



Department
for Transport

High Speed Rail (London to West Midlands) Act 2017 Vocational Qualifications Report 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019

Moving Britain Ahead

September 2020

High Speed Rail (London to West Midlands) Act 2017 Vocational Qualifications Report

1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019

Presented to Parliament pursuant to the High Speed Rail Act 2017

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1. Background

- 1.1 The High Speed Rail (London to West Midlands) Act 2017 (“the Act”) provides authority for the construction of the high speed rail network between London Euston and Birmingham which is known as Phase One of the HS2 project. Creating opportunities for skills and employment is one of the seven strategic goals of the HS2 project, complementing its goal to be a 'catalyst for growth across the UK'.
- 1.2 Section 66(1) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to prepare a report on vocational qualifications obtained in each financial year in connection with HS2 construction, so that the project's contribution to skills development can be better understood.
- 1.3 This is the second annual report made under section 66 and it covers the period 1 April 2018 until the end of the 18/19 financial year on 31 March 2019. The requirements of the report are threefold.
- 1.4 Section 66(2) of the Act requires this report to contain an account of vocational qualifications gained by individuals employed in constructing Phase One of HS2, in preparing for its construction and in connected and ancillary activities, and that they be broken down by type of qualification and activity.
- 1.5 Section 66(3) requires the report to contain an overall assessment of the costs of vocational training for relevant qualifications and by whom such costs were incurred.
- 1.6 This report covers Phase One of HS2. Vocational qualifications relating to future phases are covered within a separate report pursuant to section 2(3) of the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013.¹
- 1.7 During the course of the period covered by this report, Phase One enabling works have been underway, including site clearance, utility works, ecological surveys and ground investigations. Main Works Civils Contracts were awarded in July 2017 but are largely focussed on design and development work during the period covered by this report.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/31/contents>

2. Vocational Qualifications

Apprenticeships

- 2.1 The Enabling Works Contract and the Main Work Civils Contract included a requirement for the provision of apprenticeship opportunities. Once these contract awards were made, the successful contractors began to take on apprentices in line with the contractual requirement.
- 2.2 For Enabling Works Contracts the requirement is that at least 2.5 per cent of their workforces should be apprentices at any one time. The figure for Main Works Civils Contracts during the build stage is 4 per cent.
- 2.3 In 2018/19, the Enabling Works Contractors, on average, exceeded the contract requirement for 2.5% of their workforce to be apprentices. In the 17/18 Vocational Qualifications Report, it was reported that 94 apprenticeships were created and filled by HS2 Ltd and its contractors. This compares to 113 apprenticeships being created for the 18/19 reporting period.
- 2.4 Main Work Civils Contractors do not have a requirement to report on the percentage of apprenticeships until Stage 2 of their contract which is outside of this reporting period.
- 2.5 It is recognised that apprenticeship opportunities are a key driver for the number of vocational qualifications achieved in connection with HS2 development and construction, creating a pipeline for future skills development and increased take up on qualifications.
- 2.6 It is estimated that around 9,000 people were working on the HS2 project during the reporting period. The vast majority of these were employed by HS2 Ltd or its contractors and are covered in section 3 of this report. A small number worked for the Department for Transport and are covered separately, in this section, below.

The Department for Transport

- 2.7 A small proportion of those working on the HS2 project work at the Department for Transport. It is considered that the scope of this report applies to those working on Phase One of the project in the Department.
- 2.8 One employee was identified as having undertaken a vocational qualification at the time of working on Phase One of the HS2 project.

- 2.9 This employee was full-time and undertook qualifications in project management.
- 2.10 It is important to note that this data is only in relation to learning provided centrally through Civil Service Learning. Therefore, it is possible that other vocational qualifications have been undertaken. However, learning undertaken through other providers or paid for through team budgets is not captured and therefore has not been included in this report.

3. The HS2 workforce

- 3.1 For the first Annual Report on Vocational Qualifications (2017-18), data was collected centrally. For this second Annual Report, it was considered that an online survey of individuals would be a more efficient and flexible mechanism for capturing data from a rapidly expanding workforce.
- 3.2 An online survey was therefore developed and conducted by HS2 Ltd to gather data from the wider HS2 workforce working on the HS2 project, including those (the majority) not employed directly by HS2 Ltd. The HS2 workforce at the time the survey was sent was circa 9,000.
- 3.3 The exercise resulted in 586 survey submissions, of which 273 were fully completed. The survey was disseminated by HS2 Ltd via email, both throughout the organisation and to its contractors. Employees of sub-contractors (Tier 2 and Tier 3) engaged on the project were asked to complete the survey through the Tier 1 contractors who had details of their own workforce. Although the response rate was disappointing and lower than expected, it is important to highlight that the survey was not classed as mandatory and that respondents to the survey were therefore self-selecting. It seems likely that respondents who had not achieved a vocational qualification within this period would have been less likely to consider the survey relevant to them, and therefore to complete it. This could mean that the amount of relevant data captured by the survey is actually higher than the response figures alone would suggest.
- 3.4 In total, five questions in relation to vocational qualifications were asked. These were:
 - Have you achieved a Vocational Qualification* in any of the following areas whilst working on the HS2 contract between the 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019? (*Vocational Qualification work-based awards achieved through assessment and training)
 - Who is paying, or who has paid for this qualification?
 - How much has this qualification cost?
 - What sector are you working in?
 - Are you a full time or a part time employee?

4. Survey questions and results

Question 1. Have you achieved a Vocational Qualification* in any of the following areas whilst working on the HS2 contract between the 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019? (*Vocational Qualification work-based awards achieved through assessment and training)

4.1 In total, 191 respondents answered and 82 skipped the question.

	Response total	Response total not including 'no' and 'don't know'	Response total including redistributed 'Other' answers
Business / Finance	79	15	18
Construction	81	16	16
Engineering	77	15	19
Health and Safety	73	6	6
Plant	67	4	4
Project Management	74	11	12
Rail	68	3	3
Security	65	2	2
Transport / Logistics	65	2	2
Other, please specify Vocational Qualification type and level	25	16	8

Question 2. Who is paying, or who has paid for this qualification?

4.2 In total, 137 respondents answered and 136 skipped the question.

My Employer	55
Myself	19
Don't know	63

Question 3. How much has this qualification cost?

4.3 In total, 138 respondents answered and 135 skipped the question.

Up to £500	9
£501 - £1000	10
£1001 - £5000	22
Over £5000	15
Don't know	82

Question 4. What sector are you working in?

4.4 In total, 238 respondents answered and 35 skipped the question.

Administrative and Secretarial / Occupations	13
Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	37
Elementary Occupations	4
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	62
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	0
Professional Occupations	114
Skilled Trades Occupations	5
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	3

Question 5. Are you a full time or a part time employee?

4.5 In total, 262 respondents answered and 11 skipped the question.

Employed - Full Time	250
Employed - Part Time	4
Self Employed	7
Other (please specify):	1

5. Survey conclusions and limitations

Survey conclusions - question 1

- 5.1 Although the wording of the question did not specify Phase One, the survey was only sent to Phase One contractors. The analysis of responses to question 1 do not include 'Don't know' and 'No' answers.
- 5.2 The survey shows that 74 people achieved a vocational qualification during the reporting period. This does not include respondents who answered 'Other'.
- 5.3 Looking more closely at the data, 25 people answered 'Other' to question 1. Of this, 14 respondents stated the vocational qualification type and level achieved and 2 did not. This included one respondent undertaking MSc BIM & Digital Engineering (Level 8) and one respondent undertaking City & Guilds Level 3 3D CAD/ Parametric Modelling. Nine respondents answered that they did not have a vocational qualification. Of those who stated their qualification as 'Other', eight were deemed to fall into one of the listed categories and were therefore redistributed to the appropriate category, leading to the total number of vocational qualifications achieved being revised upwards to 82.
- 5.4 Although it is difficult to know how representative these results are for Phase One, the survey results show that in terms of the type of qualification and activity, the greatest majority of vocational qualifications being undertaken are in relation to engineering with 19 respondents. This was closely followed by business/finance and construction with 18 and 16 respondents respectively. Both security and transport/logistics had the lowest level with 2 respondents for either category.

Survey conclusions - question 2

- 5.5 The majority of respondents did not know who funded their qualification. Of those who did know, the overwhelming majority (55) answered that their qualification was funded by their employer. This is in contrast to 19 funding the qualification themselves.

Survey conclusion - question 3

- 5.6 The majority of respondents (82) did not know how much their qualification cost. However, of those who did, the largest majority of respondents (22) answered that the cost of their qualification was between £1001-£5000. The lowest number of responses (9) were for qualifications which cost up to £500.
- 5.7 Based on these responses, the total cost range of vocational training for relevant qualifications is between £100,000 and £200,000.
- 5.8 It is accepted that this assessment is an underestimate of the total cost due to the low survey response.

Survey conclusion - question 4

- 5.9 The majority of respondents (114) answered that they work in the 'Professional Occupations' sector. The second highest response (62) was for those who answered that they work in the sector of 'Managers, Directors and Senior Officials'. No respondent works in the Process, Plant and Machine Operatives sector.

Survey conclusion - question 5

- 5.10 The overall majority of respondents (250) are full-time employees. One respondent answered 'Other' and specified that they work in a consultancy capacity. Four respondents work part-time and seven are self-employed.

Survey limitations

- 5.11 As stated in paragraph 3.3, it is recognised that the response rate was not as good as anticipated, which therefore limits the usefulness of the data collected.
- 5.12 Whilst a survey is still considered to be an appropriate data collection tool, the method of data collection requires improvement to ensure a greater response from the lower levels of the supply chain. A number of the responses lend themselves to the assumption that the survey may have only been answered by those working for HS2 Ltd and Tier 1 contractors, rather than those from the lower levels of the supply chain such as Tier 2 and 3 contractors.
- 5.13 It is recognised that capturing data from such a dispersed and large infrastructure project as the HS2 project presents challenges that need to be addressed. The Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd will work together on improving data quality for future reports.

6. Overall conclusions and next steps

- 6.1 Of the 273 completed submissions, 82 respondents had achieved a vocational qualification associated with Phase One of HS2 within the reporting period. This includes answers that were redistributed from those that answered 'Other' to the categories that were listed in the survey.
- 6.2 The most common vocational qualifications were in engineering, business/finance and construction. The total estimated cost of all of these vocational qualifications is between £100,000 and £200,000, a cost largely met by employers.
- 6.3 As stated above, the low response rate may be due to the likelihood that those who did achieve a vocational qualification in the reporting period are more likely to have elected to respond to the survey. It is also important to draw attention to the fact that the HS2 project was, and still is, in its infancy and that as the project progresses, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in vocational qualifications achieved. Another important point to consider is that the level of vocational qualifications being achieved needs to be considered in the context of an already highly qualified HS2 workforce.
- 6.4 Maintaining a high level of apprenticeships in connection with HS2 construction will continue to be a key commitment of the project which will help to ensure a pipeline of highly qualified staff. As noted in paragraph 2.3, the increase in the creation of apprenticeships from 94 in the previous reporting period to 113, is a positive indicator of this commitment.
- 6.5 HS2 Ltd and the Department for Transport will review data collection methods in order to improve survey results for future reports. This includes making it possible for respondents to submit details if they have undertaken more than one vocational qualification during the reporting period. If an individual has not completed a vocational qualification, then they will not be required to go through the whole survey,
- 6.6 Additionally, a communication plan has been established to ensure systematic communication with the supply chain to be clear what they are required to do to ensure the survey details are widely circulated.
- 6.7 We will also aim to provide data that covers the pipeline for vocational qualifications, as an indicator of future vocational qualification take up.
- 6.8 Data collection is already well advanced for the 2019/20 report, and although efforts can be made to increase response rates, we anticipate that substantial improvements to data collection are likely to be limited until at least the 2020/21 report.

