

New English and maths GCSEs in Post-16 Education and Skills

Findings of the call for evidence undertaken on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and the Department for Education

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Executive summary

Introduction

In July 2014, the Government announced plans to introduce new GCSEs into the post-16 sector. These plans aim to meet the Government's ambition to enable as many young people and adults as possible who lack good qualifications in English and maths to have the chance to take GCSEs in these subjects. NIACE, in partnership with NRDC, was commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Education (DfE) to seek views as to how the new GCSEs in English and maths can be successfully implemented into post-16 education.

Throughout July-September 2014, NIACE consulted the sector through two online written calls for evidence (see Appendices 1 and 2) and three seminars. 127 organisations contributed to the call for evidence, including FE colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), community learning providers, third sector organisations, unions, employers, sector representative organisations and awarding organisations. This report presents the findings from these activities.

Findings

Supporting learners

- Learners should have access to **good quality information, advice and guidance** which raises their awareness of the relevance of GCSEs to the workplace and their wider lives. This should include information about the content and assessment of the new GCSEs and the benefits of achieving the qualifications, including how they can help learners to achieve their career aspirations. As the Oldham College case study on page 13 demonstrates, explicitly linking GCSE attainment to vocational courses supports learners to make the connection between GCSEs and work.
- Wherever possible, **the teaching and learning of English and maths should be contextualised** through using materials and resources which are relevant to learners' contexts; linking the learning to specific vocations or employment sectors; and working in partnership with employers and other organisations to emphasise the importance of maths and English in the world of work.
- All learners are likely to need access to **flexible teaching and learning methods and more assessment windows** in order for them to fit GCSE learning around their other commitments. Technology could play a part in achieving this, as demonstrated by the Learndirect case study on page 20.
- Learners can be motivated through **innovative and creative teaching and learning methods and approaches**. This includes inspiring and enthusiastic teachers, interactive and engaging resources, innovative and fun activities, using technology and support for the learners to make decisions about and shape their own learning.

- Stepping stone qualifications should continue to be available to build learners' confidence in English and maths and develop the skills and knowledge required for the new GCSEs. The Leicester Adult Learning Service case studies on page 24 demonstrate the importance of stepping stone qualifications in supporting learners to work towards achieving GCSE.
- Providers emphasise the importance of having **recognised and robust diagnostic tools** which are fit for purpose, and of having a process which allows sufficient time for assessments to be conducted thoroughly. As the Leicester College case study on page 26 demonstrates, initial assessments are important in supporting learners to access the most appropriate provision.
- Providers request **additional, or re-prioritising of, resources** to account for a potential increase in delivery time and the additional support learners may require to understand the more challenging content of the qualifications. In addition, post-19 sector stakeholders call for **funding to be more flexible** and follow learners, as opposed to qualifications.

Supporting teachers

- Stakeholders recognise the need to raise teaching standards and broadly welcome the Government's investment in the professionalism of the FE workforce. BIS, with DfE and in collaboration with the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), is taking forward a programme of work to raise standards in teaching and learning in FE; the strategy can be found at Appendix 3. The Maths Enhancement Programme has been well-received by the sector and stakeholders were keen to engage with the upcoming English Enhancement Programme. Providers had also drawn on the bursaries for new teachers, grants to support recruitment and the Golden Hello scheme for graduate maths teachers.
- Providers stress that their teaching staff, particularly Functional Skills and vocational tutors, will need further **training to improve or build their confidence in their own subject knowledge**. The case study of Hull College on page 29 shows the importance of leaders identifying CPD needs and putting measure in place to address skills gaps.
- Teachers need **specialist training and CPD to support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**, so that they have the knowledge and confidence to recognise support needs and support learners who choose to continue with GCSEs. Providers should draw on Government funding for CPD and initial teacher training to support teachers working with this group of learners.
- Teachers need CPD specifically for **motivating and engaging reluctant or disadvantaged learners** and **embedding and contextualising the English and maths learning** to make it relevant to learners' lives, work and wider learning programmes. The ETF will provide this as part of their CPD programmes in the FE sector.
- Teachers should continue to have access to **ongoing CPD opportunities** in order to increase their subject knowledge, develop their pedagogic skills and embed and reflect on their practice. This could incorporate joint practice development

approaches, such as peer mentoring, observations and other opportunities to share practice in safe spaces. The ETF will provide this as part of their CPD programmes in the FE sector. The Oldham College case study on page 34 is an example of this approach to ongoing CPD.

- The **current Government incentives to attract more graduates and specialist teachers of English and maths into the FE sector should continue**. Incentives such as bursaries and Golden Hellos are potential ways to address skills gaps and staff shortages identified by stakeholders and should be utilised effectively by leaders.
- Teachers need to be supported to develop their digital skills and their confidence in **using technology to enhance their teaching and learning**. There may be a role for Digital Champions in supporting or coordinating this sharing of practice.

Supporting employers

- Employers need to be made aware of **the changes to and benefits of the new GCSEs in maths and English** – and how the skills and knowledge gained can be used in the workplace – in order to support and encourage apprentices and other workplace learners to take GCSEs.
- **Flexible delivery methods and assessment arrangements** are seen as crucial to fit the delivery and assessment of GCSEs around apprentices' and employees' working hours. This could be achieved through offering multiple time slots for sessions; blended or distance learning opportunities; and more exam windows throughout the year.
- Providers should work with employers to help them develop a **positive attitude towards learning in the workplace**, which could enable staff to teach GCSEs more effectively. The Transport for London case study on page 38 demonstrates the importance of this in supporting employees to take up GCSEs.

Conclusion

Our analysis of wide-ranging stakeholder views identifies the existing and additional support that learners, teachers, providers (including leaders) and employers will need in order to bring about the successful implementation of new GCSEs in English and maths.

It is clear that there are over-arching themes in stakeholders' views which apply across the analysis, including the request for flexibility in the implementation and delivery of the new GCSEs; the request for Government to continue to support providers in raising the standards of teaching; the importance of embedding and contextualising the teaching and learning of English and maths; the role of stepping stone qualifications; and the use of technology to enhance teaching, learning and assessment practices.

Above all, our analysis demonstrates that the sector broadly supports the Government's ambition to promote GCSEs as the national standard of English and maths. Respondents to the call for evidence have identified a range of actions that they believe all stakeholders, including Government, providers (including senior leaders), practitioners and employers, need to take in order for the new GCSEs in

English and maths to be successfully implemented. Much expertise, innovation and creativity already exists within the sector. However, further investment of support and resources from providers, leaders and Government will be required to successfully implement the reformed GCSEs and ensure that all learners have the opportunity to benefit from improved knowledge and skills in English and maths.

1. Introduction

In July 2014, the Government announced plans to introduce new GCSEs into the post-16 sector. These plans aim to meet the Government's ambition to enable as many young people and adults as possible who lack good qualifications in English and maths to have the chance to take GCSEs in these subjects. NIACE, in partnership with NRDC, was commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Education (DfE) to seek views as to how the new GCSEs in English and maths can be successfully implemented into post-16 education.

Throughout July-September 2014, NIACE consulted the 16-19 and post-19 sectors on the implementation of the new GCSEs through two online written calls for evidence and three seminars. This paper presents the findings from these activities.

1.1 Policy reform

Research indicates that GCSEs are the qualifications most recognised and valued by employers, educators and the public. 93 per cent of employers value GCSEs, whereas only just over half agree that other qualifications are of equal value¹. The Government funds over 25,000 adults to do GCSE maths and over 18,000 adults to do GCSE English. Further, the number of learners aged 16-18 studying GCSE English increased from 52,000 in 2012/13 to 79,800 in 2013/14, and the number of 16-18 learners studying GCSE maths increased from 46,400 to 63,000 across the same period of time².

New GCSEs will be available to be taught in schools and colleges from September 2015. They have been reformed to make them more academically stretching and to provide greater assurance of the practical literacy and numeracy skills that employers have said they want. In order to assure standards, the examinations will be linear, not modular, and there will be no internal assessment.

The new FE Workforce Strategy³ sets out the next steps to improve the quality and quantity of specialist teachers to support the delivery of English and maths GCSEs. The Government is investing £30m over two years to improve the quality of English and maths teaching; this includes bursaries for new teachers, grants to support providers with recruitment, maths and English CPD enhancement programmes, funding for SEN training and a £10,000 Golden Hello scheme for graduate maths teachers.

¹ Ofqual Perceptions Survey 2013 <http://ofqual.gov.uk/standards/statistics/perceptions/>

²

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/369060/16T_O18_Patterns_of_study_Sub3_L3_Quals_Englishandmaths.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-workforce-strategy>

In 16-19 education, the Government will strengthen the condition of funding for full-time students on study programmes⁴ to ensure that students that have achieved a grade D at GCSE in English and/or maths during key stage 4 study for GCSEs rather than other qualifications. This will become effective from August 2015.

From 2016, schools and colleges will be held to account for the progress their students make through a new headline 16-19 English and maths performance measure which will show the progress of those who did not achieve a C at key stage 4.

The new GCSEs in English and maths will become the national standard qualification in these subjects at Level 2 for students in 16-19 education from September 2017. Part-time 16-19 students without A*-C GCSEs in English and maths, including apprentices and students on traineeships, will continue to study towards achieving a GCSE in these subjects, taking approved stepping stone qualifications such as Functional Skills where appropriate.

The Government's ambition for adults (19+) is that by 2020, GCSEs will be the preferred qualification in English and maths at Level 2, including in Apprenticeships. Functional Skills qualifications will continue to be valuable qualifications for adults, especially as stepping stones to GCSE achievement. Functional Skills will continue to be a part of Apprenticeship completion requirements but Government will work with Apprenticeship employers, FE colleges and training providers and others to identify how to achieve its ambition and remove barriers which prevent learners from choosing GCSEs. From the beginning of academic year 2015 to 2016, providers who teach GCSE Maths and GCSE English to adults (19+) outside apprenticeships will receive a higher rate of funding through the Adult Skills Budget. Also at this point, funding for Level 2 Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) English and maths qualifications will cease, so that adults studying at Level 2 will take Functional Skills and GCSEs.

1.2 New GCSEs in English and maths

The new GCSEs in English language and maths aim to provide greater assurance of literacy and numeracy, and help those who achieve them apply the knowledge and skills they acquire in their everyday lives, including the workplace. The maths GCSE will include more problem solving, including in every day contexts. The new English language GCSE places greater weight on accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

They will also be more challenging at the level commonly considered a pass. This is in response to international evidence that shows English students have fallen well behind the performance of their key competitors.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-the-quality-of-further-education-and-skills-training>

New GCSEs will have a new grading system. Students will be awarded a grade from 1 to 9, with 9 being the highest. The U grade will be retained. They will be fully linear, with assessment at the end of the course (content will not be divided into modules). In English and maths all assessment that counts towards the grade will be by examination (speaking and listening in English language will continue to be assessed but will not count towards the grade). Exams will only be available in the summer, apart from a November retake for post-16 students in English language and maths.

DfE has published the content criteria for English language and maths GCSEs, setting out the minimum requirements for specifications. Exam boards have now developed draft specifications and submitted them to Ofqual for accreditation. Only if Ofqual is satisfied that they meet its requirements can they be offered as regulated qualifications.

1.2.1 English language content

The new English language GCSE provides greater focus on ensuring students can read fluently; analyse texts and write clearly and accurately using appropriate Standard English. Students will be expected to use a range of vocabulary and different types of sentence structure with accurate spelling and punctuation, which will contribute 20 per cent of new GCSE marks of the overall qualification (up from 12 per cent in the old GCSE). The importance employers place on oral literacy and spoken language will continue to form part of the new English language GCSE but will be reported separately and will not contribute to the final mark and grade. Other new requirements include testing whether students can write in different ways such as narrating and presenting arguments to different audiences. The English language GCSE will examine students on their understanding of texts they have not seen before. These must:

- include high quality and challenging texts drawn from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, which represent a substantial piece of writing, making significant demands on students in terms of content, structure and the quality of language used; and
- include literature and extended literary non-fiction and other writing such as essays, reviews and journalism (both printed and online)

Texts that are not intended to be kept as a record, such as instant news feeds, must not be included.

The exam boards have provided exemplar assessment materials along with their draft specifications. Their non-fiction examples include: a 19th century account of slavery, a speech by President Obama on Nelson Mandela, extracts from the Sunday Times and the Observer and a Government recruitment advert for MI6.

The English language GCSE will not be tiered so all students will sit the examination papers.

1.2.2 Maths content

The content requirements for the new maths GCSE include the need for students to demonstrate confidence and competence with mathematical content so that they can apply it flexibly to solve problems. It requires students to be aware that maths can be used to develop models of real situations. Essential key stage 3 content has been explicitly included and forms a large part of the content all students should aim to master. Students should develop confidence and competence with key applications of secondary maths, such as arithmetic or ratios, before moving on to more advanced maths. The requirements cover each of the skills required by current Functional Skills qualifications.

Students will need to demonstrate that they can solve problems involving percentage change, including percentage increase/decrease and original value problems, and simple interest such as financial maths. The new GCSE will also have a section on ratio, proportion and rates of change. Students will also have to learn about vectors and conditional probability, and a number of key formulae by heart.

The maths GCSE will continue to be tiered, with a higher and foundation tier available, overlapping at the mid-point of the grading scale.

The weightings for each content domain are different for foundation and higher tier. For foundation tier, content domains which assess students' confidence in the basics – Number (with explicit reference to formal written methods of calculation) and Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change (with reference to simple interest in financial maths) – have been substantially enhanced and will make up at least half of each paper. There will be more challenging questions for the most able to properly test their understanding of the mathematical knowledge needed for higher level study and careers in maths, the sciences and computing.

Exam boards have taken account of the requirement for pupils to apply their mathematical understanding to real world contexts in their draft assessment materials, for example, through questions that test a student's ability to compare the costs of two of more different transport choices.

2. Methodology

Throughout July-September 2014, NIACE consulted the 16-19 and post-19 sectors on the implementation of the new GCSEs in English and maths. This was carried out through two online written calls for evidence and three seminars. In total, 127 organisations contributed to the consultation.

2.1 Call for evidence

The project team at NIACE worked closely with BIS and DfE to develop two calls for written evidence: one for the 16-19 sector and one for the post-19 sector. The calls for evidence were administered via an online consultation in order to reach a large number and range of stakeholders. Copies of the online submission forms can be found at Appendices 1 and 2.

Stakeholders were also offered the opportunity to submit case studies of provision where learners were already successfully engaging with GCSE maths and English learning.

Both the calls for evidence and the case study submission forms were promoted extensively through NIACE's networks and membership base, news stories on the NIACE website, and through social media. Items were also included in a range of sector newsletters and bulletins, including the Skills Funding Agency's Update, AoC's Chief Executive Letter and AELP's Countdown.

In total, 26 responses to the call for evidence were submitted from the 16-19 sector and 35 responses were submitted from the post-19 sector, making a total of 61. Respondents were from a range of backgrounds and included FE colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), community learning providers, third sector organisations, unions, employers and awarding organisations. Seven responses were from sector representative organisations who consulted with their members prior to submitting their responses. The 61 responses therefore represent the views of a wide range of stakeholders. A full list of contributors can be found at Appendix 4.

In addition, NIACE received four case studies from the 16-19 sector and five case studies from the post-19 sector.

2.2 Seminars

Alongside the online calls for evidence, NIACE held three seminars to discuss the implementation of the policy. The seminars were held in Sheffield, Leicester and London during September 2014.

Over 160 individuals attended the seminars. Attendees were from a mix of job roles, including practitioners, managers and directors. A range of organisations were represented including FE colleges, ITPs, third sector organisations, employers, awarding organisations and sector representative organisations. A full list of contributors can be found at Appendix 4.

Feedback from the events was recorded by NIACE, NRDC, BIS and DfE staff. A Textwall was also used to collect comments and observations during the session on technology.

2.3 Analysis process

Data from the written evidence and the three seminars were collated and analysed using Microsoft Excel. Analysis frameworks were developed in order to identify the main themes arising from the evidence, and to enable researchers to establish the weighting of different suggestions and concerns. Separate analysis frameworks were developed for the 16-19, post-19 and Apprenticeship sectors. The analysis frameworks identified the main themes arising from the evidence under four broad areas: structural/systemic considerations; supporting and motivating learners; supporting teachers; and supporting employers. Overall, the themes emerging from each of the sectors were very similar. The findings below therefore cover all three sectors and highlight key differences between types of provision or groups of learners.

3. Findings

Overall, our findings demonstrate that the sector broadly supports the Government's ambition to promote GCSEs as a national standard of English and maths. Much expertise, innovation and creativity already exists within the sector to support the successful implementation of the new GCSEs. However, continued investment of support and resources from providers and Government alike will be required to ensure the successful implementation of the reformed GCSEs and to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to benefit from improved skills in English and maths.

'We support the general principle of a national standard for all learners of achieving a grade C or above in English Language and Mathematics as a means of ensuring the nation develops a globally competitive workforce. However, we do not believe this should be done in such a way that jeopardises the life chances and employment prospects of those who do not respond well to traditional classroom teaching.' (Learning provider in the post-19 sector)

'GCSEs are clearly seen as important by learners as over 1,500 have been assessed... GCSEs are good and robust, and are well recognised by Higher Education and employers. The teaching of [learners with] grade Ds will be challenging in 2015-16 and it is a high expectation on staff to ensure the same level of success rates that they are achieving now with a greater level of selection. It would be good to have a greater level of flexibility to allow a learner to enter for a GCSE when they are ready which would apply to apprentices in the workplace and some learners who may be ready mid-year.' (Learning provider in the 16-19 sector)

Respondents to the call for evidence identified a range of actions that all stakeholders, including Government, providers (including senior leaders), practitioners and employers, need to take to enable the successful implementation of the new GCSEs in English and maths. The findings below summarise the evidence gathered in relation to the 16-19, post-19 and Apprenticeship sectors and highlight key differences between types of provision or groups of learners where relevant.

3.1 Supporting learners

Stakeholders agree that the ways in which learners are supported and motivated to engage with the new GCSEs will be key to their successful implementation. There is recognition that there are some potential barriers for learners in the 16-19, post-19 and Apprenticeships sectors to achieve GCSEs in English and maths. However, respondents to the call for evidence suggested some innovative and effective ways in which these challenges could be addressed. These are outlined below.

3.1.1 Demonstrate the benefits of GCSEs

Two-fifths of online respondents state that in order for learners to engage with GCSEs, they need to be made aware of their relevance and benefits in increasing their access to employment and their wider lives. One way in which learners' awareness of the importance and value of GCSEs can be raised is through **good quality**

information, advice and guidance (IAG). Providers will need to explain the changes in content and assessment of the qualifications and how they will help them to achieve their career or personal goals. This was raised by one in five online respondents, who emphasised that good IAG can ensure that learners are ready to take GCSEs and that these qualifications are the most appropriate or them to take, as well as providing learners with the 'line of sight' from GCSEs to work. As the following Oldham College case study demonstrates, explicitly linking GCSE attainment to vocational courses supports learners to make the connection between GCSEs and work.

Oldham College

Oldham College is a medium-sized further education provider in Greater Manchester, which has a substantial 16-19 vocational provision and part-time English and maths provision for adult learners. In response to the introduction of Study Programmes and the English and maths funding conditions, the college has expanded its GCSE offer for vocational learners. The college has revised its entry requirements for 2014/15 onwards to explicitly link attainment levels in GCSE and Functional Skills in English and Maths to entry and progression criteria for vocational courses. This is aimed at ensuring learners have the necessary English and maths skills to underpin effective vocational learning, and to reinforce the importance of the link between English and maths and vocational learning.

In addition, seminar participants emphasised that the message about the importance of GCSEs must come from all parties involved in delivering GCSEs, including schools, FE providers and employers. Only with a strong and consistent message will learners recognise the benefits of GCSE maths and English.

'Motivating adults to take GCSEs depends on them knowing it is the right route for them. This involves offering good quality advice and guidance and developing learning journeys – with functional skills included where appropriate – that clearly describe how they benefit from gaining their GCSEs.' (Sector representative organisation)

'Employers need to be knowledgeable about the new GCSE and make it a national message that it's needed. Providers can encourage employers to talk to young people about why English and maths are important in their job role.' (London seminar participant)

Uxbridge College

Uxbridge College has developed a mixed model approach to enhance employability and employer engagement in its 16-19 study programmes. This focuses on further teaching in maths and English for learners, who have not already achieved at Level 2. The College engages a range of different organisations as “Employer Champions” who are involved in the design, delivery and/or assessment of courses and highlight the importance of maths and English for careers in their sectors. This has resulted in strong engagement with maths and English across the College.

‘Maths and English are promoted across the College as key employability skills, highly valued in the workplace and therefore an integral part of the course. There is a mix of discrete and embedded delivery of maths and English. Learners have responded well and there is very good engagement in these essential skills because their value for a career is evident.’⁵

Similarly, seminar delegates from the post-19 sector suggested that adult learners undertaking maths and English as part of a wider programme will need to see the relevance of GCSEs to their main subject, career aspirations or wider lives in order for them to engage effectively with the provision⁶. A small number of online respondents commented that GCSEs are strongly associated with school and the content and questions in exam papers are often tailored to young people. This may reinforce any existing ideas adult learners have about GCSEs being for school pupils and lacking relevance to their aspirations. In order to overcome this, tutors will need to emphasise the difference between their provision and school, and use materials and resources which are relevant to learners’ wider lives, for example, more adult-orientated comprehension texts.

‘What they are taught needs to have relevance for them and be real. They need to put the skills into contexts that are meaningful for them (such as a vocational context or an area of interest). This has to be done through integrated teaching approaches, where the teacher of the English or maths skills understands the relevance to the students’ other areas of interest.’ (Individual response to 16-19 call for evidence)

3.1.2 Contextualising GCSE

A third of online respondents feel that **contextualising⁷ the teaching and learning of GCSEs** is particularly important in order to motivate learners on vocational

⁵ Association of Colleges (2013) Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16-19 Study Programme Principles: Uxbridge College. London: AoC.

⁶ This is supported by wider research. See, for example, Eldred, J. (2005) *Developing embedded language, literacy and numeracy: Supporting Achievement*. Leicester: NIACE.

⁷ “Contextualised language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) learning is where the primary learning goal is one associated with LLN and where tutors draw into their teaching and learning programmes, contexts, topics and issues which are relevant to the identified needs

programmes such as Apprenticeships. Similarly, research shows that, although challenging, where implemented effectively across a whole organisation, embedding English and maths can improve retention and success rates for learners on vocational courses⁸. Respondents argue that the 'line of sight' between GCSEs and work is crucial in order for young people in particular to understand why they need to achieve the qualification.

However, over a third of respondents to the online calls for evidence and participants at each of the three seminars feel that it will be more difficult to contextualise or embed GCSEs compared with Functional Skills, which may impact on learners' engagement and motivation. Providers from the 16-19 sector suggest that this may be a particular issue for learners who achieved a grade D or lower in the old GCSEs, as they will feel less motivated to continue with what will be perceived as the same qualification. Similarly, learners on vocational programmes and their employers may struggle to see the relevance of specific aspects of the GCSEs to their job roles or workplaces.

Nevertheless, respondents give a range of suggestions as to how providers could **contextualise maths and English GCSE provision**. These include using materials and resources which are relevant to learners' contexts; linking the learning to specific vocations or employment sectors; and working in partnership with employers and other organisations to emphasise the importance of maths and English in the world of work. The case study below from Plymouth College of Art demonstrates how a whole organisation approach to English and maths can enable vocational tutors to embed English and maths into their programmes. By embedding the functional aspects of the new GCSEs into learners' wider programmes, providers may also overcome some of the challenges posed by the increased size and delivery requirements of the new curriculum.

'There is a cross college policy on English and maths, understood by all staff and students. These subjects are embedded in departmental delivery with a variety of ways of ensuring vocational areas take responsibility.' (Sector representative organisation)

of individuals or groups. Embedded learning is where the host subject is the primary or equal goal along with LLN but where the LLN is identified, taught and learned within the host subject and supports achievement of it." Eldred, J. (2005) *Developing embedded literacy, language and numeracy: supporting achievement*. Leicester: NIACE.

⁸ Casey et al (2006) *Briefing Paper 3: The Impact of Embedding on Learning and Achievement*. Leicester: NIACE.

Plymouth College of Art (PCA)

'PCA approaches the embedding of Maths and English holistically... Maths and English staff, in conjunction with Academic and Study Zone staff, reviewed principal courses, Functional Skills and GCSE specifications and created a bespoke set of instruments to support Maths and English delivery within the studio environment. Highly visual Assessment Grid 'posters' containing the criteria for maths and English across Entry Levels 1-3, Functional Skills Levels 1 and 2 and GCSEs were developed to make maths and English skills practice accessible for staff and students. This practice was also supported by a document with suggested 'Activities' to practise the 'Themes' and criteria of maths and English identified in the Assessment Grids. The instruments were designed to support adoption and ownership by principal course staff of maths and English specifications in order for them to be fully combined with their specialist subject knowledge.'⁹

Embedding and contextualising the teaching of English and maths GCSEs may also help providers to overcome one of the main concerns identified by respondents to the consultation: that the new GCSE curriculum may take **longer to deliver**. This was cited by over half of the online respondents and was raised at each of the seminars. The reasons behind the perceived need for increased delivery time, despite the fact that guided learning hours will not be increased, were twofold. Firstly, the new maths GCSE curriculum will be broader and include more content than the current GCSEs. Providers are therefore assuming that tutors will require more time to cover the content of the course. Secondly, because the new GCSEs are being described as more robust and challenging, providers argue that learners will need more time to learn and practise the skills required to gain the qualification.

'The increase in the demand of the new GCSE is likely to mean that more time will need to be given to teaching the subjects and preparing learners for the exams.'
(Sector representative organisation)

However, if providers can effectively embed maths and English into their wider provision, they may be able to avoid significantly extending the delivery hours required. This should also help to ensure that employers do not have to release apprentices and other workplace learners from work more regularly or for longer periods in order to cover the new GCSE curriculum. This was raised by around one in five online respondents and was discussed in detail at all three of the seminars. Providers argue that employers may struggle to afford to release their staff for the time required to achieve a more challenging qualification. Consequently, employers may only recruit apprentices who already have a C at GCSE, recruit fewer apprentices or stop recruiting apprentices altogether. However, this challenge may be lessened through a combination of effective embedding and contextualisation

⁹ Association of Colleges (2013) *Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16-19 Study Programme Principles*: Plymouth College of Art. London: AoC.

of the teaching and learning English and maths, as well as training vocational tutors to teach GCSEs and support English and maths delivery.

3.1.3 Flexible delivery and assessment

Over a third of online respondents highlight the need to offer learners **flexible ways to learn and be assessed** in order for them to achieve English and maths GCSEs. This was also discussed at each of the three seminars, and was seen as particularly important for adults and learners following vocational programmes who have responsibilities and commitments outside of their learning. Providers will therefore need to be flexible in terms of the location, time, length, and delivery methods of programmes in order for adult and vocational learners to engage with GCSEs.

'Adult learners also need opportunities for a modular approach to learning. This would better suit working life where shift patterns and untypical ways of working are a major barrier to learning as well as the challenge of managing personal lives involving caring duties and other responsibilities.' Sector representative organisation

'The ability to access learning resources at times that suit the student's availability means a flexible approach to learning is needed that provides opportunities for self-study that fit with a variety of demands in their time.' (Learning provider in the 16-19 and post-19 sectors)

By being flexible in their delivery, providers may be able to overcome their concerns about delivering GCSE to learners on part-time or short courses. While the Government is exploring how to support all learners to engage with GCSEs in the longer term, there is no requirement for learners on short courses to work towards achieving GCSE qualifications. Respondents to the call for evidence supported this approach. Almost half of the online respondents argue that the longer delivery time resulting from the more challenging curriculum may be an issue for these learners. They will likely have to complete the GCSE within a year and may find it difficult to commit to the time required for the delivery of the new curriculum. Similarly, providers feel that learners on short, intensive courses, such as job seekers or offender learners, may be particularly disadvantaged by the changes, as they are unlikely to take up or even be offered the chance to do GCSEs if it cannot be guaranteed that they will complete them within their time-limited course. However, if learners on part-time or short courses want to engage with GCSEs, a flexible approach to delivery may enable them to access provision alongside their other commitments and potentially continue with their English and maths learning after their main programme has ended.

As well as needing to be flexible in their delivery of GCSEs, providers stress the importance of **multiple and flexible opportunities for assessment** in enabling learners to achieve these qualifications. A third of online respondents and participants at all three seminars expressed concern about the limited windows for assessment. Providers feel that this may reduce the flexibility of the GCSE programme. Learners

on short and roll-on, roll-off courses, work-based learning programmes and Apprenticeships can start their learning at any point in the year. Providers question whether they will be able to keep these learners engaged until they can take their exams if their programme finishes weeks or even months before the assessment window of June or November. Similarly, adult and workplace learners need flexible assessment opportunities which they can fit around other aspects of their work and personal life.

'The biggest issue will be getting all learners ready to test in one testing session per year. Adult learners want to learn at a time and pace which fits around other aspects of their work and family life. Blended and online learning provides that flexibility. One exam per year cannot. Learners on short programmes (e.g. job seekers) will not necessarily be on programme for the testing session in June. Those who are will not necessarily be ready to take the exam in June.' (Learning provider from the post-19 sector)

Another issue providers have in relation to assessment arrangements is the requirement for learners to undertake linear assessment. In general, providers agree that this could act as a strong deterrent for learners who may be disadvantaged by traditional exams, such as adult learners who may have had a negative experience of initial education, making the association between GCSEs and school even stronger. Furthermore, staged or unitised assessment can be a highly effective way of demonstrating learners' progress and improve their motivation to learn. This will be more difficult to achieve with linear assessment.

'The new style English GCSE will be a 100% untiered exam assessment towards the end of the year. Many students will be inexperienced on how to work through questions, particularly those students who have lower processing skills. Furthermore, students with learning difficulties may find the proposed increase in examination time a struggle. Past students benefited from modular assessments where they had short term goals to work towards. With the removal of modular assessments students will not be able to see the progress made. Colleges will need to put on mock exams to compensate for this.' (Sector representative organisation)

More flexible assessment arrangements can benefit a range of learners. For example, three providers point out that **staged assessments** can act as a strong motivator for learners to continue their programmes as they can see their own progression. Offering learners opportunities to review their progress, even through an informal or unaccredited process, may be one way for providers to overcome learners' anxieties about the linear assessment of the new GCSEs.

'Students often find a more modular approach to assessment more rewarding as they can see progress in more meaningful steps, rather than waiting until the end of the academic year and then potentially having to re-repeat.' (Awarding Organisation)

One group for which flexible delivery and assessment is particularly important is **learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**. The policy allows exemptions for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who achieved grade D at secondary school, but for whom continuing GCSEs may not be appropriate. These exceptions will be made on a case by case basis¹⁰. According to official statistics on participation in learning, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 19 and over are more likely than average to be working towards GCSEs in English and maths.

Providers feel that the linear assessment in the new GCSEs will disadvantage learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as they often prefer to undertake practical, staged assessments. Stakeholders therefore suggest that flexible delivery and assessment should be available for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who wish to continue with GCSEs, in order for them to fully meet learners' individual support needs. Furthermore, one in five online respondents stress that in order to effectively support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who continue with GCSEs, they will need **adequate and ring-fenced Additional Learning Support (ALS) funds**. This will enable providers to support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through additional lessons, revision sessions and staff support where necessary. However, without ring-fencing this budget is easily subsumed into wider funding for English and maths provision.

'Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are going to have an even greater requirement for both flexible delivery and assessment methods that can be adapted to meet individual needs.' (Sector representative organisation)

'Such programmes are not dependent on the traditional, linear, style of learning with a single opportunity examination assessment at a fixed point. This style of learning does not suit dyslexic learners and will certainly increase the incidence of non-completion if it became an essential part of the qualification.' (Learning provider in the 16-19 sector)

Flexible approaches were also identified as important for learners who will be **making the transition from old to new GCSEs**. Approximately one in ten of the online respondents highlight that learners who fail the last re-sit of the old GCSEs in November 2016 will need to study for the new GCSEs in English and maths. Respondents suggest that learners may find it difficult to make the transition successfully from old to new GCSEs. This may have a detrimental impact on these learners' motivation, and may result in them disengaging from GCSEs. In order to avoid this, providers suggest allowing the first cohort of learners two years to study for the new GCSEs. In November 2014, Government confirmed that providers of 16-19 study

¹⁰ A similar approach has been implemented for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities following 16-19 study programmes. See: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343147/16_to_19_study_programmes_departmental_advice.pdf

programmes can tailor programmes to meet individual learners' needs, for example, by enrolling them on GCSE courses for one or two years¹¹.

'In September 2016 students who have not achieved their A to C will have one year to achieve in the qualification they studied at school. Most of these students will, in our experience, need two years. We recommend that the 'old' GCSE be continued until June 2018 so these students are not singularly disadvantaged. College success rates in GCSE maths and English will be tough to maintain while 16-year-olds are undertaking a new qualification which all parties describe as more stretching.'* (Sector representative organisation)

One way in which providers could deliver and assess GCSEs flexibly is through the **use of technology**. This was cited by almost a third of online respondents, and was also a common suggestion at the seminars. Providers point out that blended learning approaches and Virtual Learning Environments can provide learners with on-demand access to learning resources and materials, allowing them to practise their skills as and when they have the time. This is seen as a particularly valuable use of technology for adult learners who may find it difficult to commit to the possibility of increased learning hours required for the new GCSEs. Providers valued access to online exams and assessments for similar reasons.

'The use of technology can motivate learners by providing a flexible approach to learning and opportunities for self-study that fit with a variety of demands on time. The ability to access learning resources at times that suit a student's availability can be very successful.' (Learning provider in the 16-19 and post-19 sectors)

Learndirect is already using technology to support the delivery of GCSEs and has found this to be a highly effective way of providing learners with a flexible and individualised approach, as shown by their case study below.

¹¹ DfE briefing – 16-19 Maths and English Requirements (November 2014)

Learndirect

'Technology has the potential to transform the way maths and English is delivered in the classroom, at home and in the workplace, improving quality, efficiency and accessibility. Every learner is unique with different learning goals, motivations and approaches to learning. For this reason, technology can play a large part in GCSE delivery. By using the latest web-enabled technology, adults can have highly individualised programmes which focus on the specific areas of learning they need. Tutor-led consolidation activities are important to enable discussion and cement learning. These can also be delivered via technology, allowing learning to take place in a safe and comfortable environment and enabling remote learners to participate fully in group sessions.

'Using technology to facilitate blended and online learning also gives those learners who dislike the 'school' classroom delivery environment a viable alternative. Online learning can offer more flexibility for learners who find it difficult to commit to a specific attendance pattern and reduces the 'fear of public failure' for those who find contributing to groups challenging. Technology gives providers the ability to carry out detailed, adaptive initial and diagnostic assessments; the results of which can be used to automatically generate highly individualised programmes of learning based on an individual's needs.'

Around one in five online respondents also point out that technology can provide ways for **learners to interact and support one another**, something which was viewed as particularly important for distance learners and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Again, this opportunity for peer support and flexible delivery could be one way to overcome potential issues around the increased delivery time and levels of support required for learners to achieve the new GCSEs.

However, both online respondents and seminar participants raised a number of potential challenges in using technology to support learners. Providers point out that learners need to have the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, as well as access to technology and the internet (both at home and in the classroom) in order to use technology to support their learning effectively. Tutors will need to be aware of these potential barriers when using technology to support the delivery of GCSE.

3.1.4 High quality teaching

For 16-19 learners who have had a poor experience at school, GCSEs may act as a barrier to their engagement. Approximately a third of the online respondents from the 16-19 sector identify **innovative and creative teaching methods and approaches** as a way to motivate learners. It is important for teachers to be enthusiastic, inspiring and emphasise the difference between their teaching approach and what was offered previously at school. This requires interactive and engaging resources,

innovative and fun teaching methods and activities, and support for learners to make decisions about and shape their own learning.

'FE tutors need to emphasise the difference between their programme and school. For example, learners have some control over their own learning, the classes are smaller which means they get more support etc. Younger learners often have a bigger barrier because they've just come from school and this negative experience is fresh in their minds.' (Leicester seminar participant)

One way in which providers could make their provision more creative is through the use of technology. Through the online submissions and seminars, providers identified a wide range of **online resources and technologies** which they use to make their lessons more interactive and engaging. This includes using tablets such as iPads or other mobile technologies to quiz learners; hosting banks of resources on Virtual Learning Environments; and the use of interactive programmes or websites such as MyMaths and iTunes U for learners to practise and revise their skills and knowledge. These approaches should be shared across the sector, for example through the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM), Jisc and the Excellence Gateway.

However, as well as highlighting the value in using online resources and materials, stakeholders identify a range of potential issues in relying on technology to deliver GCSEs. As well as the barriers for learners discussed above, tutors may also lack the confidence or skills to use technology effectively, and will need to develop engaging and interactive resources and activities in order to avoid learners being distracted by technology and social media. This has a time and resource implication for providers.

'Technology could possibly be used to help mitigate these barriers although there may be proficiency issues with using technology linked to low literacy and numeracy levels alongside previously mentioned issues of quiet space and internet access at home.' (Sector representative organisation)

'Not all providers have the technology or internet access to support online learning.' (Textwall message from Leicester seminar)

Furthermore, participants in the Sheffield seminar raised the issue of mobile phones and social media being banned from classrooms in their organisations. These participants feel that further education is a good place to allow learners to understand the rules and protocols for the use of mobiles and social media that can be transferred to the workplace, and so it is important to embed this use of technology in their provision. They argue that there needs to be a change in attitudes and culture towards technology and how it can be used to support learning in their organisations. This highlights the importance of leadership and introducing changes from the top down.

These suggestions echo the findings of the Further Education Learning Technology Action Group (FELTAG), which identified 'the need for significant investment in the knowledge, skills and understanding of learning technology's potential among policy-makers, governors, principals, senior and middle management, teachers and support staff.'¹² Wider developments in the sector, including the Government's response¹³ to FELTAG and introduction by the ETF of workforce development programmes for leaders, practitioners and support staff should enable the sector to develop the use of technology in the teaching of English and maths GCSEs.

3.1.5 Stepping stone courses

Over a third of online respondents emphasise the continued need for stepping stone courses or qualifications to **build learners' confidence** in English and maths and develop the skills required for the new GCSEs. This may be needed for a number of reasons. Some providers feel that the more challenging content of the new GCSEs may deter some learners from engaging with the qualifications. Indeed, the number of learners aged 16-18 studying an English stepping stone qualification increased from 190,200 in 2012/13 to 196,000 in 2013/14, and the number of 16-18 learners working towards a maths stepping stone qualification increased from 169,000 to 187,000 across the same period of time¹⁴.

Stepping stone qualifications may particularly help 16-19 learners who achieved a D in the old GCSEs, as they are likely to feel demotivated by the consistent message that the new GCSEs are more rigorous and challenging. Similarly, learners making the transition from old to new GCSEs or from Functional Skills to GCSEs will need to adjust to the increased demands of the new GCSE. Providers argue that the continuation of stepping stone qualifications or courses could give these learners confidence in their abilities and motivate them to engage in the new GCSEs.

'Critical to the success of motivating young people is to secure confidence in themselves and their abilities before re-attempting a GCSE programme. One step is to ensure that learners' understanding and ability to apply the underpinning skills of English and maths are secure.' (Awarding Organisation)

Although some providers feel that Functional Skills qualifications could act effectively as these stepping stones, others emphasise the gap between the skills and

¹² FELTAG (2013) *Recommendations. Paths Forward to a digital future for Further Education and Skills* <http://feltag.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/FELTAG-REPORT-FINAL.pdf>

¹³ BIS (2014) *Government Response to the Recommendations from the Further Education Learning Technology Action Group* https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/320242/bis-14-841-government-response-to-recommendations-from-the-FELTAG-action-plan.pdf

¹⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/369060/161018_Patterns_of_study_Sub3_L3_Quals_Englishandmaths.pdf

knowledge required for Functional Skills and GCSEs, and feel that learners will need further “bridging” courses between these qualifications. These courses should focus on **developing the underpinning skills and knowledge required for success in GCSEs**, such as grammar, punctuation and spelling; time management and self-study; and confidence in their academic skills. One provider suggests using the OCR Cambridge Progression suite, a set of ‘bite-size’ stepping stone qualifications which aim to develop the underpinning Level 2 skills of English and maths GCSEs. However, around one in ten online respondents feel that learners may not take these up if they are required to pay, hence they may need access to **fully-funded stepping stone courses and qualifications**.

‘Adults are likely to need a range of stepping stones provision and it is important that these are fully and adequately funded.’ (Sector representative organisation)

Some seminar participants from the post-19 sector feel that GCSEs assume a school setting with continuous learning up to the point of taking the qualification. The content and assessment of the qualification therefore assume that learners have a bank of recent knowledge to draw on. Stepping stone courses and qualifications may help these adult learners to overcome issues about the content and structure of GCSEs. Many adult learners will be returning to learning after a long break and may find it difficult to manage the demands of the new GCSEs. They may need opportunities to develop the underpinning skills and knowledge required for the GCSEs, and need contextualised teaching to make the learning relevant to their situations.

‘The content of the syllabus assumes a school setting and a 16 year old learner who has had KS3 to build written argument and literacy skills. The new GCSE makes no concessions to a once-a-week, one year (realistically 9 months) course for an adult learner who has been out of the education system for many years.’
(Individual response to post-19 call for evidence)

The availability of stepping stone courses and qualifications is seen as particularly important for learners at risk of disadvantage, for example those with ESOL needs, offenders and learners with English and maths skills at the lower entry levels. NIACE research into supporting learners with ESOL needs onto mainstream English qualifications¹⁵ showed that those with lower literacy skills, less prior experience of education and those needing more time to consolidate their learning before progressing to the next level(s) could benefit from small, unit-based qualifications and periods of non-accredited learning. Similarly, NIACE’s report on the role of skills in the Work Programme emphasised the importance of informal, unaccredited and stepping stone courses in enabling unemployed people, particularly those with ESOL needs, to engage in learning¹⁶. Acquisition of stepping stone qualifications can be a

¹⁵ NIACE (2014) *ESOL Learners’ Progression to Functional Skills and GCSE English Language Qualifications* (unpublished report to BIS)

¹⁶ NIACE (2012) *The Work Programme: What is the role of skills?* Leicester: NIACE.

strong motivator and an effective way to build learners' confidence in their English and maths skills.

Leicester Adult Learning Service (LALS)

LALS has recognised the need for a modular pre-GCSE programme which builds learners' confidence in their abilities and develops the underpinning skills required to achieve GCSEs. In preparation for the new GCSEs, LALS is trialling a pre-GCSE maths programme which involves 50 guided learning hours from September until the end of December. The course will be unit-based and cover four maths units. If their learners are ready at Christmas, LALS will register them for the GCSE exam in June.

Alongside this call for appropriate bridging courses, participants at each of the seminars emphasised that positioning Functional Skills as stepping stones to GCSEs should not lead to the devaluing of these qualifications. This was also raised by around one in ten online respondents. Overall, providers agree that these qualifications are effective in engaging both young people and adults who had negative experiences at school as they can be contextualised and made relevant to learners. Similarly, employers value Functional Skills as a qualification which provides learners with the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills required for work through embedding and contextualising provision. By positioning Functional Skills as a stepping stone to GCSEs, providers are concerned that these qualifications will no longer be valued in their own right and learners may be pushed to take up GCSEs when they are not yet ready or motivated to do so. In the 16-19 sector, this may be underpinned by the new performance measure which will show the progress of those who did not achieve a C in maths and English at key stage 4, and which will equate Level 2 Functional Skills to a grade D in GCSE.

'We strongly believe that Functional Skills should be seen as a significant achievement in their own right and not as a second class equivalent to GCSEs. They should be promoted and spoken about in policy documents in this way.'
(Independent Training Provider)

'Under the reforms, Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications will be equivalent to a grade D GCSE in performance tables. This will devalue Functional Skills: it is likely that, as a result, some providers may push young people who are not ready for a GCSE towards this, which will have a detrimental impact on some learners and effectively reinforce their sense of failure.' (Leicester seminar participant)

3.1.6 Assessing proficiency

Providers highlight the need to assess learners' proficiency in maths and English in order for them to access the appropriate provision and relevant support. The most common way in which providers assess proficiency is through **robust initial and diagnostic assessments**. These approaches were cited by almost half of the online respondents and were discussed in detail at every seminar. The combination of initial

and diagnostic tools was seen as important: providers use initial assessments to identify the skills a learner has, then a diagnostic tool to identify their skills gaps and learning needs. This ensures that learners are enrolled onto the most appropriate provision with access to appropriate levels and types of support. The Leicester College case study below demonstrates the importance of having effective initial assessments and using the results to effectively support learners to engage with GCSEs in maths and English. Providers also highlight the need to **screen for learning difficulties and/or disabilities** as these are not always identified or declared at school.

'Use of a robust Initial Assessment tool to find which level skills a learner has. Then, use a good Diagnostic Tool to identify which skills gaps the learners have at the level above. A robust initial assessment should give an informed diagnostic that is based on sound pedagogical techniques. It should effectively diagnose all skills and provide evidence of skills gaps and the need for further training.' (Awarding Organisation)

Providers emphasise the importance of having recognised and robust diagnostic tools which are fit for purpose, and of having a process which allows sufficient time for assessments to be conducted thoroughly. However, a small number of providers identify a challenge in selecting the most appropriate and comprehensive assessment out of the range of tools available. One provider suggests that BIS and DfE should fund the development of a single, "industry standard" diagnostic tool, which would ensure that all providers were applying the same benchmarks across their provision. Many existing initial and diagnostic assessment tools are aligned to the Functional Skills criteria and so some work may need to be undertaken to develop tools appropriate for diagnosing the skills required for GCSEs. Some seminar participants reported devising their own initial assessments specifically for GCSEs, used in conjunction with other tools¹⁷.

¹⁷ The development of in-house assessment tools to identify whether a learner would be better suited by a Functional Skills or GCSE course was also reported in NIACE's (2014) work on ESOL Learners' Progression to Functional Skills and GCSE English Language.

Leicester College

Leicester College uses pre-GCSE assessments to determine whether learners are ready to take GCSEs or need to engage with Functional Skills provision in order to work on any gaps in their knowledge.

'Pre-GCSE assessments were offered to internal learners prior to the summer in 2013. Those who were not successful were given guidance on the areas they needed to develop, with a follow up assessment during enrolment in September 2013. New entrants with Grade D GCSEs were invited to the Pre-GCSE assessment during enrolment. Any learner not achieving a 40% pass rate was directed to study a relevant functional skill at Level 2. Over 1,000 assessments were carried out during this period, with a high percentage of learners being directed to study Functional Skills. Successful learners are now studying towards the GCSE re-sit programme.

'The College is currently offering Pre-GCSE assessments to any learner studying a Functional Skill Level 2 in either English or Maths. The Functional Skills lecturer receives the results from the screening and, if necessary, supports the learner to work on the gaps in knowledge. The learner then re-takes the Pre-GCSE assessment, with the view to embarking on the GCSE re-sit programme in the autumn.'¹⁸

Other approaches which providers use to assess proficiency include paper-based tests, online assessments, free writing, interviews, exams and coursework. In general, providers agree that learners should have access to either paper-based or online assessments, or a combination of both, to ensure that learners with poor digital, reading or writing skills are not singularly disadvantaged. The ETF has recently undertaken a piece of work and produced a short report that identifies the current situation regarding initial and diagnostic assessment for English and maths across the sector. The report makes recommendations on how the Foundation could support improved practice.

'It is important for adults to have flexibility with the way the diagnostics can be taken and accessed. This means providing initial assessments in the workplace, for instance. The assessments need to be accessible both on print and on-line to ensure wide reach. A good diagnostic takes two hours or so to complete and it is imperative that the time needed is provided by employers.' (Sector representative organisation)

Four respondents to the 16-19 call for evidence commented that they will need to work more closely with schools in order to get better information about learners who have not achieved their English and maths GCSEs at the end of key stage 4. These

¹⁸ Association of Colleges (2013) Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16-19 Study Programme Principles: Leicester College. London: AoC.

stakeholders feel that post-16 providers not only need information on learners' grades, but also more detailed information on their proficiency in the constituent parts of the subject content to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to target learning priorities.

'Information from schools is also important in diagnosing proficiency. As well as actual GCSE grades (which the learners provide) their predicted grades are based on the teachers' knowledge of proficiency built up over a sustained period of time and adds to the insights from our own assessments of young people who we have only just met.' (Independent Training Provider)

3.1.7 Funding

A third of online respondents and participants at each of the seminars made a request for more additional funding to account for the possible **increase in delivery time**, the **additional support learners will require** to understand the more challenging content of the qualifications, and to **cover staff training and CPD** to deliver new GCSEs in English and maths.

'Funding should be increased to reflect the extra demands of GCSE courses for both providers and learners.' (Learning provider from the post-19 sector)

'Funding should be made available to pay for the internal development providers need to implement the policy – e.g. for co-ordination across organisations and support for practitioners.' (Sheffield seminar participant)

Another strong theme arising from seminar participants from the post-19 sector is that funding systems need to be **more flexible and follow learners**, as opposed to qualifications. This would enable providers to meet learner needs more effectively. A small number of providers recommend that the Education Funding Agency changes its position on the funding arrangements for part-time 16-19 learners enrolled elsewhere. If the funding arrangements remain the same and providers cannot claim for these learners, then this will act as a disincentive for providers to take on part-time 16-19 learners enrolled full-time elsewhere. One independent training provider also requests that the Education Funding Agency enables smaller providers to sub-contract English and maths provision as this would allow them to continue delivering vocational courses.

'The funding system needs to respond to learners' needs. Learners should be able to take the Level 2 route that is appropriate for them whether it is Functional Skills or the GCSEs. The funding system needs to support this so that learning providers are not forced to shoehorn all learners through one qualification pipeline. The funding system should also allow enough time for people to develop their skills and providers to provide extra support and learning hours when needed to achieve the qualification. If learners do want to progress from functional skills to the new GCSEs it is essential that the funding provides this opportunity to do this. Therefore, learners should have access to fully funded Level 2 functional skills and

the new GCSEs if that is the appropriate route for them.' (Sector representative organisation)

3.2 Supporting teachers

Stakeholders are committed to supporting teachers and tutors to acquire the knowledge and skills to teach the new English and maths GCSEs. However, this was highlighted as a challenge for the sector, as providers may struggle to secure the required **quantity and quality of staff able to deliver GCSEs** within the timeframe given to implement the new GCSEs. Participants at each of the seminars and approximately a third of online respondents reported a current shortage of teachers able to deliver GCSEs, particularly maths. They feel that the requirement for learners to re-take GCSEs will increase this shortfall, and providers will not only need to recruit additional teachers, but also grapple with the skills gaps of their existing workforce. Three online respondents and delegates at the London seminar felt that this problem was compounded by the **current pace of change in the sector**, which leaves providers with less time and resource to focus on preparing for the delivery of the new GCSEs. Providers are also concerned about the focus that Ofsted is putting on English and maths at a time of change, with some suggesting that Ofsted give providers more time to make the transition before using the grading of English and maths provision as an overall indicator of quality at an institutional level.

Despite these challenges, stakeholders were keen to identify the CPD needs of their workforce and suggest constructive ways in which these could be addressed. These are outlined below.

3.2.1 Build confidence in own subject knowledge

In general, stakeholders feel that the more challenging and in-depth content of the new GCSEs will not only require learners but also tutors to develop their English and maths skills. Providers suggest that their current teaching staff, particularly Functional Skills and vocational tutors, will need **training to improve or build their confidence in their own subject knowledge and skills**, particularly in maths. This was raised by over half of online respondents and was discussed at each of the seminars. The Government has already responded to this need in the sector by investing heavily in CPD enhancement programmes to build the skills of existing maths and English teachers, including those teaching Functional Skills and vocational subjects, so that they can teach GCSEs. The Maths Enhancement Programme¹⁹ is a six-day face-to-face training programme which has already been delivered to over 2,200 numeracy teachers. The English Enhancement Programme²⁰ involves a suite of activities, including courses, train the trainer activities and online learning, which aim to support current English and Functional Skills teachers who would benefit from some English subject enhancement and pedagogy.

¹⁹ <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/gcse-maths-enhancement/>

²⁰ <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/english-enhancement-programme/>

Participants at the London seminar also highlighted the need for teachers to be supported by leaders and managers in their professional development. This support from the top is vital in order to develop and embed a culture whereby teachers feel motivated and all staff are accountable for delivering high quality provision. The Hull College case study below is an example of senior leaders identifying the CPD needs of their staff and leading a programme of change in their organisation.

Hull College

Hull College has identified a shortage of teachers able to deliver English and maths GCSEs as a potential problem in their implementation of the new GCSEs. To combat this, the college sent 17 members of staff on the Government-funded Maths Enhancement Programme delivered by the ETF²¹. At least seven of these tutors will teach GCSE maths from September 2014. The College has introduced its own in-house English skills development programme, in advance of the ETF's English Enhancement Programme, to improve the English skills of tutors who will be delivering GCSEs. The college has also bid for Maths Graduate Recruitment funding and has secured sufficient funding to enable the recruitment of one maths graduate.

Hull College recognises that staff development to deliver GCSEs needs to involve all teachers in the delivery of the Maths and English Progression Pathway. They argue that successful progression from Functional Skills to GCSEs will be dependent on a Functional Skills teacher being able to introduce some GCSE content as learners approach the transition. The college is therefore intending to enable vocational tutors to access maths and English qualifications to enable them to integrate and embed the subjects into their vocational lessons. They will also be delivering further internal staff development to familiarise all staff with the new, 'bigger' GCSE content.

Stakeholders broadly welcome investment in the professionalism of the FE workforce. At the seminars, providers spoke highly of the Maths Enhancement Programme²², which they felt was effective in providing staff with the skills and knowledge required to deliver the new maths GCSE. Stakeholders recommended extending this programme to allow more staff to attend the training, as well as offering a similar CPD opportunity for those teaching English²³. The ETF launched the English Enhancement Programme in September in the FE sector, which is pitched at three

²¹ <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/gcse-maths-enhancement/>

²² <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/gcse-maths-enhancement/>

²³ The Education and Training Foundation launched the English Enhancement Programme on the 22 September 2014 <http://enhanceenglishprogramme.co.uk/>

levels to accommodate differing levels of ability in the staff enrolling on the programme.

'Many teachers/tutors are not confident about their own skills – particularly their maths skills. These people require time and support to improve their own skills, overcome their fear of failure and become confident at teaching GCSEs.'

(Leicester seminar participant)

At the seminars, stakeholders emphasised the importance of providers, leaders and Government **investing in existing good teachers and developing their English and maths skills**, rather than training new English and maths graduates to teach, as this does not always produce enthusiastic and inspiring teachers. In general, they agreed that teachers should be qualified to the level above that which they are required to teach; however, they did not feel that teachers need a degree in maths or English to teach GCSEs.

Seminar participants also suggested that **all teaching staff should be trained to teach English and maths GCSEs**, not just those who teach discrete English and maths. As stated above, providers are likely to need to embed the more functional aspects of the GCSEs into learners' wider or vocational programmes in order to deliver all of the content within the required timeframe. Therefore, teachers of all subjects, vocational tutors and workplace assessors should have access to training in the English and maths knowledge and skills required for GCSEs to enable them to embed these skills within their core subjects. This would further support providers to overcome any potential concerns about the perceived increased delivery time required for the new GCSEs.

'Maths GCSE especially is very hard to teach unless you know maths very well, in my experience the majority of current tutors are not confident in their own maths ability. Same applies (albeit less so) for English. So make all new teachers and force existing teachers to re-train to teach English and maths GCSEs in addition to their core subject.' (Awarding Organisation)

3.2.2 Developing teaching skills

As well as building their confidence in their subject knowledge, stakeholders feel that many **tutors will need further training in order to teach GCSEs**. This may particularly be the case for Functional Skills tutors and vocational trainers. In general, seminar participants agreed that Functional Skills tutors often achieve higher success rates than GCSE teachers because they are skilled and experienced in making learning relevant to learners. Consequently, providers argue that there should continue to be a focus on developing the skills of vocational tutors and assessors to enable them to both deliver and support the delivery of GCSEs. This would further enable providers to contextualise and embed English and maths GCSEs into their wider provision and could go some way to addressing the perceived shortage of staff with the capability to teach GCSEs.

'We employ skilled and experienced Functional Skills tutors who have very specific skills in re-engaging young people who have become disillusioned with 'classroom learning', in particular maths and English. However, our tutors are not trained teachers and in order to deliver GCSEs will need to further develop their teaching skills and knowledge of the curricula.' (Independent Training Provider)

Approximately one in five online respondents identify a CPD need for tutors to acquire the specific skills needed for **motivating and engaging reluctant or disadvantaged learners**. This is particularly pertinent for practitioners in the 16-19 sector whose learners may feel demotivated due to recently failing the qualification at school. As discussed in the previous section, these tutors will need to employ creative and interactive teaching methods and approaches to engage these learners and emphasise the difference between their provision and school. Providers from the post-19 sector also highlight the need for tutors to be trained in different teaching methods and strategies to engage adult learners, who appreciate a more collaborative approach to teaching and learning²⁴. This may help providers to overcome the potential issue of GCSEs being strongly associated with school.

'Significant further investment and continuing professional development in the existing workforce will be required to enable teachers to deliver GCSE to learners with complex needs and potential prior negative experiences of maths and English.' (Awarding Organisation)

'Well-trained tutors in the methodology of teaching adults - a process of partnership in learning different from traditional school and college approach to younger people.' (Individual response to post-19 call for evidence)

Teachers need to **embed and contextualise the English and maths teaching and learning** to make it relevant to learners' lives, work and wider learning programmes, particularly if they are on a vocational course. As Eldred highlights, "embedding is complex and requires time for tutors to co-operate"²⁵. Approximately one in five online respondents identify this as a CPD need for tutors. In particular, providers want training in how tutors can make GCSEs relevant to learners' vocations, local contexts and the needs of employers. This may include information on the practical maths skills required for work; how to use language in situations which are associated with professional settings; and having a bank of resources and materials which will help to engage learners. Functional Skills and vocational tutors may need particular support with this as it is likely to fall to them to embed the more practical aspects of the GCSEs into their delivery.

²⁴ Methods and strategies that can be adopted to manage inappropriate behaviour and build motivation are described in *Managing challenging behaviour within skills provision for unemployed adults* (NIACE, 2012) and consideration is given to motivational issues affecting English and maths provision in *Helpful approaches to the delivery of English and maths provision for unemployed adults* (NIACE, 2013).

²⁵ Eldred, J. (2005) *Developing embedded language, literacy and numeracy: Supporting Achievement*. Leicester: NIACE.

'Some vocational teachers will require up-skilling to enable them to integrate and embed maths and English into their vocational lessons.' (Learning provider from the 16-19 and post-19 sectors)

'Training on how teachers can use resources and provide examples with a vocational context including the type of language used in a professional setting and the practical maths skills required in a workplace.' (Learning provider from the 16-19 sector)

3.2.3 To support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Three-quarters of online respondents highlight the need for continued **specialist training to support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**. This was also discussed at each of the three seminars. Existing training on this topic, such as the £1m which DfE provided to fund SEN training last year, needs to be highlighted to providers affected by the implementation of the new GCSEs. Providers feel that this training needs to cover a range of aspects in relation to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Firstly, tutors need to have **the knowledge and confidence to recognise support needs and specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities**. This is important in order for learners to be referred to screening assessments and for them to have adequate and appropriate support in place from the beginning of their course. Tutors need accurate and up-to-date information on learning difficulties and/or disabilities and how these may be displayed in the classroom or on vocational training.

Secondly, tutors need comprehensive and in-depth training on **the ways in which they can support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve GCSEs**. This could be offered in the form of generic training about different ways to meet learners' support needs, which could be complemented by specialist training on specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The training could include effective and creative ways to engage learners and make GCSEs accessible; useful materials and resources to support learners to retain information; and how to set realistic and relevant targets for learners. Stakeholders suggest that the training not only cover the support tutors should offer in the classroom, but also in vocational training and work placements, as well as access requirements for assessments. Providers also request more training for specialist support staff who have expertise in working with learners with particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

'Training on the techniques teachers can use to help support these students would be useful including how to cope with students with specific needs in a classroom environment without them feeling targeted.' (Sector representative organisation)

'All teachers need an understanding of how to help people with difficulties or disabilities and generic training here can help. Specific training is useful if you have a student with a particular difficulty or need.' (Learning provider in the 16-19 sector)

As with CPD on English and maths, providers suggest that formal training for supporting learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities could be complemented **by peer support and mentoring from specialist staff**. However, some participants at the seminars pointed out that many providers do not have these specialist staff in-house and it may be costly to buy-in this specific type of support for practitioners. One potential way to overcome this challenge is to have strong partnerships with larger providers or specialist support organisations, or to link tutors with specialist practitioners via technology, for example through online forums or Skype. Following a Learning and Skills Improvement Service review in 2013²⁶, awarding organisations have developed Level 5 standalone diplomas in teaching disabled learners and these qualifications could be used for CPD purposes.

3.2.4 Continual opportunities for CPD

The success of the Maths Enhancement Programme was balanced with the recognition from seminar participants that a one-off training programme of six days was not in itself sufficient to bring tutors' skills, knowledge and confidence up to the level required to teach GCSEs. Providers therefore recommend that tutors and teachers continue to have access to **ongoing CPD opportunities to embed and reflect on their practice**. This would not necessarily need to be formal training, but could incorporate joint practice development approaches, such as peer mentoring, observations and other opportunities to share practice in safe spaces. This could enable teachers to continually improve and expand their knowledge and pedagogical skills, as well as effectively embed their formal CPD learning into their practice. For example, Dudley College has effectively implemented a CPD programme for their Functional Skills, Key Skills and PSD tutors which has enabled them to support learners working towards GCSEs in maths and English. One seminar participant suggested that CPD should be a three stage process: formal training, followed by peer mentoring and time for reflection, consolidated by further formal training where practitioners have an opportunity to share practice. Alternatively, CPD could be offered on a modular basis to enable tutors to pick and choose the training they need to fill their skills gaps and have time in-between courses to reflect on and use what they have learnt in practice.

'Time to take in the information and consider how to use it. It is all very well going on courses but it is hard to find time to put what you have learned into practice. To help this it would be useful for the development to be modularised so the teacher has to complete an assignment showing how they have used their learning in their work.' (Individual response to post-19 call for evidence)

'The Maths Enhancement Programme was very successful and well-received. However, graduates from this programme were still not confident and have developed CPD plans. Peer observation, co-planning of maths lessons with an

²⁶ LSIS (2013) *Further Education and Skills in England. New Qualifications for Teachers and Trainers Phase Two – Findings Report*

external facilitator, mini-action research projects and local network meetings were all types of support that trainees requested.' (Leicester seminar participant)

As schools will be teaching the new GCSEs from 2015, a year before the majority of post-16 providers, stakeholders suggest that a process for communicating experiences should be put in place. This ongoing sharing of practice and lessons learned might be done through existing local networks and schools' liaison arrangements. For example, FE colleges who participate in local networks of schools or sponsor academies could use these partnerships to establish or develop CPD opportunities. A successful example of this is demonstrated in the case study of Oldham College below. The ETF is funding nine Regional Specialists for maths, English and SEND to support practitioners and these individuals will likely play a key role in the sharing of good practice. Awarding Organisations may be able to support the communication of experiences through their networks and the support and resources they make available to their centres. These points link back to the identified need for closer working relationships between schools and post-16 providers, in order for them to share more detailed information on learners' prior attainment in English and maths.

Oldham College

Oldham College's provision includes sponsorship of the Stoneleigh Academy (a primary school) and the Waterhead Academy (a secondary school). The college plays an active role in local schools networks, and has responded to local needs through its 14-16 provision. This partnership between the college, its academy schools and other local schools has provided opportunities for English and maths tutors to work together, share practice and engage in joint CPD activities. For example, college tutors worked with school teachers to develop and deliver fun and active English and maths 'booster sessions' for secondary school pupils identified as disengaged from these subjects and in need of further support. College and academy staff have opportunities to participate in jointly organised CPD activities, and the college is developing further CPD activity to support the delivery of English, maths and the new GCSEs. Plans include a 'Teachmeet' session, led by practitioners and hosted at the college's HE campus, for teachers in primary, secondary and further education to share good practice, practical innovations and personal insights in teaching maths.

3.2.5 Recruiting and training new teachers

Another way in which providers could overcome the potential difficulties of skills gaps and staff shortages in the sector is to recruit new teachers to deliver English and maths GCSEs. This was discussed at each of the seminars but was only raised by five of the online respondents. Providers have encountered a number of challenges in relation to recruiting staff, including a lack of graduates interested in the FE sector, the relatively low pay and benefits in comparison with schools, and the lack of awareness of job opportunities in the sector. Seminar participants suggested that the

FE sector could be made more attractive to graduates through **incentives linked to pay and reputation**. The Government has already provided incentives through bursaries of up to £25,000 and the maths incentive bonus of £20-£30K per institution. It has also introduced Golden Hellos of up to £10,000 to graduate maths teachers who take up their first qualified teaching post in the FE sector teaching GCSE mathematics, and who remain teaching maths for two years. These incentives may help to overcome some of the issues providers have had with training new staff who then move to a better paid job in a different sector. Providers may also need to consider paying higher salaries to retain these staff. The ETF has also launched the premium graduate scheme to attract more graduates to train on the job to teach in the FE sector. Online respondents highlighted the need for a high profile marketing or publicity campaign to increase awareness of job opportunities and promote the benefits of working in the FE sector.

'Improved awareness of teaching roles within the FE sector is needed in order to recruit skilled and appropriate people to deliver GCSEs.' (London seminar participant)

As mentioned above, seminar participants also questioned the need for maths and English teachers to have a degree in order to deliver GCSEs and have experienced some challenges in recruiting maths graduates into the sector. It was suggested that **developing alternative pathways to becoming an English or maths teacher**, such as teacher internships or Higher Apprenticeships, would help providers to recruit and train the quantity and quality of delivery staff needed for the implementation of the new GCSEs. A Higher Level Apprenticeship leading to a teaching qualification is currently being developed by In Touch Care, with support from the ETF.

'Government should stop insisting that only graduates can train to teach maths and English and encourage non graduates in relevant jobs to train as FE English and maths teachers.' (Sector representative organisation)

However, since September 2013 it has been the responsibility of individual employers to make decisions about the qualifications they require their staff to hold or work towards. Revised Level 5 standalone diplomas and specialist pathways in English (literacy), maths (numeracy), English (ESOL/Literacy and ESOL) have been available since 2013 to support initial teacher training and CPD. Whilst specialist qualifications are no longer enforced by legislation, the Lingfield report into Professionalism in Further Education notes that for teachers of foundation skills, such as English and maths, and for those working with learners with disabilities there should be 'special emphasis' beyond the generic Level 5 teaching qualification on these areas: 'Level 5 plus, in essence'²⁷. These changes may need to be made more explicit to stakeholders, and providers should be encouraged to enable their staff to access these opportunities for CPD.

²⁷ *Professionalism in Further Education. Final Report of the Independent Review Panel.* October 2012

The Lingfield report resulted in the creation of the ETF, which published new standards for teaching and teachers in May 2014²⁸. The ETF also offers a range of support for colleges and providers; employers; governors; leaders and managers; practitioners; and teacher recruitment. This work will be crucial in the implementation of the new GCSEs in English and maths.

3.2.6 Using technology

In the discussions about using technology to support the achievement of GCSEs, seminar participants consistently brought up the need for teachers to **develop their own digital skills** in order to use technology effectively in teaching and learning. This support might include familiarising tutors with different types of technology; improving tutors' confidence in using technology in a range of settings; and demonstrating the types of resources which are appropriate and effective to use in the delivery of English and maths GCSEs. One online respondent suggests that learners could support tutors to use technology in the delivery of GCSEs which would make the experience more collaborative.

'Developing teaching skills to ensure teachers are confident and knowledgeable about the use of technology in the classroom. Often students know more than teachers!' (Sheffield seminar participant)

Seminar participants also highlighted the need to support to teachers to develop their skills in **using technology to enhance their teaching, learning and assessment practices**. The general agreement was that this should be done through enabling tutors to share effective and innovative practice which draws on a range of technologies and online resources to deliver GCSEs. There may be a role for Digital Champions in supporting or coordinating this sharing of practice. Providers agree that it would be helpful to have a set of resources which were identified by BIS or DfE as being of high quality and appropriate for use in the delivery of GCSEs. This could encourage tutors to use technology and reduce the time it takes to find or develop good quality resources. One online respondent suggests that a bank of online resources could be hosted on the Excellence Gateway.

'Technology has huge potential in terms of enabling teachers to share good practice. We need a resource bank around use of technology in supporting GCSE English and maths – could be located on the Excellence Gateway (with signposting, review and rating functions – 'Trip Advisor for maths teachers').' (Leicester seminar participant)

Access to this CPD would help the sector to overcome any challenges faced around tutors' skills and confidence in using technology to support the delivery of new GCSEs.

²⁸ <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/professional-standards/>

3.3 Supporting employers

Employers are seen as vital in encouraging learners to engage with the new GCSEs. However, stakeholders identify a range of issues which may affect employers' support for the reforms. Suggestions as to how these challenges may be overcome are outlined below.

3.3.1 To understand requirements and benefits of GCSEs

In order for apprentices and other workplace learners to take GCSEs, they will need support and encouragement from their employers. Without this, it will be difficult for providers to motivate these learners to take GCSEs. Providers at the Sheffield and London seminars emphasised the importance of **employers understanding the requirements and benefits of GCSE** maths and English. Around one in five online respondents also felt this was important. In particular, employers need to be made more aware of the skills and knowledge that GCSEs will give apprentices and other workplace learners, and how these will match across to their job roles and the wider business.

Seminar participants and online respondents suggest that employers' awareness of the value of GCSEs could be raised through marketing campaigns; closer working with providers and great contextualising of the teaching and learning of GCSE maths and English. By showing employers what they will gain from employees taking GCSEs, they should be more motivated to offer the support that workplace learners need in order to achieve the qualification.

'Employers will need to have clear understanding of what GCSE maths and English will cover as part of the Apprenticeship and importantly have sight of how relevant the maths and English components will be as part of the candidate's job role and how completion will contribute to the full Apprenticeship programme. There is often too much assumption that as employers have heard of GCSE, that they understand what it covers, it is our experience that this is not true.' (Awarding Organisation)

However, employers will also need to have a realistic expectation of the demands that GCSEs will place on workplace learners, including the time they will require out of the workplace and the level of work involved in achieving the qualification. This should avoid employers being reluctant to provide the necessary support to learners and ensure their **willingness to release staff** for longer periods in order for them to complete GCSE maths and English.

'Employers will be encouraged to agree to release their apprentices from the work place for longer periods of time to allow them to access the full academic curriculum for GCSEs.' (Learning provider from the 16-19 and post-19 sectors)

'If learners are going to complete their Apprenticeship successfully employers need to be on board and understand up front that learners will need time out from their duties and business productivity may be lower in the short term whilst learning is taking place.' (Awarding Organisation)

In addition, four respondents to the online call for evidence suggest that employers could be given **financial incentives** to encourage their apprentices and employees to engage with GCSEs. This could cover the additional time required out of work to complete GCSEs, or funding could be arranged to give employers, providers and learners financial rewards on completion of GCSEs.

'The funding arrangements for providers and employers should be devised in a way that includes a strong incentive to ensure the apprentices are released to do their GCSE learning and exam taking. Consideration should be given to funding providers and employers on the basis that the GCSE and vocational learning components have all been finished.' (Sector representative organisation)

3.3.2 Flexible delivery and assessment

Approximately one in five online respondents comment that **flexible delivery methods and assessment arrangements** are seen as crucial to fit the delivery and assessment of GCSEs around apprentices' and employees' working hours. Suggestions as to how this could be achieved include offering multiple time slots for sessions; offering blended or distance learning opportunities; and having multiple exam windows throughout the year. Although workplace learners will still need to be released to attend sessions, flexible opportunities to do this will relieve the pressure on employers and may address some of the potential issues around having to release staff on the same day for sessions or exams.

'There needs to be a flexible approach to assessment of maths and English capabilities, including on-the-job observations, and the use of portfolio evidence to demonstrate maths and English capabilities.' (Awarding Organisation)

'Time for apprentices to complete the course whether it be by classroom learning, distance learning or blended learning.' (Learning provider in the post-19 sector)

3.3.3 To promote skills development and GCSEs

In order to support the delivery of the new and more demanding GCSEs, employers will need to be committed to skills development and in particular GCSEs. Approximately one in ten online respondents highlight support from employers as vital in supporting workplace learners to engage with GCSEs. Providers should work with employers to help them develop a **positive attitude towards learning in the workplace**, which could encourage apprentices and other staff to engage with GCSEs. There may also be a role for peer mentors, such as Union Learning Reps, to promote the benefits of GCSEs and encourage colleagues to take up learning.

'Employers need to be knowledgeable about the new GCSE and make it a national message that it's needed. Providers can encourage employers to talk to young people about why English and maths is important in their job role.' (London seminar participant)

'Positive attitudes in industry fostered and advocated strongly by employers organisations and supported by trades unions.' (Individual response to post-19 call for evidence)

Transport for London (TfL)

TfL Learning Zone has offered English and maths courses and qualifications, including GCSE English and GCSE Maths, since 2003. In the last 10 years, 328 of their employees have studied GCSEs with a pass rate of 100%. TfL feel that this success is due to an organisational culture which promotes a positive and supportive learning environment. Managers and Union Learning Reps work together to emphasise the benefits of GCSEs, but also give employees realistic expectations of the work and commitment involved. Previous learners act as champions for the course and give talks about the benefits they've experienced as a result of gaining GCSEs.

To support employees to engage with GCSEs, TfL offers pre-GCSE courses at Levels 1 and 2, which enables employees who have been out of learning to 'get back into the habit'. They also ensure that employees' attendance on GCSE courses is confidential, and repeat classes several times a week to enable shift workers to attend. The work is also made available via a Virtual Learning Environment so that learners who cannot attend face-to-face can keep up with their learning.

Feedback from learners suggests that GCSEs have enabled them to write better quality reports, balance family budgets, understand bank statements and exchange rates, improve their communication skills, progress onto further learning, and gain promotions. TfL has found that improving their employees' skills in English and maths has helped to achieve their full potential in their job roles, and also helps to retain employees who have worked for the organisation for a long time and have the specific experience and knowledge required to work for TfL.

4. Conclusion

Our analysis of wide-ranging stakeholder views identifies the support that learners, teachers, providers (including leaders) and employers will need in order to bring about the successful implementation of new GCSEs in English and maths. Our analysis has considered each of these areas in turn, but equally it is clear that there are over-arching themes in stakeholders' views which apply across the analysis.

The first and most immediately apparent theme is the need for flexibility in the implementation of the new GCSEs. Greater flexibility on the part of all stakeholders – including Government, learning providers and employers – will be important in supporting and motivating learners to engage with and achieve GCSEs in maths and English. This will also go some way to meeting the needs of employers, as it will enable employees and vocational learners to fit their learning in and around their work commitments. Providers and other stakeholders across all sectors are in general agreement that flexibility in the implementation of new GCSEs would allow more and different types of learners to achieve the qualifications.

Secondly, continued support for CPD is a significant over-arching theme. According to stakeholders, this would not only help to address specific workforce development needs, but would also play a vital role in engaging and motivating learners through the development of better teaching and learning practice. In particular, providers recognise the need for more CPD for existing tutors to improve their confidence in their own English and maths skills; to develop the skills to deliver the new GCSEs; to support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and to effectively use technology in the delivery of GCSEs. This is addressed in the FE Workforce Strategy (see Appendix 3), particularly through the Maths and English Enhancement Programmes provided by the ETF. Providers emphasise that opportunities for CPD should be offered on an ongoing and flexible basis to enable teachers to build their knowledge and skills and reflect on their practice. Stakeholders also request that work continues to make the FE sector more attractive to new graduates through offering bursaries, the maths incentive bonus, Golden Hellos, Subject Knowledge enhancement courses and the Premium Graduate Recruitment scheme, to help them recruit new teachers.

Thirdly, the importance of being able to embed and contextualise the teaching and learning of English and maths with learners' vocational courses, work and wider lives is also clearly emphasised in all sections of our analysis. This is particularly crucial for providers in the Apprenticeships sector, but was also identified by stakeholders from the 16-19 and post-19 sectors as an effective way to engage and motivate reluctant learners. Embedding is also cited as important in supporting employers to realise the benefits of upskilling their employees in English and maths, as it demonstrates the benefits and relevance of GCSEs to their job roles.

Fourthly, stakeholders emphasise the importance of having appropriate and accessible stepping stone qualifications and courses available to help learners on the route to GCSE achievement. These could be both accredited and unaccredited

and should focus on developing the underlying skills and knowledge required for achievement of GCSE maths and English. Access to these types of programmes will be particularly important for learners who may be disadvantaged by the requirement to take GCSEs, such as ESOL learners, as they will need to build their confidence and knowledge in English and maths before engaging with the qualifications. Although some providers feel that Functional Skills are an effective stepping stone to GCSEs, this is mirrored by concern at the potential de-valuing of these qualifications. Stakeholders from all sectors highlight that Functional Skills are a significant achievement in their own right and are valued by employers and learners alike. They do not want the value of Functional Skills to be diminished by the implementation of the new GCSEs. Ministers have asked Ofqual to review the fitness for purpose of Functional Skills and the report from this review will appear in 2015.

The use of technology also emerges as a final cross-cutting theme. Not only is this identified as potentially more motivating for some learners, particularly in the 16-19 sector, it may also support all stakeholders to effectively implement the new GCSEs, for example by enabling greater flexibility in delivery. Stakeholders highlighted the need for more CPD in the use of technology to support teaching and learning as well as a need for providers to invest in the equipment and resources required to use technology effectively in the delivery of new GCSEs.

Above all, our analysis demonstrates that the sector broadly supports the Government's ambition to promote GCSEs as the national standard of English and maths. Respondents to the call for evidence have identified a range of further actions that all stakeholders, including Government, providers (including senior leaders), practitioners and employers, need to take to support the successful implementation of the new GCSEs in English and maths. The examples of emerging practice highlighted in this report demonstrate that expertise, innovation and creativity already exists within the sector, but stakeholders need further encouragement. The third phase of the Study Programme Shared Learning Grant is funding case studies and a variety of activities to develop innovative teaching and learning practice in the delivery of the new GCSEs in English and maths. However, further investment of support and resources will be required to successfully implement the new GCSEs and ensure that all learners have the opportunity to benefit from improved skills in English and maths.

Appendix 1: Call for evidence online form: 16-19 sector

New English and maths GCSEs: Written evidence for 16-19 sector

On Wednesday 2nd July 2014, the Government announced plans to introduce new GCSEs into the post-16 sector to meet the Government's ambition to enable as many young people and adults as possible who lack good qualifications in English and maths to have the chance to take GCSEs in these subjects.

NIACE, in partnership with the NRDC, has been commissioned by BIS and the DfE to seek views on how the new GCSEs in English and maths can be successfully implemented into post-16 education. These changes are far-reaching and we are keen to listen to education leaders, managers, employers, teachers and learners to understand how all learners can be supported to achieve English and maths GCSEs, including 16-19 students, apprentices, trainees and adults. We really want to hear from you and will be collating a response for BIS and DfE. The deadline for submissions is 30th September 2014.

[Click here](#) for full details about the call for evidence.

You can use this document to prepare your/your organisation's response. However, we will only be accepting evidence through our [online form](#). Any responses sent to us via email will not be included in our evidence base.

Please note this form is for written evidence in relation to the 16-19 sector only. If you would like to submit evidence in relation to the post-19 sector, please [click here](#).

If you have any questions or would like more information please e-mail Emily.Jones@niace.org.uk or tel/text 07771524254.

Please outline the background to your submission (including brief details on your context and interest in the policy changes)

Support for 16-19 full time learners

The aim is that the vast majority of 16-19 full time students will work towards achievement of GCSEs in English and maths. The new GCSEs will be more stretching and demand more practical skills in literacy and numeracy. Functional Skills will continue to be supported up to Level 2 as a useful step on the way to GCSE attainment, for those 16-19 full time students with achievement below grade D.

What approaches are successful in motivating young people to re-engage with GCSEs?

What are the effective ways of diagnosing English and maths proficiency in students?

How can students with grade D or below be supported to achieve GCSEs?

What are the practical issues in preparing for GCSE part-time 16-19 students?

How can students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities be effectively supported?

For students transferring from the old to the new GCSE, what challenges do you consider there may be and how can they be addressed?

How can technology support the achievement of GCSEs?

Support for teachers

Awarding organisations will provide resources to support providers to implement the new specifications. The current FE workforce strategy is designed to help providers secure sufficient specialist teachers to improve teaching of English and maths to 16-19 year old students, adults, apprentices and trainees. £30m has been invested this year and next to bring in more graduates to teach English and maths in FE and expand CPD programmes for existing teachers to improve their skills and knowledge, and share innovative practice. The GCSE Maths Enhancement Programme has engaged 2,000 teachers and an equivalent programme for English will be rolled out nationally from September 2014.

From August 2014, 16-19 students who have not achieved a good pass (GCSE A*-C) by 16 must continue working towards achieving these qualifications as a condition of student places being funded. This policy allows exemptions for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on an individual basis but there will be no blanket exclusion.

What further professional development is needed for teachers to deliver GCSE Maths and GCSE English to 16-19 students?

What further professional development is needed for teachers to deliver GCSE Maths and GCSE English to 16-18 apprentices?

What further development is needed for teachers to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities?

Please provide any further comments for consideration:

Appendix 2: Call for evidence online form: post-19 sector

New English and maths GCSEs: Written evidence for post-19 sector

On Wednesday 2nd July 2014, the Government announced plans to introduce new GCSEs into the post-16 sector to meet the Government's ambition to enable as many young people and adults as possible who lack good qualifications in English and maths to have the chance to take GCSEs in these subjects.

NIACE, in partnership with the NRDC, has been commissioned by BIS and the DfE to seek views on how the new GCSEs in English and maths can be successfully implemented into post-16 education. These changes are far-reaching and we are keen to listen to education leaders, managers, employers, teachers and learners to understand how all learners can be supported to achieve English and maths GCSEs, including 16-19 students, apprentices, trainees and adults. We really want to hear from you and will be collating a response for BIS and DfE. The deadline for submissions is 30th September 2014.

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Please note this form is for written evidence in relation to the post-19 sector only. If you would like to submit evidence in relation to the 16-19 sector, please [click here](#).

If you have any questions or would like more information please e-mail Emily.Jones@niace.org.uk or tel/text 07771524254.

Please outline the background to your submission (including brief details on your context and interest in the policy changes)

Support for 19+ adult learners

The Government's ambition for adults is that by 2020, GCSE will be the preferred qualification in English and maths at level 2, including in Apprenticeships. They will work with Apprenticeship employers, FE colleges and training providers and others to identify how to achieve this and remove barriers which get in the way.

What changes will need to be made to the funding system to support more adult learners to take GCSEs?

What approaches are successful in motivating adults to engage with GCSEs?

What is the most effective way of diagnosing English and maths proficiency in students?

What support is required to help learners make the transition from Functional Skills to GCSEs or from old to new GCSEs?

What are the practical issues for part time adult learners or those on short programmes such as job seekers?

How can learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities be effectively supported?

For learners transferring from the old to the new GCSE, what challenges do you consider there may be and how can they be addressed?

How can technology support the achievement of GCSEs for adults?

Support for apprentices

The ambition is that, by 2020, apprentices of all ages studying English and maths will be working towards achievement of the new GCSEs, taking stepping stone qualifications if necessary. Functional skills will continue to be part of Apprenticeship completion requirements but we will work with Apprenticeship providers to enable them to offer GCSEs to their apprentices.

What needs to be in place for employers to support GCSEs as part of Apprenticeships for adults?

What needs to be in place for education providers to support GCSEs as part of Apprenticeships for adults?

How can the teaching of the new GCSEs be contextualised for learners following predominantly vocational programmes or Apprenticeships?

Support for teachers

Awarding organisations will provide resources to support providers to implement the new specifications. The current FE workforce strategy is designed to help providers secure sufficient specialist teachers to improve teaching of English and maths to 16-19 year old students, adults, apprentices and trainees. £30m has been invested this year and next to bring in more graduates to teach English and maths in FE and expand CPD programmes for existing teachers to improve their skills and knowledge, and share innovative practice. The GCSE Maths Enhancement Programme has engaged 2,000 teachers and an equivalent programme for English will be rolled out nationally from September 2014.

What further professional development is needed for teachers to deliver GCSE Maths and GCSE English to adults?

What further development is needed for teachers to support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities?

Please provide any further comments for consideration:

Appendix 3: Further Education Workforce Strategy

BIS, with DfE and in collaboration with the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) is taking forward a programme of work to raise standards in teaching and learning in FE. It focuses on 3 core priorities:

- **Priority 1:** Robust standards of **governance and leadership**
- **Priority 2:** Excellent **vocational teaching and learning**, responsive to the needs of business, as evidenced by outstanding inspection results and excellent outcomes for learners and employers
- **Priority 3:** A step change in the quality of teaching in **Maths and English**

The FE Workforce Strategy (published July 2014) sets out these core priorities in more detail, plus an additional underpinning priority on the **effective use of technology** in teaching and learning.

The programme includes an evaluation strand led by BIS and a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement plan led by ETF. The table below sets out the key actions that we plan to undertake under these priorities and our headline success measures.

Priority 1: Improving the quality of governance and leadership
<p>Two reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIS Review of FE & Sixth Form College governance (focused on recruitment and succession planning; recognising the status and importance of governors; and remuneration of governors). Report - A Review Of FE & 6th Form Colleges published July 2013 • AoC review defining the capabilities required of governing bodies, including their information, advice and development needs. Report - Creating Excellence in College Governance published Nov 2013. • ETF is delivering a programme to support sector leadership capacity and capability building, which addresses issues identified by FE Commissioner; supports peer review; assists in development of new National Colleges; increases business engagement in governance; develops new governance models which demonstrate lateral accountability; and research structures and delivery models in order to identify those capable of being used as exemplars.
Priority 2: Improving Vocational teaching and learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETF is taking forward the recommendations from the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning. Frank McLoughlin will publish a One Year On report on 13th November 2014, noting progress. • ETF is taking forward professional development support programmes for those delivering Traineeships and Apprenticeships; programmes to exploit potential of skills competitions; developing and embedding a framework for Teach Too; making best use of learning technologies; ensuring occupational updating of vocational teachers; supporting leaders to develop models of employer/provider partnership; embedding characteristics of excellent vocational teaching and learning, including embedding maths and English; accelerating development of higher quality higher apprenticeships; and establishing the Foundation's role in shaping and building a strong Vocational Education and Training (VET) system (including event for employers in July 14 and the national VET Conference in November 14 alongside the Skills Show).
Priority 3: Improving teaching of maths and English
Incentives to encourage new graduate level teachers into FE:

- **Pre service Bursaries** of up to £20k in 14-15 (£25k in 15-16) to attract new graduates to train to teach maths and English and SEN. Over 400 bursaries awarded so far.
- **In service Bursaries** at the same amount - available for students who train to teach once employed as a teacher. Being paid by Skills Funding Agency from September 14
- A **Maths Subject Knowledge Enhancement** scheme, to enable highly qualified graduates who have the skills and aptitude to teach but need to acquire deeper, more specific knowledge and skills to do this before they start initial teacher training.
- A **Maths Golden Hello** scheme, to encourage new graduate level maths teachers to stay and teach maths in FE for at least two years. The Golden Hello is worth £7,500, with an enhancement of £2,500 if they also train to teach those with special education needs
- A **Recruitment Incentive Scheme**, which provides payments up to £20,000 to colleges and providers that recruit specialist graduate maths teachers; or £30,000 if the recruit supports a number of providers. 123 grants have been made so far with further awards in December 14.
- A **'premium' graduate recruitment** scheme, to enable graduates within FE (especially those teaching maths and English) to achieve a Masters degree within two years of commencing teaching; with fast track route to senior leadership roles. ETF is managing pilots in 2014.

Existing teachers:

- ETF delivered a subsidised **Maths enhancement programme**, to enable existing teachers of maths at level 2 to teach to GCSE level. Over 2200 took up training in 13/14. A further programme will run in 14/15 and details available now.
- An **English enhancement programme**, to increase the skills of existing FE teachers to teach English to GCSE level. Bookings opened in September for events to be run through to July 15.
- A pilot for a **new enhancement course for teaching maths** to level 2, as a bridge to the GCSE Enhancement programme. It will up skill existing functional skills teachers to teach beyond entry and level 1 to level 2.
- **Grants for SEN teachers and inclusion co-ordinators**, to undertake specialist training in teaching students with SEN. 440 grants awarded in 13/14.

Structural change:

- Funding for a network of **FE Centres of Excellence in Teacher Training**, to deliver initial teacher training and identify innovative practice in teaching maths, English and SEN (2013/14 and 2014/15).
- **Ofsted inspections** of ITT, focusing on embedding high quality teaching of maths and English across all teaching.

Success measures

Increase in the numbers of new teachers of maths and English, and of existing teachers with enhanced skills.

Increase in the quality of teaching; in the qualification attainment levels of students; and in the relative impact on positive outcomes in to work or further and higher education.

Increased employer involvement in skills, whether through provision of work experience; or support for study programmes, traineeships and apprenticeships; in the design and delivery of vocational education; or as part of governing bodies or non-executive board members.

DETAILS OF ALL INITIATIVES CAN BE FOUND BY VISITING THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOUNDATION WEBSITE AT <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/>

Appendix 4: Contributors to call for evidence

Below is a list of the 127 organisations that contributed to the call for evidence, by submitting written evidence and/or attending a seminar.

157 Group
54North Maritime Training
AchieveAbility
Adult College of Barking and Dagenham
Adult College for Rural East Sussex
Adult Community Learning College Essex
AELP
Alpha BSE
Amersham and Wycombe College
Association of Colleges
Babington Group
Basildon Adult Community College
Bedford College
Bexley Adult Education
Blackpool and Fylde College
Bolton College
British Army
Calderdale Adult Learning
Cambridge Access Validating Agency
CDC Training
Chesterfield College
Chiltern Training Ltd
City and Guilds
City College Brighton and Hove
City of London
City of York Council
Coventry Adult Education Service
Croydon Adult Learning
CTS Training
Develop EBP
Doncaster Council
Dudley College
East Surrey College
Education and Training Foundation
EMFEC
EM Skills
Essex County Council
Gloucestershire College
Great Yarmouth College
Greater London Authority
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Greenwich Community College
Guroo Ltd
Hackney Learning Trust
Health Education Thames Valley
Hillingdon Adult Education Centre
HIT Training
Hounslow Adult and Community Education
Hugh Baird College
Hull College
Hull Training and Adult Education
In Touch Care
KM Training
KSEP Federation Kingston College, Carshalton College
L&Q Housing Trust
Lancashire Adult Learning
Landex
learndirect
Learning South West
Leicester Adult Skills and Learning Service
Liverpool Adult Learning Service
Looked After Children Education Service
London Borough of Hounslow
London College of Beauty Therapy
Magna Eta
Merton Adult Education
Middlesbrough Community Learning
Milton Keynes Council
Morley College
National Association for Numeracy and Mathematics in Colleges
NATECLA (National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults)
National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics
National Construction College
National Extension College
National Numeracy
National Offender Management Service
National Union of Students
Nelson and Colne College
Newcastle City Learning
NFER
North Lincolnshire Council Adult Community Learning
Northern College
OCR
Oldham College
Oxfordshire Skills and Learning Service

Pearson
Pera Training
PET-Xi Training
PM Training
POA Learning
Puffins of Exeter Ltd
Remit Ltd
Royal Air Force
Sixth Form Colleges' Association
Skills for Life Network
South Cheshire College
South Tames College
Speaking Out UK CIC
St Mungo's Broadway
Sum Solutions Ltd
Swindon College
TCHC
Telford and Wrekin Council
The Greenbank Project
The Learning Centre
The Manchester College
The Sheffield College
Thurrock Adult Community College
TLC Bexley
Tower Hamlets Career Service
Transport for London
TUC Unionlearn
UCU
United Road Transport Union
URTU
Wakefield College
Walford and North Shropshire College
Walsall College
Wakefield Council
Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service
WEA
West Nottinghamshire College
Whitby Fishing School
Worcestershire County Council
Working Men's College
WorkingRite
Workplace Words
Youth Aid Lewisham

