

Anticipated acquisition by Pearson Professional Assessments Limited of the computer-based testing business of learndirect Limited

Cancellation of reference

1. On 16 December 2015, the Competition and Markets Authority (**CMA**) made a merger reference under section 33(1) of the Enterprise Act 2002 (the **Act**) in respect of arrangements in progress or in contemplation which, if carried into effect, would have resulted in Pearson Professional Assessments Limited ceasing to be distinct from the enterprise carried on by the computer-based testing business of learndirect Limited (together referred to as the **Parties**).
2. Further to the terms of reference, and in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act, the inquiry group was required to decide:
 - (a) whether arrangements are in progress or in contemplation which, if carried into effect, will result in the creation of a relevant merger situation; and
 - (b) if so, whether the creation of that situation may be expected to result in a substantial lessening of competition within any market or markets in the United Kingdom for goods or services.
3. On 16 December 2015, the Parties requested a three week suspension of the phase 2 timetable under section 39(8A) of the Act.
4. On 23 December 2015, the CMA received assurances from the Parties that the arrangements in question have been abandoned.
5. Having had regard to those assurances, I am satisfied that the Parties have, within the terms of section 37(1) of the Act, abandoned the proposal to make arrangements of the kind mentioned in the reference.
6. Accordingly, I hereby cancel the reference.

Roger Witcomb
CMA Panel Chair
6 January 2016