

# Ofqual Board

## Paper 89/16

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**Title:**

Vocational and Technical Qualifications Update

**Report by:**

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**Paper for information****Open paper (some paragraphs closed)****Issue**

1. This report provides an update on the work of the Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQ) Directorate since the last Board meeting. A paper covering proposals for our regulatory approach to Apprenticeships is the subject of a separate submission.

**Recommendation**

2. To note the issues raised in the report.

**Vocational and Technical Qualifications update**

3. This paper includes an update on the following key areas:
  - a. Regulation
  - b. Reform updates including:
    - Applied Generals
    - Functional Skills
    - Technical Education Qualifications
    - Apprenticeships
  - c. Strategic relationships

## Regulation

4. This section has been redacted, as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

6. **Security Sector Report.** On 31 January, we published our report on the Security Sector. The report highlighted issues with centre controls and quality assurance, leading to ineffective risk management and malpractice handling. We are planning a joint event with the Security Industry Authority and the Home Office to consider, with awarding organisations, how we can implement improvements.
7. This section has been redacted, as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

b. This section has been redacted, as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

8. **Issuing of incorrect results.** The University of Arts London (UAL) issued 650 incorrect certificates due to an IT failure. We made a formal determination of non-compliance; however, because UAL effectively managed the adverse effects, we took no further action.

9. This section has been redacted, as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

## Reform

12. This section has been redacted, as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

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20. **Apprenticeships.** We have been undertaking some considerable work to agree our regulatory approach to reformed Apprenticeships and have submitted a separate paper. This paper follows a positive discussion at the Board Strategy Day on 24 February that also informed our response to the Institute of Apprenticeships' Operational Plan; this response was received positively across the sector.

### **Strategic Relationships**

21. On 28 February we delivered our second conference focused on vocational and technical qualifications. We welcomed 266 delegates from 137 awarding organisations. Other stakeholders represented included CCEA, Qualifications Wales, Skills Funding Agency, Ofsted, Education Funding Agency, FAB, JCQ and the Northern Ireland government. The Department for Education also attended to provide a presentation on Technical Education Qualifications (see para 19 above).
22. In addition to our annual conference, we have spoken and presented at a wide range of events, including the Skills Conference (Leicester), the University of the Arts Conference (London), the Skills Summit (London) and the FE Week Annual Apprenticeships Conference. We continue to engage closely with key stakeholders such as the Association of Colleges and AELP on reform issues. We are also developing our relationship with Ofsted to share intelligence and align our approaches on the integrity of the qualifications system.
23. To supplement this engagement activity, we have established a new VTQ Stakeholder Group to seek advice and feedback throughout reform. Thirty-five different groups or individuals have responded positively to our invitation, including training provider bodies, teacher associations, employer groups, vocational groups and academics/researchers in

vocational education. Our first meeting was held on 6 March. We have also reviewed the way we work with vocational experts in relation to our Vocational Advisory Group. An update on this is included in the Chair's report.

24. We are currently piloting our longitudinal survey of employer confidence in vocational qualifications, covering Functional Skills, vocational and technical qualifications and apprenticeship end-point assessments. 2,000 employers will be interviewed. Results from this survey are due in May and will inform our reform programme. Our intention is to repeat this survey on an annual basis, and use this as a mechanism to track public confidence in vocational and technical qualifications and assessments during reform.
25. To support and inform the development of our approach to Functional Skills reform, we have been meeting a range of English and maths practitioner groups to gather their views. Workshops have taken place in Brighton, Nottingham, London, Cambridge, Newcastle and Darlington, and have included providers focused on apprenticeships, pre-employment learning as well as broader adult community learning and general FE colleges.

### **Finance and Resource**

26. This section has been redacted, as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

### **Impact Assessments**

#### Equality Analysis

27. No specific issues.

#### Risk Assessment

28. Our risk assessment will be informed by the strategic approach that we take to reform.

#### Regulatory Impact Assessment

29. No specific issues.

### **Timescale**

30. Timescales for each area of work are set out above.

### **Communications**

31. Nil.

### **Internal Stakeholders**

32. All other Directorates have an interest in the work set out in this report.

## External Stakeholders

33. We continue to build relationships with VTQ external stakeholders, as detailed in the Strategic Relationships section above.

Paper to be published	Yes (with some closed sections)
Publication date (if relevant)	N/A