

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Statutory Notice to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section
ZA2(9)(b) of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children
and Learning Act 2009, as inserted by paragraph 2
of Section 4 to the Enterprise Act 2016.

July 2020



Gillian Keegan MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills

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Jennifer Coupland
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Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
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14 July 2020

Dear Jennifer

STATUTORY NOTICE TO THE INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION 2020-2021

It was good to meet recently and I am grateful for the work the Institute has done to date in readiness for the implementation of the higher technical education reforms. We are keen to address the economy's demand for higher technical skills and to provide a progression route for the first T level students in 2022, for A level students and people of all ages wishing to upskill or retrain. Higher technical qualifications are central this and play a crucial role in supporting productivity and enabling our economy to recover following the Covid-19 outbreak.

I am pleased to issue you with a statutory notice for the financial year 2020-2021. A table of priorities for this work is attached at Annex A. This letter provides a steer concerning the government's priorities for the coming year in relation to implementing a national approvals process for higher technical qualifications and should be read alongside the Government response to improving higher technical education, published today.

Under the Apprenticeship, Learning and Skills Act, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) must have regard to the matters set out in this document when performing its functions. I expect the Institute to include the contents of this statutory notice as part of its business planning process and objective-setting. I look forward to receiving updates on progress through our regular conversations and quarterly performance reviews.

I expect the Institute to take account of policy decisions made by the department and to make operational changes required to accurately reflect and deliver policy, in particular in light of lessons learned from the first wave of delivery of approved higher technical qualifications. The department will work with the Institute to make sure operational and delivery requirements are taken into account. I also expect the Institute to continue to work with employers and other arm's length bodies, such as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Ofqual, Ofsted and the

Office for Students (OfS) in order to deliver an effective approvals process to enable the first teaching of approved higher technical qualifications from September 2022.

Thank you again for the Institute's ongoing work on this exciting new programme and I look forward to hearing how this work is developing through the first Digital route and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gillian', with a large, stylized flourish on the left side.

Gillian Keegan MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills

ANNEX A: HIGHER TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS - PRIORITIES FOR 2020-2021

Higher technical qualifications	
Approving L4-5 technical qualifications	<p>1. Implement process and plans for the national approval of higher technical qualifications, as described in Reforming Higher Technical Education - Government consultation response. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing a detailed delivery plan for the implementation of the end-to-end higher technical qualifications approval process; • a process for appraising qualification content and assessment material, including implementing the flexibilities we have committed to; • plans to inform and engage awarding bodies (ABs) and support the department's wider activity on employer engagement; • criteria for the transfer of copyright where appropriate; and • plans for collaborating with Ofqual and OfS on the ongoing assurance of quality in delivery and review of higher technical qualifications after approval. <p>2. The Institute has operational responsibility for the delivery of approved higher technical qualifications and should work closely with the department, Ofqual and OfS on this. Approval must deliver the following key success factors set by ministers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approval process and criteria are effectively calibrated to ensure that approved higher technical qualifications <i>consistently</i> deliver the needs of the relevant occupations; • They are verified and <i>trusted by employers</i> as providing the right skills, at the right breadth and depth, to enter a broad range of relevant occupations, anywhere in the country; • Students can be sure that approved higher technical qualifications are <i>credible, prestigious and consistently valued by employers</i>, and choosing any approved higher technical qualification covering their chosen occupation will deliver the same readiness for a broad range of jobs, anywhere in the country; • The process is <i>manageable, clear and transparent to ABs</i>, so that they understand the conditions they need to meet before they apply for higher technical qualifications approval and how the decision will be made; and that are not discouraged

from applying by undue bureaucracy or uncertainty about the bar they need to clear.

- *Employer Route Panels* are enabled to make consistent and transparent decisions, in order to give ABs and employers confidence in the approvals process; and
- The scale and scope of the roll out is *manageable* for the Institute to deliver to the necessary standard of rigour and consistency, and in time to enable the provider-facing aspects of the higher technical education system to run their course.

3. The Department will agree with the Institute the metrics against which the delivery tests will be measured.

4. The Institute should work with the Department to ensure close monitoring of the national approvals process during wave 1 to enable further development and refinement ahead of subsequent waves of delivery.

5. Evaluate wave 1 in live delivery against the principles set out at 1 above. The evaluation should specifically:

- Seek feedback from stakeholders in live delivery, including feedback from ABs during the engagement, application and approval stages of wave 1.
- Identify emerging issues relating to compliance with the approval criteria.
- Monitor and evaluate approval decisions for consistency, seeking input from employers
- Regularly report on implementation including findings during wave 1 in order to inform wave 2 and beyond.
- Provide regular information on application numbers, approvals and rejections.
- Provide any recommendations on any relevant changes to the approved higher technical qualifications programme and policy on the basis of evidence and evaluation from wave 1 of the programme.

6. Continue to advise and support the department in developing policy and plans around future waves of roll-out of approved higher technical qualifications, in particular by reporting on volume of qualifications coming forward for approval, emerging issues during wave 1 and future resource requirements.

7. Work to ensure the process and wider system is accessible to all users including employers, awarding bodies, education providers and learners.

8. Build and promote the approved higher technical qualifications brand, by:

- Working jointly with departmental officials on the development of a brand strategy for approved higher technical qualifications to be approved by ministers.
- Working jointly with the department on trademarking, licensing and managing on an ongoing basis the brand proposition.
- Working jointly with the department on the promotion of approved higher technical qualifications to key stakeholders and user groups (including students and employers)
- Ensure the branding is widely publicised through engagement with ABs.

9. Assisting and advising the department on wider higher technical education system design issues, including ensuring alignment with other products and developing options in relation to: enhanced flexibility, including small and modular qualifications; emerging or future skills, including how to incorporate emerging skills into occupational standards and approved higher technical qualifications; incentives for ABs to submit qualifications (including funding) and alternative approval arrangements for Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) accredited qualifications.

10. The Institute is to work with employers, PSRBs and ABs to identify any additional occupations at Level 4 and 5 that meet the Institute's criteria, that should be added to the occupational maps and an occupational standard developed. Where possible the Institute will encourage stakeholders to develop these ahead of future waves of approval. In the initial stages of the programme, the Institute should also highlight to ABs, as appropriate, where employers identify unfulfilled demand for qualifications aligned to occupations at Level 4 and 5.

11. In addition, the Government response sets out some information on next steps on provider assurance and funding. The Institute's contribution to these discussions may be included in future strategic guidance.