

New Simplified 14-19 Qualifications System announced

As part of a qualifications strategy for 14-19 year olds, proposals have been published to simplify the qualifications system so that everyone can understand them and how they can lead to different progression routes. These proposals have been introduced by Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and they detail plans to take the best of current qualifications into four key national qualification structures: Diplomas; GCSEs and A-Levels; Apprenticeships and a Foundation Learning Tier (preparation for moving on to higher level qualifications).

Ed Balls said:

“Building on the aim that we set out in the Children’s Plan for a world-class education system for all 14-19 year olds, this Strategy will help to ensure that we can unlock the talent of every young person – enabling all teenagers to gain qualifications that are understood and valued and allow them to achieve and succeed. This Strategy builds on the advice we have received from a group of independent experts from all parts of the education sector and employers.

“The current qualification system is still too complex – it is often difficult for young people and their advisers to understand which will best meet their needs and support their aspirations. Not every qualification option has clear progression routes to further study or to skilled employment. Not all the qualifications currently on offer enable young people to develop all the skills and knowledge they need, and that employers and universities want. We want a more comprehensive and coherent qualification for young people, supporting better progression through a set of clear, well-valued qualification choices. ”

The new process to simplify the qualification structure will be designed to continue to meet all the needs of learners through the four main national routes. Assessing the suitability of the qualifications will be carried out against a set of common criteria and approval for funding will be through the expert body of advisers – the Joint Advisory Committee on Qualification Approval. To ensure the qualification options are truly comprehensive in order to match and meet the needs of all young people will be attained by introducing an Extended Diploma, to recognise wider achievement through the Diploma framework, making the Extended Project open to all A-Level students and extending the Diploma entitlement to all 17 Diplomas post 16 from 2013.

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