



# Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–17

## UNITED KINGDOM



Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies

**Developments in vocational education and training  
policy in 2015-17**

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ENGLAND**

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## Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in the United Kingdom was decreasing and below the EU average: 43.8% in 2013 (European Commission, 2015, p. 9) against 48.9% in the EU; 42.7% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 137); 40% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU <sup>(1)</sup>. Yet, 56.4% of upper secondary initial vocational education and training (IVET) students were following work-based programmes in 2014, against 34% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 137). The employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates was also higher than in the EU: 78.5% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 2) and 78.7% in 2015 (European Commission, 2016, p. 2) compared to 70.8% and 74.1% on average in the EU in respective years. Adult participation in lifelong learning was above the EU rate: 15.8% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 9) and 15.7% in 2015 compared to 10.7% on average in the EU in both years (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 137) (Table 1).

VET faced the challenge of regaining attractiveness. In September 2014, a step to address this issue was the introduction of the tech level, preparing students for specific job roles but also counting towards higher education entry. To enhance the status of apprenticeship, legal protection of the word itself was envisaged. The relevance of funds availability, guidance structures, work experience provided and complexity of pathways in the VET sector was also being questioned in public and policy debate. Of particular concern in England was the insufficient number and quality of apprenticeships (Ofsted, 2015).

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<sup>(1)</sup> Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in the United Kingdom and in the EU: 2010, last available year and recent trend

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)		
	UK <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	UK <sup>f</sup> EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	UK	EU
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>							
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	42.7 <sup>b</sup> 48.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -1.1	▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	56.4 <sup>b</sup> 34.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E2</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -1.2	▪ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	40.4 69.2 <sup>E3</sup>	'13-'14	▪ -9.7	▪ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	31.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	31.0 38.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	30.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	30.0 20.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	20.1		'15	15.7 10.7 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	↘ -0.5	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	80.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	80.0 66.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	43.0 <sup>b</sup> 42.7 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -1.2	▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	25.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	25.0 25.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	33.2 <sup>b</sup> 33.0 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ -1.9	▪ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	14.5	5.3	'15	12.1 6.9	'10-'15	↘ -0.3	↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	6.8 <sup>c</sup> 4.3 <sup>c</sup>	'13-'15	↘ -0.6	↘ -0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	19.5		'15	14.2 9.5 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	↘ -1.3	↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	<sup>B</sup>	9.5 <sup>e</sup> <sub>B</sub>	'11				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	81.6 <sup>B</sup>	80.2 <sup>e</sup> <sub>B</sub>	'11	81.6 80.2 <sup>e</sup>			
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>							
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	0.46 <sup>b</sup> 0.56 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E4</sub>	'12-'13	▪ 0.07	▪ 0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13	6.1 <sup>b</sup> 6.4 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E5</sub>	'12-'13	▪ -0.5	▪ 0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.7	0.8 <sup>e</sup>	'10	0.7 0.8 <sup>e</sup>			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14				
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14				
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14				
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)		41.5 <sup>E9</sup>	'12				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	79.0 <sup>b</sup> 77.2 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 1.0	▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates			'15	-3.4 <sup>b</sup> 5.3 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ -0.3	▪ -1.0

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)			
	UK <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	UK <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	UK	EU
(over general stream)								
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	21.9 <sup>b</sup>	23.7 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 2.7	▪ -0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	84.9	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	52.6	55.2	'15	57.8	57.3	'10-'15	▪ 1.0	▪ 0.4
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>								
Early leavers from education and training (%)		13.9	'15	10.8 <sup>b</sup>	11.0 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↘ -1.0	↘ -0.6
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)		33.8	'15	47.8 <sup>b</sup>	38.7 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↗ 0.5	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)	17.8	16.6	'15	14.5	15.8	'10-'15	↘ -0.7	↘ -0.1
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)	9.9	13.1	'15	6.8	12.9	'10-'15	↘ -0.7	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)		77.4	'15	85.8 <sup>b</sup>	76.9 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↗ 1.1	→ 0.0
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)		27.3	'15	20.3 <sup>b</sup>	23.5 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↘ -0.8	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)		68.6	'15	76.9 <sup>b</sup>	70.0	'11-'15	↗ 0.9	↗ 0.4
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)		53.4	'15	59.7 <sup>b</sup>	52.6 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↗ 1.1	↘ -0.1
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	84.6 <sup>d</sup>	82.8 <sup>d</sup>			

<sup>(A)</sup> UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

<sup>(B)</sup> AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

<sup>(C)</sup> 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

<sup>(D)</sup> Forecast made in 2016.

<sup>(E1)</sup> Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

<sup>(E2)</sup> Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

<sup>(E3)</sup> Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

<sup>(E4)</sup> Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

<sup>(E5)</sup> Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

<sup>(E6)</sup> Partial information for NL.

<sup>(E7)</sup> Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

<sup>(E8)</sup> Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

<sup>(E9)</sup> Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

<sup>(b)</sup> Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

<sup>(u)</sup> Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

<sup>(z)</sup> Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

<sup>(e)</sup> Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 137.

## CHAPTER 1.

# MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

### 1.1. Reforming apprenticeship

Published in December 2015, the *English apprenticeships 2020* vision outlines the government's plan to increase the quality and quantity of apprenticeships to reach its commitment to three million apprenticeships in England by 2020 <sup>(2)</sup>.

In May 2016, the Enterprise Act <sup>(3)</sup> gave apprenticeships the same legal treatment as university degrees and the term apprenticeship was protected, allowing the government to issue a fine if it is misused by training providers.

Governance of apprenticeship was changed. In July 2016, apprenticeships and skills, along with higher and further education, were transferred to the Department for Education which now has overall responsibility <sup>(4)</sup> for all elements of education, children's services and skills. An Apprenticeship Delivery Board has been established and is operational since 2015. The board is in charge of:

- (a) advising the government on how best to expand apprenticeships nationally;
- (b) increasing the number of places that employers offer in both the public and private sectors.

Representatives from Barclays Banks, Fujitsu UK, the TV company *Channel 4* and the City of London are among those participating in the board.

To expand apprenticeship to the public sector, a public consultation was held in 2016 on plans to make public sector employers take on more apprentices. The 2016 Enterprise Act <sup>(5)</sup> set out that at least 2.3% of workers starting each year in public sector bodies with 250 or more employees in England should be apprentices. Implementation of the target started from April 2017.

To improve quality, the Enterprise Act also established an institute for apprenticeships, led by employers, in charge of maintaining clear quality

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<sup>(2)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-in-england-vision-for-2020>

<sup>(3)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/enterprise-act-becomes-law>

<sup>(4)</sup> <http://qna.files.parliament.uk/ws-attachments/539038/original/DfE%20and%20BIS%20Explanatory%20Note.pdf>

<sup>(5)</sup> Amending existing legislation: the apprenticeships, skills, children and learning Act 2009.

criteria <sup>(6)</sup>. Also, a government-funded national programme was launched in October 2016 to support independent end-point assessment of apprentices, including through increasing the number of apprenticeship assessment organisations. A register <sup>(7)</sup> of organisations eligible to conduct independent end-point assessment of apprentices has been established. Programme activities include the production of guidance material and support actions for assessors. Registered organisations are entitled to receive public funds.

Funding measures were also involved. Since April 2017, employers in the United Kingdom with an annual pay bill in excess of GBP 3 million pay an apprenticeship levy (0.5% of the employer's annual pay bill) to place apprenticeship funding on a sustainable footing and reverse the trend of employer underinvestment in apprenticeship training.

A GBP 10 million fund (in two phases) to boost the number of degree apprenticeships places available, providing more opportunities for young people to fulfil their potential, was announced in March 2016. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is allocating degree apprenticeship development funding (GBP 8.5 million over two years of the GBP 10 million fund) to support new degree apprenticeships. The fund supports degree apprenticeships by:

- (a) ensuring universities can deliver the new higher-quality apprenticeship courses which employers want;
- (b) establishing capacity and expertise in apprentice teaching to deliver them;
- (c) making broader higher educational opportunities available to apprentices.

The remaining GBP 1.5 million is being allocated by the education and skills funding agency (ESFA) over the two-year period:

- (a) to increase awareness and understanding of young people;
- (b) to improve teacher and school senior leadership awareness and training on apprenticeships through development of a teach first model;
- (c) using the ESFA teacher resource *Amazing apprenticeships* to promote degree apprenticeships;

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<sup>(6)</sup> [https://consult.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/government-s-draft-strategic-guidance-to-the-insti/supporting\\_documents/Governments%20Draft%20Strategic%20Guidance%20to%20the%20Institute%20for%20Apprenticeships%20%20201718.pdf](https://consult.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/government-s-draft-strategic-guidance-to-the-insti/supporting_documents/Governments%20Draft%20Strategic%20Guidance%20to%20the%20Institute%20for%20Apprenticeships%20%20201718.pdf)  
<https://consult.education.gov.uk/comms-and-stakeholder-engagement/institute-for-apprenticeships-operational-plan/>

<sup>(7)</sup> Published by the skills funding agency in England in October 2016.

(d) to provide school material and ambassadors <sup>(8)</sup>.

Apprenticeships at (degree) levels 6 and 7 have been developed in a broad range of sectors, including automotive, banking, digital, chartered surveying, aerospace and nuclear.

## 1.2. Reforming post-16 education

A new post-16 skills plan, published in July 2016, accepted the recommendations of Lord Sainsbury's independent panel for a new framework for technical education, based on 15 new technical routes. The industrial strategy green paper, published in January 2017, went further, setting out how government would improve basic skills for those who have fallen behind, develop a proper system of technical education for young people not going to university (based on the 15 new technical routes), address regional skills imbalances, address shortages in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills and, at higher levels, and make it easier for adults to retrain and upskill later in their working lives.

## 1.3. Reinforcing cooperation between schools and enterprises

An interactive step-by-step guide for schools, the *Give yourself the edge toolkit*, has been developed in partnership with the national foundation for educational research and launched in March 2017. The aim is to help schools develop and deepen partnerships and face-to-face exchanges with employers through teacher placements in industry, workplace visits and talks by employers in schools <sup>(9)</sup>.

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<sup>(8)</sup> <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/skills/apprentice/dadf/>

<sup>(9)</sup> <http://www.edge.co.uk/news/edge-news/give-yourself-the-edge-interactive-toolkit-for-schools>

<http://www.edge.co.uk/give-yourself-the-edge/#menu>

## CHAPTER 2.

# MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET <sup>(10)</sup>

A quality assurance reference point was set up in 2009. It covers IVET, continuing vocational education and training (CVET)/adult learning, and non-formal learning. A quality assurance approach and a methodology for internal and external (by inspectorate) evaluation exist. External and internal evaluations are based on a publicly available framework, guidelines and indicators (revised in 2012). A lighter touch inspection regime applies to high performing further and higher education institutions. Providers have a quality assurance system and self-assess their performance periodically under the framework but also at their own initiative. Assessment is supposed to be followed up by quality development plans. Guidance for different providers/types of VET is available.

Statistics are provided for local authorities and providers to assess their performance and to develop ways to support learners. Data are shared among ministries (departments for education and work) to analyse further education learners' progression into employment. Following the introduction of the requirement for students to remain in education or training until age 18 in September 2015, there has been increasing focus on the effectiveness of council tracking systems. The most common initial approach to keeping track of students' destinations after they leave schools and colleges are through the use of call

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<sup>(10)</sup> Sources:

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop):

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

ReferNet: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet>

Priorities reported by Directors General for vocational training for the 2016-20 period;

EQAVET (2016 Secretariat survey, website, newsletters): <http://www.eqavet.eu>

2016 compendium of EQAVET NRP *Erasmus+* funding;

Council recommendations on the 2016 national reform programmes:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/2016/#>

Education and training monitor 2016 country reports:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en)

centres (both internal and external to the local council and the college) to try to contact young people whose details were known. Standards, programmes and curricula take account of information on employability of VET graduates from sector skills councils.

## 2.1. Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET

England did not submit the 2016 European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET) survey. Information on quality assurance related developments after 2015 is therefore not available.

## 2.2. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET

The technical and further education bill proposed by the Department for Education in October 2016 (currently being debated in Parliament) proposes a new measure to require colleges and local authorities to continue to share information (for example data on results) with the government to inform policy decisions.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Ofsted (the inspectorate of education and training providers in England) and the Department for Education (DfE) was agreed in November 2016 to share sensitive information.

## 2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in continuing VET

In April 2016, the government published its response to a consultation that set out proposals for using outcome measures as part of central government's minimum standards framework for accountability and intervention. These measures concern publicly funded post-19 education and skills provision, focusing on learner destinations (into employment or further learning), progression within learning, and earnings; they are expected to be used formally as of autumn 2017.

## CHAPTER 3.

# MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

### 3.1. Promoting equal opportunity

Government is committed to ensuring that high quality apprenticeships are a prestigious option, accessible to all people from all backgrounds. It has set an ambitious public target to increase the proportion of apprenticeships started by people of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in England by 20% by 2020. The Department for Education is also working to deliver the recommendations of the Maynard taskforce <sup>(11)</sup> to improve access to apprenticeships for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; it has set as a measure of success a 20% increase in starts by people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in England by 2020. Part of this is taking a place-based approach, bringing local partners and employers together to deliver better diversity outcomes.

The government continues to invest in learning opportunities for those who need additional support. This includes the adult education budget (AEB) which can be used to provide the skills and learning disadvantaged adults need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or further learning, traineeships or apprenticeships. It enables tailored programmes of learning to be made available, which do not need to include a qualification, to help those furthest from learning or the workplace.

#### 3.1.1. Equal opportunities with British sign language

The Department for Education announced in January 2017 that British sign language (BSL) will be accepted <sup>(12)</sup> as an alternative qualification to functional skills in English for apprentices where BSL is their first language. As functional

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<sup>(11)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-improving-access-for-people-with-learning-disabilities>

<sup>(12)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/equal-opportunities-for-people-who-use-british-sign-language>

skills or the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in English are compulsory components of current apprenticeship frameworks, this change will remove a barrier that has been preventing some of these apprentices from completing the apprenticeship programme.

### **3.1.2. Social mobility <sup>(13)</sup>**

In 2016, social mobility opportunity areas were announced by the Department for Education in England. A GBP 60 million scheme has been introduced to promote social mobility, supporting schools and links with employers. The scheme aims to ensure all children can access high-quality education at every stage, including to strengthen technical pathways for young people and to work with employers to improve young people's access to the right advice and experiences. Opportunity areas have been selected from areas identified in the social mobility index published by the Social Mobility Commission.

## **3.2. Guidance**

### **3.2.1. Pathfinder programme initiative**

Plans for *Jobcentre plus* (JCP) advisers to work within schools delivering high quality and impartial career advice were formalised in 2015. The demand-led provision is intended to support schools in engaging young people (aged 12 to 18) identified as being at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) or who face potential disadvantage in the labour market (for example, due to their ethnicity or to a health/disability issue). The initiative, known as the Pathfinder programme, involved establishing at least one full-time equivalent *Jobcentre plus* programme adviser in each area to work within schools; the adviser will provide students with information on traineeships and apprenticeships, accessing work experience, the local labour market and soft skills that employers expect.

The initiative was launched as a pathfinder in Birmingham and Solihull district in January 2016, spreading to a further nine pathfinder districts in April 2016. Independent evaluation (published in December 2016) of these pathfinders

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<sup>(13)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-visits-blackpool-on-opportunity-areas-tour>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-announces-6-new-opportunity-areas>

demonstrated that there was demand for the JCP offer, that it added value, and that there was an appetite for the offer to be extended. Following these findings, the initiative was rolled out to all 27 JCP districts in England from November 2016. Funding for the initiative is secured up to 2020.

The demand-led nature of the initiative has resulted in as many varieties of support as there are schools engaged. For example, in some schools the demand has been to upskill teachers on the local labour market; in others, work was carried out with groups of students identified by the school as potentially NEET on such things as interview techniques, career options, and confidence building; in some cases, presentations were provided to parents on the benefits of apprenticeships.

Support for schools is now embedded as a business-as-usual JCP service. It is anticipated that, when full capacity is reached, the initiative will impact on approximately 1 000 schools.

### **3.2.2. Careers and enterprise fund**

A GBP 5 million *Careers and enterprise* fund was created by the government with the backing of the Education Endowment Foundation and the Bank of America Foundation in 2016. The fund is run by the *Careers and enterprise* company and is allocated to businesses and organisations to enable them to trial, evaluate and increase effective careers and enterprise activities for young people between 11 and 18 years of age within schools and colleges across England. The fund aims to increase the number of encounters young people have with employers while in education, which has the potential to reduce their chances of becoming NEET and to increase future salary. It will focus on areas of greatest need with GBP 1 million being targeted to six opportunity areas identified by the government. Successful organisations were notified of available funding in March 2017.

### **3.2.3. Better understanding VET pathways**

An increasing number of university applications are based on vocational qualifications, posing a challenge for university admissions staff who often lack in-depth knowledge of these qualifications. From 2015-17, the *Progression pathways* project <sup>(14)</sup> of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) has provided learners, parents, university admissions staff and academic staff with information and advice tools to improve this understanding and ensure candidates are admitted to appropriate programmes.

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<sup>(14)</sup> <https://www.ucas.com/>

### 3.3. National qualifications framework <sup>(15)</sup>

The qualifications and credit framework (QCF) was adopted and introduced in 2008, building on previous frameworks since the 1980s. In 2010, it was linked to the European qualifications framework (EQF). The framework had a limited scope as it mainly covered – and regulated – (pre-)VET qualifications in England and Northern Ireland. It was open to qualifications awarded by the private sector and also integrated units placed on levels; but it was not comprehensive and operated in parallel to the framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ) and the previously devised national qualifications framework (NQF) <sup>(16)</sup>, which included general education qualifications. The QCF was an important reference point for citizens and the private sector, as qualifications are not linked to education and training programmes. As a credit framework, the QCF allowed for the combination and accumulation of units of qualifications.

The multitude of frameworks operating affected the overall transparency of English qualifications. In October 2015 a new regulated qualifications framework (RQF) was introduced for England and Northern Ireland, replacing the QCF and the NQF <sup>(17)</sup>. A total of two years is foreseen for the full implementation of the RQF. The RQF covers all academic and vocational qualifications regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) <sup>(18)</sup> and by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) <sup>(19)</sup>. RQF uses the same eight levels (plus three entry levels) as the QCF but introduces some changes in the way qualification size <sup>(20)</sup> is calculated. The QCF had a clear regulatory role but the RQF does not regulate qualifications and does not set qualification design rules; it describes them in a transparent way and provides an overview of qualifications, showing how they relate to each other. Ofqual is responsible for the daily running of the framework. One of the main principles applying to all qualifications in the RQF (after a consultation carried out in spring

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<sup>(15)</sup> Cedefop, 2017b.

<sup>(16)</sup> An NQF existed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland alongside the QCF mainly for the school/general (academic) qualifications: GCSEs and general certificates of education (GCEs).

<sup>(17)</sup> Relevant documents:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofqual-to-introduce-new-regulated-qualifications-framework>

<sup>(18)</sup> Register of regulated qualifications: <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>

<sup>(19)</sup> [http://ccea.org.uk/about\\_us/what\\_we\\_do](http://ccea.org.uk/about_us/what_we_do)

<sup>(20)</sup> Award, certificate or diploma, depending on the indicative time a standard learner might need to study a qualification.

2015) is using guided learning hours (GLH) and total qualification time (TQT) <sup>(21)</sup>; these cover activities completed by the learner under the direct instruction or supervision of a lecturer and time that is made up of the GLH plus all other time taken in preparation without supervision. TQT will be indicated for all RQF qualifications by the end of 2017. Awarding organisations are expected to review their existing qualifications by the end of that year. The framework level is displayed on all certificates for qualifications referenced to the framework but there are no plans to introduce EQF levels on certificates. The EQF level is, however, displayed along with the RQF level for each qualification in the register of regulated qualifications. The replacement of the QCF and NQF by the RQF implies that the UK referencing report, for England and Northern Ireland, needs to be updated.

### 3.4. Promoting VET participation through increased attractiveness

#### 3.4.1. Popularisation of the STEM: *Think UTC*

University technical colleges (UTCs) in England were involved in *Think UTC*, a new national day (held in March 2016 and March 2017) that celebrates the work UTCs do to educate young people in science, technology engineering and maths. *Think UTC* is set up and run by the organisation behind UTCs, the Baker Dearing Educational Trust (BDT). Activities included: STEM careers fairs; workshops; walk-in information technology (IT) support help from UTC students; robot

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<sup>(21)</sup> All qualifications registered in the framework will be assigned a measure of (c) size, expressed in total qualification time and guided learning hours. Total qualification time is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification. TQT comprises the number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for guided learning (GL), and an estimate of the number of hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by – but, unlike guided learning, not under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/awarding-organisations-must-justify-sizes-of-qualifications>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/597612/total-qualification-time-criteria.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/597612/total-qualification-time-criteria.pdf)

showcases; STEM themed charity cake sales; aircraft design and build competitions, and construction challenges.

In spring 2017 the government announced a GBP 170 million investment to establish institutes of technology in every English region, to deliver higher level STEM skills and meet the needs of employers in local areas.

National colleges are also a key part of the government's measures to address gaps in the high-level skills needed by employers and help ensure that UK has the skills to support the delivery of major infrastructure programmes. Around GBP 80 million of government funding has been announced to support the creation of five new national colleges. These centres of high-tech training will ensure the UK has skilled people in industries crucial to economic growth: high speed rail, nuclear, onshore oil and gas, digital skills and the creative industries.

#### **3.4.2. Promotion of apprenticeship: *Get in go far***

*Get in go far* – a government campaign to promote apprenticeships – launched a new wave of activity in February 2017 <sup>(22)</sup>, focused on promoting benefits of apprenticeships to employers and aiming to increase the number of places offered. Advertising on the radio and LinkedIn told the stories of several businesses currently employing apprentices.

#### **3.4.3. The apprenticeship diversity champions network**

The apprenticeship diversity champions network (ADCN) was established in February 2017 <sup>(23)</sup>. The network comprises employers that will work alongside the Department for Education and the national apprenticeship service to help promote diversity within apprenticeships. The ADCN has been established to promote apprenticeships and diversity among employers and encourage more people from underrepresented groups to consider apprenticeships.

#### **3.4.4. New apprenticeship funding policy**

A new apprenticeship funding policy <sup>(24)</sup> was published by the government in October 2016 and became available from May 2017, following the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April. Employers that pay the levy receive a 10% top-

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<sup>(22)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dfe-encourages-more-businesses-to-offer-apprenticeships>

<sup>(23)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/network-established-to-encourage-diversity-in-apprenticeships>

<sup>(24)</sup> <http://www.ufi.co.uk/voctech-impact-2017>  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/562401/Apprenticeship\\_funding\\_from\\_May\\_2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562401/Apprenticeship_funding_from_May_2017.pdf)

up from government to the funds entering their digital accounts each month; this is available for them to spend on apprenticeship training and assessment. The new arrangements provide support for non-levy paying employers, with government paying 90% of apprenticeship training and assessment costs. Incentive payments of GBP 1 000 are paid by the government to employers and providers when recruiting apprentices aged 16 to 18. These payments will also be available for apprentices aged 19 to 24 who have previously been in care or who have special educational needs. Additional funding is available to support small employers, with government paying 100% of training and assessment costs for employers with fewer than 50 staff if they recruit an apprentice aged 16 to 18.

#### **3.4.5. Drawing young people into construction**

*Build UK* and the college *Collab Group* announced in February 2017 plans to pilot a one-year construction course in seven colleges across England called *Bridge into construction* <sup>(25)</sup>, intended to provide a dedicated route into the industry ahead of the government's post-16 skills plan. The course will be developed to equip students with the introductory skills they need to embark on an apprenticeship in construction.

In parallel, the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) have developed the *Go-construct* platform in conjunction with the industry; this offers careers advice and guidance to young people, as well as providing a work experience matching service between those that want to understand what a career in the industry might be like, with employers that want to encourage the development of new skills and interest in the sector. *Go-construct* is also in the early stages of offering an apprenticeship ambassador service, which will give new apprentices access to mentoring and guidance from those that have recently completed their apprenticeship programme.

#### **3.4.6. Promoting digital solutions in delivering VET**

The Ufi charitable trust's <sup>(26)</sup> 2017 fund to promote digital solutions for vocational learning puts emphasis on supporting projects that deliver new learning tools or delivery models, using innovative methods to raise skill levels for a significant number of learners. Between GBP 150 000 and GBP 300 000 of funding is available for projects of up to 18 months delivery time.

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<sup>(25)</sup> <http://www.collabgroup.co.uk/posts/build-uk-and-collab-group-to-draw-young-people-into-construction>

<sup>(26)</sup> <https://www.ufi.co.uk>

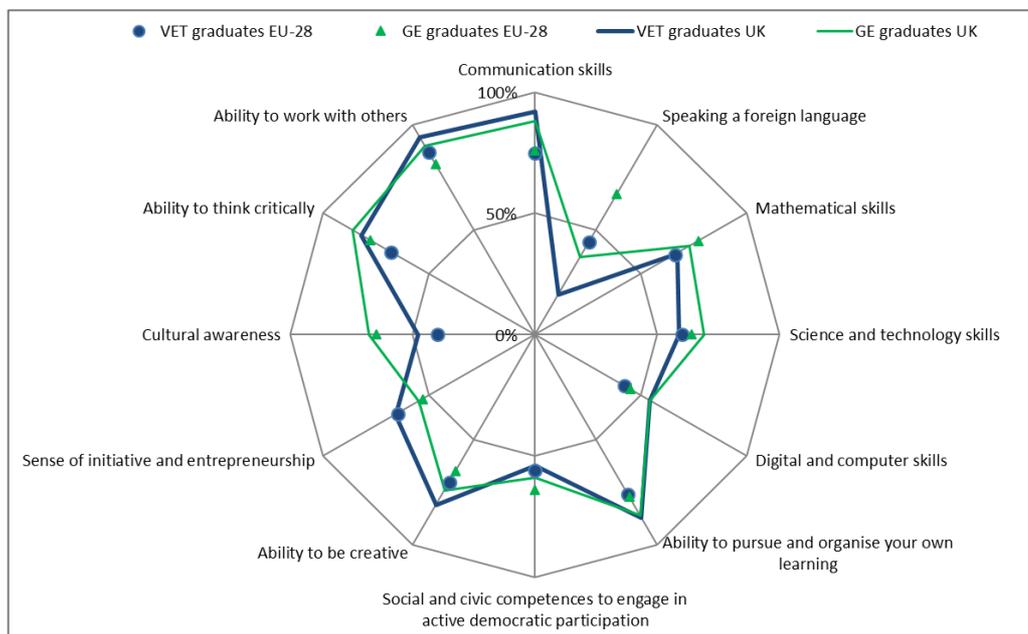
## CHAPTER 4.

# MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

In the United Kingdom, compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes feel they have:

- (a) stronger (ranked by priority):
  - (i) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
  - (ii) ability to be creative;
  - (iii) ability to work with others;
  - (iv) communication skills;
- (b) weaker:
  - (i) cultural awareness;
  - (ii) foreign language speaking;
  - (iii) science and technology skills (Figure 1).

Figure 1. **Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET**



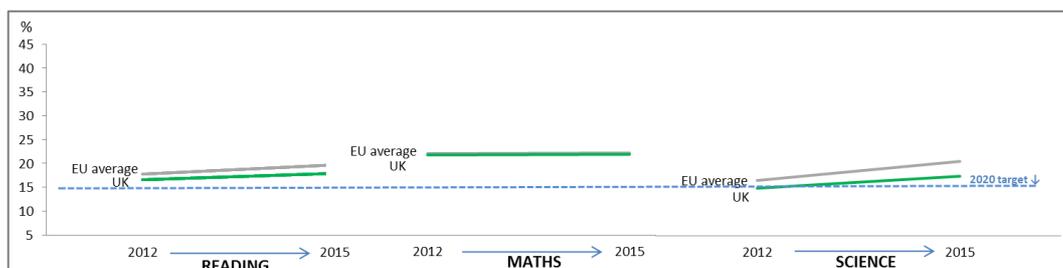
NB: GE stands for general education.

Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in summer 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET and age groups of respondents.

Source: Cedefop, 2017c.

The context of key competences in 2015 in the United Kingdom was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 2). The share of low achievers in the UK was lower than in the EU on average, where the trend is similar.

Figure 2. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing level 2 on the PISA (programme for international student assessment) scale.

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolls 40% of all upper secondary learners in the country <sup>(27)</sup>, this trend is likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes.

In England, most VET, including apprenticeships, is delivered in the further education and skills sector at upper secondary level (age 16+). At this level, education and training providers are free to work with students to identify the study programmes most suitable to them. Centralised assessment of key competences is assured by independent awarding organisations <sup>(28)</sup>.

#### 4.1. Key competences in initial VET

In January 2017 the Department for Education published a list of qualifications from 2015 and 2016 that, for the first time, count towards the English and maths progress measure <sup>(29)</sup> for 16 to 18 (upper secondary education) performance tables. This new headline performance measure <sup>(30)</sup> looks at the progress made

<sup>(27)</sup> Calculated from Eurostat; data for 2015.

<sup>(28)</sup> For more information on key competences in VET see UK NARIC, 2016.

<sup>(29)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-18-english-and-maths-progress-measure-qualifications>

<sup>(30)</sup> <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk>

by students who did not achieve a good pass in English or maths at the end of lower secondary education.

The counter-terrorism and security Act 2015 contains a duty on specified authorities, including VET providers, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This is also known as the *Prevent* duty. The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) was commissioned in September 2016 by the Department for Education to develop online prevent resources which will be made freely available on an ETF learners platform. Resources will cover radicalisation and extremism, safe use of the internet, critical thinking skills plus British values and how they apply to learners. A supporting facilitator pack for teachers and trainers will help them work with and build on the resources with their learners.

Functional skills <sup>(31)</sup> are practical skills in English, maths and information and communication technology (ICT) for all learners aged 14 and above. Functional skills provide an individual with essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work. Functional skills are often studied alongside apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications in England. The Education and Training Foundation is leading on the maths and English functional skills reform programme that aims to raise the credibility of these qualifications with employers. Policy recommendations followed a public consultation in August 2016. Ministers are considering the recommendations and how they fit into the wider post-16 skills landscape. Further consultations on subject content and policy are expected from the Department for Education and the qualifications regulator Ofqual before reformed functional skills are scheduled to be introduced in 2019.

#### 4.2. Key competences in continuing VET

In 2017, the government published its transformation strategy <sup>(32)</sup> to help transform public services through accelerated digitalisation, enhanced verification and digital skills training by 2020. Objectives of the strategy include developing the right skills and culture among government staff and leaders and bringing together policy and delivery to enable services to be delivered in a learning and

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<sup>(31)</sup> <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Summary-of-Functional-Skills-reform-programme-for-publication-October-2015-v5-finalBrand-version-2.pdf>

<sup>(32)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-transformation-strategy-2017-to-2020/government-transformation-strategy>

iterative environment, focused on outcomes for citizens. There is also the aim to create learning and development opportunities for digital, data and technology professionals through a digital academy.

People who lack basic digital skills suffer digital exclusion. The government is committed to ensuring appropriate training is available to help build a more inclusive society and address the digital divide between those who have been able to embrace the digital world and those who have not. The March 2017 digital strategy explains that government will support adults who lack core digital skills to access fully-funded, relevant training, free of charge, as part of the publicly funded adult education offer. The digital economy Act (April 2017) provides the primary legislation that underpins this commitment. The secondary legislation to support this commitment has yet to be enacted.

## CHAPTER 5.

# MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors

The criteria for teaching at further education level are flexible: the education provider decides on the suitability of the teaching staff. The Education and Training Foundation, established in October 2013, is the government-backed sector-owned national support body for the further education and training sector. It has received an annual grant from government to drive improvements in the quality of teaching and leadership in the sector. In 2014, the ETF published professional standards for teachers and trainers in education and training in England, which expect teachers and trainers to demonstrate professional values, attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills <sup>(33)</sup>. Also in 2014, the *Further education workforce strategy* of the then Department for Business, Innovation and Skills insisted on:

- (a) improving quantity, quality and professionalism of teachers and trainers;
- (b) being responsive to employer needs;
- (c) improving the quality of leadership including system leadership;
- (d) using technology effectively in teaching and learning.

Professionals providing training or coaching to apprentices in companies must comply with the requirements of the employer and any regulations specific to the occupational area. Professionals and companies determine how they stay up to date on industry specific matters.

### 5.1. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools

The Education and Training Foundation in England published in December 2016 revised guidance on the teaching qualifications for the further education and skills sector, as well as on the minimum core of teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills in literacy, language, numeracy, ICT, and using inclusive approaches to

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<sup>(33)</sup> [http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/4991-Prof-standards-A4\\_4-2.pdf](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/4991-Prof-standards-A4_4-2.pdf)

address learners' needs. The guidance reflects changes in the sector, such as the introduction of the regulated qualifications framework, new regulations for 16-to-19 study programmes, and increased emphasis on apprenticeships. The document includes the sector's recommended teacher training programmes <sup>(34)</sup>.

The ETF also launched in July 2016 a new further education workforce data system that will inform policy-makers and enable learning providers to collect, analyse and benchmark their workforce data <sup>(35)</sup>. The ETF also published reports on initial teacher education (ITE) from a range of different sources to give a clear picture of the size and shape of teacher training in further education, as well as an understanding of who is undertaking this training in 2015 and 2016 <sup>(36)</sup>.

Apprenticeship trailblazers are groups of employers who work together to design new apprenticeship standards for occupations within their sectors. A trailblazer for the education and training sector started the process of developing four apprenticeship standards for tutor-assessors, teachers and lecturers in 2016.

## 5.2. Initial training for trainers and mentors in enterprises

The apprenticeship standards for tutor-assessors, teachers and lecturers developed in 2016 by the trailblazer <sup>(37)</sup> (Section 5.1) also apply to the initial training of in-company trainers and mentors.

## 5.3. Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools

The Society for Education and Training was established in 2015 as a new professional membership organisation for practitioners working in the post-16 education and training system. It aims to support initial and ongoing professional development of practitioners, improving outcomes for learners and employers. It is a voluntary membership organisation for trainers, teachers, assessors, tutors,

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<sup>(34)</sup> <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/qualifications-education-training-assessment-revised-guidance-published/>

<sup>(35)</sup> <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/etf-launches-new-fe-workforce-data-system/>

<sup>(36)</sup> <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/education-training-foundation-publishes-second-annual-report-initial-teacher-education/>

<sup>(37)</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards#childcare-and-education-standards>

support staff, mentors, coaches and managers, working in education and training.

In December 2016, the ETF in partnership with *ResearchED* held the first *ResearchED* event dedicated to further education. *ResearchED* is a teacher-led organisation aimed at improving research literacy in education. The event gave practitioners the time and space to reflect, experiment, and generate their own evidence in order to improve practice for themselves and others. The event was a new medium to promote and support applied research in the sector with the ultimate aim of improving learner experience and outcomes <sup>(38)</sup>.

The ETF has also commissioned the Association of Colleges, in partnership with the Association of Employment and Learning Providers and HOLEX (Association of Adult Education and Training Organisations) to deliver phase 3 of the *Teach too* programme. GBP 100 million is available for post-16 education and training providers; it will fund projects which will bring industry professionals and training providers together to build effective collaborative arrangements to help improve the design and delivery of vocational education courses. Around 10 projects have been funded from March to September 2017 <sup>(39)</sup>.

Since their launch in April 2015, the ETF's free online maths and English modules have been used by over 1 000 further education and training teachers <sup>(40)</sup>.

Qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) is a badge of professionalism awarded by the society for education and training for teachers, trainers, tutors and lecturers in the post-16 sector. After a comprehensive review, ETF introduced a new QTLS process in September 2016, offering more opportunities for practitioners to indicate progression and supported by an improved e-portfolio <sup>(41)</sup>.

The *Prevent* training catalogue published by the Home Office in March 2016 (Section 4.1) lists publically accessible courses that may assist individuals covered by the requirements of the *Prevent* duty. All specified authorities subject

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<sup>(38)</sup> <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/first-researched-fe-conference-partnership-etf/>

<sup>(39)</sup> <https://www.aoc.co.uk/teach-too-programme>

<sup>(40)</sup> <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/1000-users-maths-english-modules-counting/>  
<http://www.foundationonline.org.uk/>  
<http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/maths-and-english-pipeline/>

<sup>(41)</sup> [http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ETF\\_Annual\\_Report\\_AW\\_v3\\_Pages.pdf](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ETF_Annual_Report_AW_v3_Pages.pdf)

to the duty will need to ensure they provide appropriate training for staff involved in its implementation <sup>(42)</sup>.

The ETF runs the *Outstanding teaching learning and assessment* (OTLA) programme. OTLA is a peer-led and expert-supported collaborative development programme where practitioners and leaders provide sector-led solutions to improve teaching and learning. In 2015-16, the ETF ran three regional programmes which were expanded to further regions. In 2016-17, professional exchanges (smaller-scale peer development networks aiming at embedding and sustaining what was learned through OTLA) were also introduced. The OTLA programme reached over 2 500 teaching staff in England in 2015-16. Practitioners reported that it increased confidence in their teaching, helped them understand how to improve their practice, increased their engagement with learning technology and grew their sense of professionalism in their career <sup>(43)</sup>.

The 2014 children and families Act requires the post-16 education sector, local authorities and health and social care agencies to work together to improve outcomes and life chances for young people aged 16 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). A new tool to improve outcomes for learners with SEND was launched in February 2017. The tool was developed for post-16 education providers and local authorities, to assist self-assessment of the effectiveness of supporting young people with SEND and identify continuing professional development opportunities <sup>(44)</sup>.

#### 5.4. Continuing professional development for trainers and mentors in enterprises

In 2017, a trailblazer for the learning and development (L&D) sector, supported by the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development, British Telecom, Jaguar Land Rover and Specsavers, started to develop a new level 3 (EQF level 4) and level 5 (EQF level 5) apprenticeship for L&D practitioners and managers to be ready for delivery in January 2018. L&D staff typically operates in medium to large commercial organisations (private, public, third sector) and are typically

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<sup>(42)</sup>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/503973/Prevent\\_Training\\_catalogue\\_-\\_March\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/503973/Prevent_Training_catalogue_-_March_2016.pdf)

<sup>(43)</sup> [http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ETF\\_Annual\\_Report\\_AW\\_v3\\_Pages.pdf](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ETF_Annual_Report_AW_v3_Pages.pdf)

<http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/new-tool-improve-outcomes-learners-send/>

<sup>(44)</sup> <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/new-tool-improve-outcomes-learners-send/>

involved with identifying learning/training needs, design/sourcing training, delivering training, evaluating training; however, the role could also be more specialist with a focus on, and requiring in-depth expertise in, areas such as learning design, e-learning, digital/blended learning.

Also relevant to the continuing professional development of in-company trainers are:

- (a) the opportunities offered by the new qualified teacher learning and skills badge (Section 5.3);
- (b) the courses on the *Prevent* training catalogue published by the Home Office in March 2016 (Section 5.3);
- (c) the apprenticeship standards for tutor-assessors, teachers and lecturers developed in 2016 by the trailblazer (Section 5.1).

The last of these also applies to the continuing professional development of in-company mentors.

The OTLA programme, the SEND workforce development project, the first *ResearchED* event dedicated to further education, and the *Teach too* programme, are all actions involving in-company trainers' continuing professional development (CPD) (Section 5.3).

## Conclusion

Since 2015, England has taken steps to reform further its apprenticeship system, transform technical education, and bring schools and employers closer together. The system of information and feedback loops to guide the strategy for VET development was reinforced. Measures have been adopted to promote equal opportunity of access to VET and qualifications. Projects to develop and support guidance have been implemented. A range of initiatives to increase the attractiveness of VET has been launched. Major progress has been achieved with the introduction of the regulated qualifications framework, bringing together the qualifications and credit framework and the national qualifications framework. Initiatives have been taken to support the development of functional skills and key competences in initial and continuing VET. A variety of actions have also been developed to support the initial training and continuing professional development of VET teachers and in-company trainers and mentors.

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions are being addressed but information available to Cedefop at the time suggests issues that could benefit from further consideration:

- (a) further developing mechanisms for quality assurance in VET;
- (b) making more systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor VET developments.

Also, further support to entrepreneurship education seems to have been overlooked over the past three years. Setting out policy priorities for all five Riga medium-term deliverables for the remaining period until 2020 could also be considered.

## List of abbreviations

ADCN	apprenticeship diversity champions network
AEB	adult education budget
AES	adult education survey
BAME	black, Asian and minority ethnic
BDT	Baker Dearing Educational Trust
BSL	British sign language
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
CPD	continuing professional development
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DfE	Department for Education
DGVT	Director General for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESFA	education and skills funding agency
ETF	Education and Training Foundation
FHEQ	framework for higher education qualifications
GCE	general certificate of education
GCSE	general certificate of secondary education
GDP	gross domestic product
GL	guided learning
GLH	guided learning hours
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
ICT	information and communication technology
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IT	information technology
ITE	initial teacher education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
JCP	<i>Jobcentre plus</i>
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NEET	not in education, employment or training
NQF	national qualifications framework
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OTLA	<i>Outstanding teaching learning and assessment</i>
PISA	programme for international student assessment

PPS	purchasing power standards
QCF	qualifications and credit framework
QTLS	qualified teacher learning and skills
RQF	regulated qualifications framework
SEND	special educational needs and disabilities
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TQT	total qualification time
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UTC	university technical college
VET	vocational education and training

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