

STUDY PROGRAMMES FOR 16-19-YEAR OLDS

Implications for Further Education Colleges

Radical curriculum and funding changes announced last July and which come into effect in September will give FE Colleges more freedom and flexibility to match the courses they offer to the needs of individual students.

Colleges will be expected to offer each student a **16-19 Study Programme** based on their prior attainment, and designed to meet clear educational and career aspirations. These changes reflect the 'progress and progression' criteria set out in the Common Inspection Framework which Ofsted introduced last September:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/common-inspection-framework-for-further-education-and-skills-2012>

Changes to the **funding of 16-19 education** will be introduced at the same time. These changes will make it easier for Colleges to fund what the Education Funding Agency describes as 'non-qualifications activity' such as work experience. The funding changes will also mean that college funding will no longer be linked to their success rates. Students can be entered for more challenging qualifications without fear that failure will affect success and in turn funding, can take fewer qualifications and spend time on work experience if this is appropriate:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentsupport/funding/a00210682/funding-formula-review>

One of the biggest changes is that all students who haven't achieved a C grade in **GCSE maths and English** by the end of Key Stage 4 will have to continue to study those subjects whilst at College. Almost 50% of all students fail to achieve a Grade C at age 16 in these subjects, and so this will create extra demand for teachers able to teach maths and English in Colleges. From September 2014 this requirement will become a condition of funding. Where GCSE A*-C English and maths is not immediately attainable, students can study other English and maths qualifications such as Functional Skills and Free Standing Maths qualifications as 'interim' or 'stepping stone' qualifications on the journey towards achievement of a GCSE. In future GCSEs will be comprehensively reformed. The reformed GCSEs in English and maths will replace existing GCSEs as part of the Study Programme English and maths requirement once they are available.

16-19 Study Programmes Principles

These were set out in the Government response to consultation and plans for implementation,

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a00210755/16-19-study-programmes>

This said that all students should be given the opportunity to follow a course that:

- Provides progression to a level higher than that of their prior attainment

- Includes qualification(s) that are of sufficient size and rigour to stretch the student and are clearly linked to suitable progression opportunities in training, employment or higher levels of education.
- Requires students to work towards GCSE A* – C grade in Maths and English (or other qualifications that will act as a stepping stone for achievement of these qualifications in time).
- Allows for meaningful work experience related to the vocational area of the Study Programme, which develops employability skills and/or creates potential employment options.
- Includes other activities unrelated to qualifications that develop the skills, attitudes and confidence that support progression.

Delivering 16-19 Study Programmes

How the Study Programme principles are applied will vary widely depending on students' needs, abilities and ambitions. Possible programme characteristics for students taking different qualification routes are set out in the Annex. All colleges will need to look at carefully their existing curriculum offer to ensure that students are able to take subjects and activities that really do support their educational and career ambitions. In particular:

Students taking A Levels

Students of all abilities will be enrolled on Study Programmes and this includes those studying A level courses. Schools and colleges whose students are following A level courses are unlikely to need to make substantial changes to their programme in order to meet the new requirements.

Whilst not a requirement, colleges are being encouraged to provide opportunities for students who have already achieved at Level 2 at GCSE A* – C to continue with the study of maths at level 3 in the light of the value placed on this by employers and higher education institutions.

A level students' Study Programmes will usually include non-qualification activity such as tutorials, work to develop personal or study skills or support in choosing options for employment and higher education.

Students taking vocational qualifications

For those students capable of studying and achieving qualifications and for whom a vocational qualification is the most appropriate route to their career goal, they will be expected to study at least one substantial vocational qualification. Substantial vocational qualifications should make up the majority of the Study Programme time, and in most cases these qualifications will be at a level above the student's prior achievement. Substantial vocational qualifications will be of sufficient size, weight and relevance to provide a route into a trade, profession or other form of employment, or access to a university or higher education course. For students who are not yet ready to study and achieve substantial vocational and/or academic qualifications, this element of the Study Programme may consist of substantial work

experience and English and maths, working towards GCSE if they have still to achieve these qualifications at Grade C or above.

The Department for Education is consulting on whether to set new standards for 'substantial vocational qualifications' offered at Level 3. This could mean that only those courses which meet the rigorous new criteria (and are respected and valued by employers) will continue to count in College performance tables. These standards could include, for example, external assessment and whether a qualification is recognised by universities and employer groups. Following this, a further consultation on Level 2 qualifications is proposed at a later date.

For students taking vocational qualifications, work placements can be an integral part of their training. For those planning to move onto higher education or further training, work experience or other kinds of work-related education can help students select the course and career path which best suites them.

Students not studying substantial qualifications

For students not taking substantial qualifications, work experience can help develop employability skills. Work experience along with proficiency in maths and English are skills that are actively sought by employers. Funding changes, and moves by Government to cut 'red tape' aim to make work experience an integral part of many more students' courses. The EFA's funding guidance suggests that students who are not taking substantial vocational or academic qualifications will be spending 'a majority' of their time on work experience, English and maths.

Smaller level 1 and 2 qualifications have not been shown to provide any particular benefit to students in terms of their future employment, although they can help engage students in a new subject and/or provide a 'stepping stone' to a more substantial qualification. These curriculum and funding changes are designed to support institutions to offer substantial and challenging academic and vocational qualifications, and to remove perverse incentives which can lead to students piling up small qualifications, or being placed on courses that may be too easy for them and that don't help them progress into employment or higher education. However, EFA will continue to fund smaller qualifications where there is no larger alternative or where they are in the best interests of the student as a step towards their long term career aim.

Students on Traineeships

The proposed new Traineeships will be a strand for 16-19 Study Programmes targeting students who are committed to securing an Apprenticeship or other employment. From August 2013, the new Traineeships programme will prepare young people for an Apprenticeship or sustainable work by offering a high quality work placement, work preparation training, and English and Maths.

Students with learning difficulties and disabilities

The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) can vary widely, but the Study Programme principles will still apply. Students should follow a programme that supports their progression into work or further study. For students with LDD who have a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a Study Programme applies up to the age of 25. Institutions, in discussion with the student, will need to assess what type of programme is most suitable given their career aspirations.

Study Programmes for students with profound and/or complex learning difficulties may also concentrate on work experience rather than qualifications (for example Supported Internships for students with more complex needs) or other non-qualification activities that will prepare them for adult life. Study Programmes should always include English and Maths but at an appropriate level and students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities will be excluded from the funding requirement to take a named qualification.

Funding

Rather than the current 'funding per qualification' arrangements, the new system will fund Colleges 'per student'. Education Funding Agency guidance published in December 2012 states that colleges will receive at least 600 hours funding a year for each student as long as they study for at least 540 hours. This level of funding will be sufficient to offer A-level students the opportunity to take at least four AS-levels, three A2-levels and also have up to 150 hours of time for enrichment activities, tutorial time and/or work experience across their two year programme of study. For students following a vocational route this will fund students to take at least one substantial vocational qualification as well as non-qualification activity, such as work experience, that will enhance their employment opportunities. The EFA propose in their funding guidance that 'the majority' of a student's time should be taken up with taking A levels or substantial qualifications or a combination of work experience, maths and English.

All full time programmes will continue to be funded at the same level for three academic years, based on the 2012/13 per student allocation. At that point funding levels will be reviewed. Non-qualification activity such as tutorials, the teaching of study skills and most significantly work experience also now count towards students' funded hours.

Accountability Arrangements

To support the changes, schools and other providers will be accountable for the quality of the Study Programmes that they offer their students through:

- Reformed 16-19 performance tables that provide clear and easily understood measures of student achievement.

- The publication of student destinations (further education, higher education or employment) after their study.
- Publication of data on GCSEs (including those who have achieved English and maths) and other level 1 and level 2 qualifications in addition to the already published annual data on A level results and other level 3 qualifications.
- An Ofsted inspection framework that, from September 2013, will pay particular attention to the quality and coherence of Study Programmes and how successfully they prepare students for further study or employment.
- Robust minimum standards that all 16-19 providers will be expected to meet with financial penalties, intervention and, ultimately closure, for those failing to meet them.

Route	Student Characteristics	Possible Programme Characteristics	How Maths and English Condition of Funding will be applied
A levels only	16-19 students in full time education capable of undertaking study at level 3, and who probably wish to progress to HE	Typically over 2 years a student will take 4 AS levels and 3 A levels. They will also engage in non-qualification activity of at least 30 hrs, which will include tutorial time and, if relevant, work related activity.	Students are expected to work towards GCSE A*-C if not already achieved. Academic only: 4% do not have English A*-C; 13% do not have maths A*-C
Level 3 Vocational (or A levels and vocational)	16-19 students with an interest in a vocational area or areas or seeking to qualify for employment within an identified occupation. Or progression to HE	Students take part in a vocationally related programme of general education which is neither purely academic or specific to a particular occupational.	Students are expected to work towards GCSE A*-C if not already achieved. Functional Skills and FSMQ accepted as 'stepping stones'. 28% have not achieved English and 37% have not achieved maths.
GCSE	This is likely to include students who want to follow an academic route doing re-sits.	GCSEs are generally delivered over an academic year and cover academic subjects. GCSEs for 16-18 year olds will be the same as pre-16.	32% of students taking a GCSE only course 2011 had not achieved GCSE English and maths A*-C at the end of KS4. Students will be expected to work towards GCSE A*-C if not already achieved. Functional Skills and FSMQ accepted as 'stepping stones'.
Level 2 Vocationally Related Qualification	Students studying VRQs are likely to be interested in a specific occupation where the level two qualification offers underpinning knowledge rather than 'hands on' vocational experience and/or progress to level 3	Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) will have an occupational focus, but will be based mostly on theory rather than practice. These will be predominantly provider based rather than delivered in the workplace.	Work towards GCSE A*-C if not already achieved. Functional Skills and FSMQ accepted as 'stepping stones'

Route	Student Characteristics	Possible Programme Characteristics	How Maths and English Condition of Funding will be applied
NVQ Currently not delivered to those in full-time (unless as part of an apprenticeship) but could now be part of a programme for those doing mainly in the workplace	Students interested in gaining an Occupational qualification through a work based route.	National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) comprise competence and knowledge components, with the competence element assessed in the workplace by a professional assessor.	Work towards GCSE A*-C if not already achieved. Functional Skills and FSMQ accepted as 'stepping stones'
Smaller Level 2 qualifications – 'not substantial'	These could be offered as a mechanism for re-engaging disaffected learners, or as accredited parts of what could lead to a full VRQ,	These are likely to be VRQs and accredited within the QCF.	Work towards GCSE A*-C if not already achieved. Functional Skills and FSMQ accepted as 'stepping stones'
Level 1	16-19 year olds who need more time to develop the skills to achieve and progress and/or have LLDD.	Programmes will focus on English, maths and preparation for employment	Work towards GCSE A*-C if not already achieved. Functional Skills and FSMQ accepted as 'stepping stones'
Other	As above	Generally, 'other' will represent Entry level qualifications,	All students will be expected to continue to study an appropriate qualification in English and maths.

Route	Student Characteristics	Possible Programme Characteristics	How Maths and English Condition of Funding will be applied
Apprenticeships	Young people generally In full time training. Apprenticeships are full-time jobs, therefore Apprenticeship employment must be for at least 30 hours per week.	A job with significant new learning, the practice of new skills, and achievement of nationally-recognised qualifications; normally expected to last between 1 and 4 years, depending on sector.	From September 2012, apprentices who have not yet achieved level 2 English and maths will have the opportunity to study these subjects to this level, through GCSE or Functional Skills. The statutory Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) sets the requirement for English and maths at a level below that of the Apprenticeship itself, so completion of an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship requires English and maths at level 1 only. Nevertheless, providers are expected to ensure that the opportunity of level 2 English and maths is open to all apprentices and to support and encourage them to pursue this option.
Traineeships	Young people aiming for Apprenticeships and sustainable employment, requiring extended input to reach level two and above.	Progression- focused and destination led; likely to focus on early short input on Employability Skills/ Work Readiness (- covering practical and behavioural elements) and to contain substantial core of work experience	Work towards GCSE if A*-C if not already achieved. Functional Skills and FSMQ accepted as 'stepping stones'