



Department  
for Business  
Innovation & Skills

**A DUAL MANDATE FOR ADULT  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
CONSULTATION**

**Response Form**

MARCH 2015

# A dual mandate for adult vocational education consultation - response form

A copy of the consultation document can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/adult-vocational-education-challenges-over-the-next-decade>

A further version of the response form is also available to complete on line at:

<https://bisgovuk.citizenspace.com/fe/a-dual-mandate-for-adult-vocational-education>

You can email or post this completed response form to:

Postal Address:

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Department for Business, Innovation and Skills  
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Email: [FE.reform@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FE.reform@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

If you are emailing the document, please include "dual mandate" in the subject box.

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available, on public request, individual responses.

The closing date for this consultation is: 16 June 2015

## Your details

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Please tick the box below that best describes you as a respondent to this consultation

- Representative organisation
- Independent Training Provider
- College
- Awarding Organisation
- Charity or social enterprise
- Individual
- Legal representative
- Local government
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Large business (over 250 staff)
- Medium business (50 to 250 staff)
- Small business (10 to 49 staff)
- Micro business (up to 9 staff)
- Professional body
- Trade union or staff association
- Industrial Strategy sector
- Other (please describe)

## **National Colleges**

**Question 1: How can the National College proposals be developed to ensure the employers across the whole sector benefit?**

There will inevitably be some geographical concentration in the National College model, which will mean that skills provision is not always going to be where there is need. National Colleges will need to work with institutions across the country, and should consider ways to do this on a centre of excellence model, encourage and developing practice in existing settings.

**Question 2: How can National Colleges best work in partnership with local FE colleges, private training organisations and HEIs?**

**Question 3: Which priority sectors should be targeted for future National Colleges?**

Government needs to be cautious about defining what specific skills are going to be needed in the future. Instead, it should encourage employers, universities and other partners locally to seek to understand and inform the right skills development for their area.

## **Communications and branding**

**Question 4a: Would you support rebranding English higher vocational education as either "Professional Education and Training" or "Professional and Technical Education"?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Question 4b: If so, which would you prefer and why?**

Professional Education and Training

Professional and Technical Education

**Please explain your response:**

**Question 5: Would you support a national advertising and marketing campaign for higher vocational education?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

**The role of universities in higher vocational education should be a major part of any campaign**

**Question 6: What other means of promoting higher vocational education do you think would be desirable?**

**Question 7: How can we encourage more individuals to study higher vocational education?**

**Part-time higher education provision**

**Question 8: How can we encourage more individuals to study part-time Higher Education?**

Previous changes to policies, including funding for ELQs and the changes to tuition fees in 2012 have had a significant impact on part-time higher education. The challenge for government is in supporting higher education institutions in developing appropriate, flexible provision that meets the needs of those studying part-time.

**A new overarching body to manage awarding powers for higher level vocational qualifications**

**Question 9: Should a new overarching vocationally focused body be established to grant higher vocational awarding powers?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

**Question 10: How could we increase the role of employers in scrutinising applications for new awarding powers?**

We are unclear as to why employers would be involved in scrutinising award powers when there are other organisations in place to do this. It may be that there should be more involvement of employers in the overall process, but awarding powers should be decided independently.

**Question 11a: How can the role of National Colleges in defining qualifications, apprenticeships standards and assessments and curricula best be taken forward?**

This should be done in collaboration with universities.

**Question 11b: Should other, high performing providers be empowered to do this?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

Universities are extremely well placed to do this and so National Colleges should be encouraged to work with the appropriate universities (be that by subject, locality etc)

**Question 12: Are the right awarding powers in place to facilitate an increase in the uptake of HNC, HND and BTEC type qualifications?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

More students are studying BTEC and using them to apply for university entry. Vocational qualifications are offered by universities, but the decline in the numbers studying HNC/HND is linked with the changes made in to the tuition fee regime in 2012.

**Question 13: How do we design delivery and assessment in a way which imparts work ethics, occupational attitudes and standards, while enabling learners to reflect on and improve these?**

Universities already include these elements when develop courses, degrees and programmes.

**Question 14: How do we develop these mechanisms without losing existing quality products that already meet these standards and which employers recognise and have faith in?**

### **Refocusing the Foundation Degree curriculum**

**Question 15: Should the Government be prescriptive about the role of employers in the design, development and delivery of Foundation Degrees?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

The 2010-15 government failed to promote foundation degrees, which may have had an impact on uptake and engagement. It should avoid being prescriptive about employer involvement, but instead allow universities and colleges to work with relevant employers where and when it is appropriate. PSRBs can often be more appropriate to work with than specific employers, given their overarching view of specific sectors.

### **Reviewing Foundation Degrees Awarding Powers (FDAPs)**

**Question 16: Should we consider some form of specialised FDAPs rather than general powers to award any kind of foundation degree?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

This would be too restrictive on providers and would lead to excessive burden. It therefore could harm future development of foundation degrees.

**Question 17: Could the FDAPs process and/or criteria be changed to improve access while maintaining quality?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

The current process and criteria are fit for purpose.

**Question 18: How do we ensure that the quality assurance arrangements are appropriate to foster the right type of HVE (higher vocational education)?**

The Quality Assurance Agency has worked extensively with higher education institutions on developing the right approaches to higher vocational education. It would seem sensible to continue these relationships, seeking to improve on QAA approaches where necessary.

### **Work-based learning and higher vocational education**

**Question 19: Should all HVE courses involve work based learning?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

This may be too restrictive and costly for many providers and employers (especially smaller ones). Work based learning should be encourage where it is appropriate but in some instances other approaches may be just as beneficial, if not more so, for example students undertaking projects that are commissioned by employers, or undertaking their own entrepreneurial activities.

### **Specialisation in colleges**

**Question 20: Are there other lessons to learn from the implementation of the CoVE (Centres of Vocational Excellence) programme?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

**Question 21: Should there be a new status for colleges specialising in higher level vocational skills as the Institute of Public Policy Research recommended?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

Adding additional tiers to the higher education system is unlikely to benefit providers or students. Government should look to build on existing strengths in the sector rather than attempt to establish new systems that add complexity.

**Question 22: How can we support FE colleges to achieve excellence in higher level vocational skills?**

**HVE in the higher education setting – extending the role of universities and links with research and innovation**

**Question 23: What are the barriers to effective collaboration between colleges, universities and Catapult centres?**

Catapult Centres are geographically concentrated so there may be some restrictions to collaboration, but there are not barriers per se. The Catapult Centres should be encouraged to reach out to providers across the sector to work with those institutions that are acknowledged as having research and innovation excellence.

**Question 24a: Should all Catapult centres be engaged in developing vocational education and higher level vocational skills training?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Question 24b: If so, how best can this be achieved?**

**Question 25: What should the role of universities, colleges and Catapult centres be in growing technician level skills?**

**Question 26: How do we ensure even stronger employer/university engagement?**

There are many good examples and excellent practice of this across the sector. This should be used by BIS to support, establish and strengthen further engagement. In some areas, this may require investment from BIS.

**Stronger virtual learning and use of technology**

**Question 27: How can Government drive the further adoption of new technology in FE institutions?**

**Making the overall system more effective**

**Question 28: What is the best way to ensure greater local accountability on the part of providers towards learners and employers, in terms of relevance and quality of provision, and social and economic impacts?**



**Question 29a: What benefits would there be to commissioning Adult Skills Budget provision through local partnerships or through a lead provider acting on behalf of a partnership?**

**Question 29b: What downsides might there be to such an approach?**

**Question 30: How do we ensure a stronger focus on outcomes without encouraging cherry picking of the easiest to help?**

**Question 31: What issues would there be with supporting programmes of study rather than qualifications?**

### **Testing alternative approaches**

**Question 32: What risks do we need to cater for in testing out new local arrangements to deliver skills provision for unemployed individuals and those with skills below level 2?**

**Question 33: What new approaches can be taken on commissioning and funding streams to maximise the value gained from public spending to support unemployed and disadvantaged learners?**

### **Community Learning**

**Question 34: If we were to make the changes described in paragraph 208 of the consultation document, how should we look to phase them in over time?**

**Question 35: Would a greater focus on commissioning partnerships enhance partnership working and deliver a more coherent Community Learning offer?**

**Question 36: What would be the pitfalls and unintended consequences that could arise from these potential reforms and how can we avoid them?**

**Question 37a: Do you agree that some institutions, such as Specialist Designated Institutions (SDIs), play a unique role within the wider sector and should continue to receive funding on an individual basis?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Question 37b: Are there other organisations that should be considered alongside the SDIs?**

**Question 38: What would be the risks associated with these proposals?**

**Question 39: Would there be benefits from greater integration of Community Learning and Adult Skills Budget funded provision?**

**Supporting the development of resilience in the sector**

**Question 40: What are the barriers preventing some colleges from adjusting their provision and approach?**

**Question 41: What lessons can we learn from colleges who have already made significant changes?**

**Question 42: How can relationships between localities and FE providers be strengthened?**

**Question 43: What are the risks to colleges and providers with the shift towards greater local influence and control over skills funding and accountability?**

**Question 44: What are the advantages/disadvantages of Central Government taking an active intervention role in the FE landscape, including supporting new entrants and/or supporting mergers and rationalisation?**

**Advantages:**

**Disadvantages:**

**Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views on this consultation. We do not acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you tick the box below.**

**Please acknowledge this reply**



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