence that 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 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.

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.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has taken a strategic interest in the recognition of informal and non-formal learning in England. Pilots were 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, in 2004, LSC launched a system for providing informal recognition of the learning outcomes of adult part-time courses that do not of themselves lead to a qualification. Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in Non-Accredited Learning (RAPRA) approach was adopted as one of the new measures of success in LSCs' strategy. RAPRA was accepted as a valid method of recognising and recording learners' achievement in learning where more usual measures (e.g. qualifications) are not appropriate. Since then significant changes were introduced in terms of funding of non-accredited provision, which led to sharp fall in number of adult learners and hence reduced the impact of the approach.

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 certificating 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.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) has a set of guidelines on recognition of prior learning and experiential learning (APEL),

allows credit rating and levelling of learning in terms of core, generic skills rather than subject-specific learning.

0803 - IMPACT OF EU POLICY COOPERATION

The UK has three different qualification frameworks in each of the parts of the UK. England, Wales and Northern Ireland have a three-country framework, known as the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which has nine levels, including an entry level. At present, NQF in England includes only full qualifications (not units), which meet statutory requirements and many qualifications are outside the framework. It did not cover HE. Within this, Wales has its own Credit and Qualifications Framework (CQFW). Scotland has a separate own credit and qualifications framework (SCQF), based on 12 levels, which includes access levels. Currently, England, Wales and Northern Ireland are working on the development of a more inclusive unit-based qualifications framework, underpinned by a system of credit accumulation and transfer across the three countries. This framework will be aligned with the Scottish CQF and EQF.

The EQF's focus on learning outcomes is consistent with the development of qualifications frameworks across the UK. Both national and sectoral qualifications in the UK are being matched to the EQF through these national qualifications frameworks. Thus in Scotland, a mapping exercise has been conducted between the SCQF and EQF levels to ascertain the alignment.

Some concerns have been expressed about the lack of clarity in the proposed EQF how lower levels of qualifications such as those for learners with low skill levels would be accommodated. The framework for lifelong learning should be generic and inclusive of all types of learners, in UK's view.

The UK supports the objectives of the proposed ECVET system: increased transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competence and qualifications are all important to enable greater mobility and ensure that lifelong learning becomes a reality. In particular, the UK strongly supports the emphasis on learning outcomes as the primary means of describing achievement. This is consistent with the development of vocational qualification systems across the UK, and should help move towards a system where individuals are recognised for what they achieve, rather than how long they have studied.

However, the UK is concerned about the potential problems arising from having separate credit systems for higher education (ECTS) and vocational education and training (ECVET). There is a need to break down the artificial barriers between 'vocational' and 'academic' education. The UK have expressed concern that the ECVET proposals may not facilitate the mobility or credit transfer between VET and HE, given ECTS's focus on workload, and ECVET's focus on learning outcomes. Moreover, the presence of two credit systems has the potential to confuse stakeholders. The UK wishes the two systems be evaluated and ways to bring ECTS and ECVET closer together be examined, so that they are compatible, or to create a single credit

accumulation and transfer system, which encompasses both academic and vocationally orientated learning.

0804 - FACILITATING EU MOBILITY

The UK support the developments of EQF and ECVET, which both have a potential to help increase transnational mobility of individuals, as well as aid the development of institutional and sectoral partnerships across Europe.

As of end-June 2007, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) leads on the implementation of the Directive and the draft EC (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2007 (?the DIUS Regulations?), which apply to all ?general systems? professions, i.e. those whose training conditions are not harmonised across the EU. Some of the provisions will apply to the sectoral professions, for example, doctors, architects, whose training conditions are harmonised in the EU. DIUS have conducted a consultation exercise (May to October 2007) on the draft implementing regulations, as well. The follow up of the consultations can be found at: <http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations>.

The DIUS have liaised with the sectors? regulatory and professional bodies as well as professionals at large. It will consider feedback form the consultation and recommend any resulting amendments to the draft legislation to Ministers, before laying the regulations before Parliament in the autumn 2007.

Relevant government departments lead on transposing measures relating to different professions. Devolved administrations have different settlement arrangements for different professions and regulations concerning different professions will be made in relation to the whole of the UK or to different countries of the UK.

The UK encourages efforts to exchange best practice in the areas of quality of qualifications by supporting some bilateral initiatives, for example, twinning arrangements between the French colleges and lycees and UK language colleges in collaboration with the Technology College Trust.

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The overall 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.

With devolution and other political changes, the UK system of for the delivery of IAG has fragmented. Whilst Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales retain all-age service, England continues to separate services for young people from those for adults.

The reform of 2001 in England established Connexions services <http://www.connexions.gov.uk/> for young people in the years of transition between schooling and the labour market, which have delivered services through 75 partnerships at local level. It was credited with some success in reducing the number of NEETs, but was not sufficiently responsive to the needs of mainstream young people. The latter was partly due to the underfunding and confusion over respective roles and responsibilities of schools and Connexions partnerships.

Two government policy initiatives of 2005⁴³ and the Education and Skills Bill (2007) make provision for a IAG reform for young people by planning to transfer Connexions services from the existing partnerships to Local Authorities.

IAG for adults is also in transition in England, following the recommendations of the Leitch review of skills (2006) and the Skills Commission's inquiry into IAG (2008). The Leitch review recommends to establish 'a new universal adult career service, providing labour market focused careers advice for all adults. With demise of LSCs, which is currently responsible, alongside other organisations, for adult IAG, the new Adult Advancement and Careers Service (AACS) in England will be rolled out in 2010-11 with an intention to 'give every adult easy access to skills and careers advice that will help them find work and progress in their careers'. Currently, 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 report describes the 2007 IAG services in the UK.

In England, all providers of IAG services that are funded through Connexions partnerships require accreditation against the National Quality Standards for

⁴³ An End to End Review of Careers Education and Guidance for young people, DfES, 2005 and Youth Matters (Green Paper), DfES, 2005.

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 Ofsted (not Scotland) provides a quality assurance for standards and provision of guidance services.

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.

Guidance and counselling can also be provided in the workplace by Trade Unions, which is currently is developing a new IAG model for ULRs or through Learndirect and learndirect Scotland who act as brokers between learners and learning providers.

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 <http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk/home/home.asp>.

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;
- The following are the main UK measures.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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.

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 Table 1.

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 <http://www.learndirect.co.uk/> 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. England has started yet another big-scale reform of funding of post-16 education⁴⁴ as 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' 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. The reform envisages that a higher contribution will be required from employers and individuals, who have got level 2 qualifications. 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.

The education spending in the UK in real terms has not significantly increased in the last five years, although the government is committed to stability of funding for education and skills. The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the financial framework for public services, provides for overall public funding for education and skills only to increase slightly in the next five years (0.3% UK, 2.8% England for 2008-2011). In VET funding has been changed to support government policy priorities for young people and major programme for adults, such as Skills for Life, level 2 entitlement and Train to Gain, thus curtailing spending on other adult non-priority areas.

For the last five years, spending per pupil/student has increased fastest in schools, followed by FE, whereas HE spending per student has changed little in real terms.

In 2007, the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) will redistribute resources in the light of changing economic and social priorities, and ensure efficient use of resources for work which crosses Departmental boundaries. This funding will be linked to a set of public service agreements

⁴⁴ This report covers the system in 2007.

(PSAs) and indicators, which HM Treasury will use to measure the impact of the investment. Investment in the DAs is less directly linked to PSAs than in England, as the DAs control their own budgets within the overall allocations from HM Treasury. The 2000-06 European Social Fund programmes were used to add value to a range of government training programmes and initiatives across the UK, and this continues in the integrated lifelong learning programme period 2007-13.

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 <http://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).

In Wales, the National Assembly Government (WAG) 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 Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) under the WAG has a responsibility for post-16 education and training in Wales (excluding higher education) has implemented a new National Planning and Funding system, which aims to strengthen the link between the learning needs and the learning delivery and to 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

New funding models and methods are being introduced during 2008-2009, making funding more demand-led by learners and employers and reflecting introduction of new programmes. As the system is in transition, it reflects the funding mechanisms of 2006.

In England, funding flows from the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) to Learning and Skills Councils and then to training providers. The LSC funds post-16 education in secondary schools, via the

LAs, 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.

The majority of funding for school-based IVET (whether undertaken at a further education – FE – college or school) originates from the central DIUS). 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 authorities (LA) based on the funding formulae (number of students, their age, students with special education needs etc). LA raises funds through local taxation. Local authorities and education institutions also receive a small proportion of direct funding from DSCF or the Welsh Assembly Government. Schools can also raise some funds through voluntary contributions and renting out premises.

The LSCs are also responsible for funding school sixth forms. The LSC does not fund them directly – it funds the LAs, which include the allocation within their schools' 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 Councils – 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 DIUS as a grant. The DIUS 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 adult 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.

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. 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.

In Wales the National Planning and Funding System (NPFS) supports a credit-based framework. Funding is based on Credit Equivalence Units (CEUs), which were developed as a component of the NPFS funding model pending the wider credit valuation of funded learning.

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.

In Northern Ireland, virtually all schools have delegated budgets under which school governors determine spending priorities.

DELNI 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 (SE) 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 provided GBP 42m (EUR 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.

At tertiary level, the 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 Funding Council (SFC)⁴⁵, 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.

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

Statutory, employers are not required to provide training to employees. Nevertheless, employers spend a considerable amount on training: The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) claims that employers spend some GBP 32 (EUR 39.6) billion per annum on training, including the costs off the time staff spend training. 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, particularly, for those without basic skills or level 2 qualifications. The companies can also qualify for the government-sponsored programmes for low-skilled employees (for example, Train to Gain).

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 and almost 2,000 learning centres across the UK.

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. Government sponsors

⁴⁵ In 2006, the funding bodies for FE (Scottish Further Education Funding Council) and HE (Scottish Higher Education Funding Council) were merged to form the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in order to develop a cohesive system of funding lifelong learning and research.

the Union Learning Fund, which trains and accredits union learning representatives, who aim to help 250 000 employees per year annually by 2010. Union Academy has been established with the government financial support to provide course from basic skills to MBAs.

ADULT AND COMMUNITY 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 (for priority areas and priority qualifications), as well as distance learning courses, such as through Open University. Increasingly, study programmes and guidance are available on-line. 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.

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.

Although traditionally the adult learning participation has been high, it has dropped (49% change in enrolment 2003-2007) due to the funding changes, which took effect in 2005-2006 and were followed by further funding cuts in non-priority areas in 2006-2007. Training providers have been obliged to increase courses fees for adults who do not fall into the government's priority groups (those without basic skill level 2 qualifications, amongst others).

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 Local Authorities (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.

In Northern Ireland, it provided by the further education sector, supplemented by the work of a range of non-statutory providers, using established funding streams.

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. Its financing follows established routes.

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

The government announced a comprehensive review of welfare policies and associated programmes, including training, for long-term unemployed and other vulnerable groups (those on incapacity benefits, offenders and others) in 2005. The system is yet to undergo further changes, the report refers to the system as it stands in 2008.

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. After a 10-year successful run of the programme, in December 2007 the government announced a programme reform to introduce a more flexible, personalised New Deal with a strong focus on helping the most disadvantaged jobseekers get and sustain work. In January 2008, the government was spending £5 billion less on unemployment than in 1997 and claimant unemployment was at a 30 year low. According to the programme evaluation, the New Deal has contributed to this success.

THE NEW DEAL INITIATIVE

[The New Deal for Young People \(NDYP\)](#) and New Deal 25plus are mandatory programmes for those who are unemployed for six to 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. To boost skills of those actively searching work, New Deal for Skills launched back in 2004 and 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.

Diagram 1 – New Deal Spending 2000 - 2008

	2000 –01	2001 –02	2002 –03	2003 –04	2004 –05	2005 –06	2006 –07	2007 –08
	outturn	outturn	outturn	outturn	outturn	estimated outturn	plans	plans
Administrative expenditure (see notes 1–3)								
New Deal for young people	119	89	93					
New Deal 25 plus	18	73	71					
New Deal for over 50s	11	5	5					
New Deal for lone parents	29	37	44					
New Deal for disabled people	7	6	15					
New Deal for partners	10	6	6					
Sub-total for New Deals	194	216	234	111	113	121	125	129
Action Teams (see note 4)	5	14	23	11	13	14	8	0
Sub-total	199	230	256	122	126	135	132	129
Programme expenditure (DEL)								
New Deal for young people	293	219	178	215	211	153	181	190
New Deal 25 plus	42	140	114	137	135	98	116	121
New Deal for over 50s	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3
New Deal for lone parents	14	9	18	20	24	28	23	23
New Deal for disabled people	7	4	16	28	65	66	75	67
New Deal for partners	1	2	0	0	1	1	8	8
Sub-total for New Deals	360	376	328	404	439	348	406	412
Action Teams (see note 4)	6	23	30	32	23	29	14	0
Sub-total	366	399	358	437	462	377	420	412
Programme expenditure (AME)								
New Deal for young people (see note 5)			43	49	43	43	44	46
New Deal 25 plus (see note 5)			53	52	44	44	41	45
New Deal for over 50s (see note 6)	42	80	79	38	0	0	0	0
Sub-total	42	80	174	139	87	87	85	90
Total	607	709	789	698	676	599	638	631

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 EUR 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's and the devolved administrations' main objectives for education and training. From 2005, the focus of policy for adult learning changed to acquisition of skills, the aim being to meet the needs of employers and boost the country's economic competitiveness. Therefore, the major objective in the financing in education and training has been to alter the balance of resources between the state, employers and individuals. With limited public resources, state funding is to be channelled to areas of demonstrated market failure and used to support government priorities, notably provision for young people and initiatives for adults without a full level 2 qualification or above, while encouraging employers' further contribution into their staff training as well as individuals'. The current institutional changes (abolishment of LSCs and channelling funding streams through different structures) and funding mechanisms review are meant to support this shift.

The linking of strategy, funding and the different learning streams is an intentional part of government policy and of the new legislation.

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.

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 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 review of guidance systems.
- How to raise intermediate or technical skills levels among the workforce: State funding of apprenticeships, new diplomas for young learners, the expansion of non-degree higher education and the current review of vocational qualifications aim to tackle this issue, although major concerns remain.
- How to fund the expansion of higher education: in particular, the extent to which the stock of graduates is an individual good as compared to a social/economic good is a sharp political issue. The administrations of the UK take divergent positions on this issue.

CHANGES TO THE FUNDING MECHANISM FOR GOVERNMENT-FUNDED TRAINING

The changes 2008/09 academic year relate to the mechanisms of funding rather than the types of learning that the government fund. It has affected the mechanisms by which the funding is calculated, paid and recovered in line with demand. The impact of these changes will be measured as the funding arrangement inbed.

The government has increased the assumed private contribution towards fees where learners are not undertaking priority courses. It increases from

32.5% in 2006/07 to 37.5% in 2007/08 further increasing to 42.5% in 2008/09. By 2010-11, the government expects an equal balance between public and private fee contributions.

The ongoing reform envisages that FE colleges will increase their income by providing more courses, consultancy and research work for employers at full cost recovery rates, selling other goods and services, or charging full-cost fees to overseas students, where there is existing and growing demand or where the provision is no longer attracting public funding.

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

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.

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

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 communiqué⁴⁶.

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 lifelong learning strategies. England⁴⁷, Scotland⁴⁸, Wales⁴⁹ and Northern Ireland are each responsible for their own strategy. While the 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 aims⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ See UK response to the DGVT questionnaire conducted as part of the Maastricht study.

⁴⁷ 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. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy> [cited 13.5.2005].

⁴⁸ Scottish Executive. Learning through Life: Life through Learning. The lifelong learning strategy for Scotland. February 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/lism-00.asp>.

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰ The following is adapted from the UK's response to the DGVT questionnaire for the Maastricht study.

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 0201).

Each of the established frameworks within the UK are based on learning outcomes. England and Northern Ireland and Wales are in the process of making provision for credit accumulation and transfer and the accreditation of informal and non-formal learning. Scotland has already done so.

The frameworks of the UK will be referenced to the eight levels of the EQF. UK representatives have been actively involved in discussions about the development of the EQF.

Implementation of ECVET faces some potential barriers, such as multiple independent awarding bodies and is yet to be tested nationally. The implementation of common practical strategies for improving the transparency of qualifications and other information packages, are not yet widely used but are welcome in the UK.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In terms of some key identified priorities of the current European programmes, the 'scorecard' for the UK can be summarised (⁵¹see file footnote) as follows:

51 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.

- 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 comparatively high level of early school leavers, 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.

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 House of Lords EU committee in its report on the Proposed Integrated Action Programme for Lifelong Learning (2005) highlighted a lack of a coherent national strategy for making most of the EU programmes and tackling the decline in British participation. Since then, DIUS published a White Paper "Innovation Nation" (2008), where there is an explicit reference to the importance of the EU dimension, in terms of R&D, as well as further encouragement of UK business participation in EU programmes.

The government is expected to draw together inter-related policies in higher and further education, skills, research and innovation during 2008. The FE colleges' international co-operation strategy (2006) mostly builds on the UK traditional links beyond Europe and will remain a vital part of international networks and mutual learning communities.

London: Work Foundation, 2005, p. 4.; and Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of VET: final report to the EC: the Lisbon-to-Copenhagen-to Maastricht Consortium, November 2004.

In terms of mobility of learners, the UK is no longer the most popular destination for foreign Erasmus learners, and UK students participate less in EU cross-national learning and work experience placements than do learners in many other countries. In line with the latest EU initiative to target those 'hard to reach', the UK promotes new EU integrated programmes among older and part-time students, although there are challenges in terms of work and family commitments and underdeveloped language skills.

Traditionally, UK has had a comparatively well-developed ICT supported learning system across all levels. The government finances a national network of 6,000 local online centres where general public can have access to internet, and support in using it. A national network of learndirect based in community locations provide access to online adult education programmes and associated support.

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.

1103 - AUTHORS, SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Internet Resources

Ageing:

www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?ID=949

Careers Scotland:

<http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk/home/home.asp>

Connexions:

<http://www.connexions.gov.uk/>

Jobcentre:

Jobcentre Plus

Labour force survey:

www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Source.asp?vlnk=358.

learndirect:

<http://www.learndirect.co.uk/>

New Deal for Young People (NDYP):

http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/advisoryservices/training/Dev_015796.xml.html

Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework:

<http://www.scqf.org.uk/>

Young Enterprise:

<http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/>.

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