
United Kingdom

VET in Europe – Country report

2012

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This country report is part of a series of reports on vocational education and training produced for each EU Member State plus Norway and Iceland by members of ReferNet, a network established by Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training).

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¹ European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training - www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/refernet/index.aspx

Table of contents

CHAPTER 1	4
1. External factors influencing VET	4
1.1 Structure and development of the population	4
1.2 Structure and development of the workforce	4
1.3 Economy structure	6
1.4 Regulation of the labour market	6
1.5 Welfare and employment policies	6
1.6 Value of VET in the labour market	6
CHAPTER 2	8
2. Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective	8
2.1 Diagram of the national education and training system	8
2.2 Government-regulated VET provision	9
2.2.1 Access to VET and progression opportunities	10
2.2.2 VET Provision to target groups	11
2.2.3 Finance and governance of VET	14
2.2.4 VET providers	16
2.2.5 Teachers and trainers	17
2.2.6 Challenges, difficulties, success stories	18
2.3 Other forms of training	20
2.3.1 Training providers and programmes	20
2.3.2 Sectoral training programmes and qualifications	21
2.3.3 Workplace learning	21
2.3.4 Funding mechanisms	21
2.3.5 Transfer possibilities	22
2.3.6 Quality assurance mechanisms	23
2.3.7 Challenges, difficulties, success stories	23
CHAPTER 3	24
3. Shaping VET qualifications	24
3.1 Methods used to anticipate labour market needs	24
3.2 Design process and qualification designers	25
CHAPTER 4	29
4. Promoting participation in vocational education and training	29
4.1 Incentives for individuals	32
4.2 Incentives for enterprises	33
4.3 Incentives for providers	34
4.4 Guidance and counselling, structures and services	34
4.5 Challenges, difficulties, success stories	35
Bibliography	37
List of acronyms and abbreviations	40
Annex 1: Table	42

1. External factors influencing VET

The United Kingdom (UK) is a union of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and Northern Ireland. The UK Government has given responsibilities for a number of policy decisions to the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, such as governance for VET. Whilst there are similarities between the systems in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Scottish system is significantly different in many ways to those of the rest of the UK.

1.1 Structure and development of the population

The population of the UK is currently just under 63 million having risen from just over 60 million in 2005 ⁽²⁾. The UK old age dependency ratio is showing a trend towards an aging population with more people reaching pension age. The old age dependency ratio for 2010 was 24.9% and the estimated ratio for 2011 is 25.2%. The ratio is expected to rise dramatically after 2020. The estimated EU average for 2010 was 25.9% ⁽³⁾.

Table 1: Projected old-age dependency ratio ⁽⁴⁾

(%)	2010	2015	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
EU 27	25.92	28.48	31.37	38.33	45.52	50.16	52.55
UK	24.86	27.76	29.63	34.83	38.86	39.41	42.07

Estimated immigration to the UK in 2011 was 589 000. Long-term emigration is estimated to have been 338 000 in 2011 and net migration was an estimated 345 000. 250 000 immigrants arrived in the UK to study in 2011, which represents the largest group of immigrants. All these figures have remained similar in recent years ⁽⁵⁾.

1.2 Structure and development of the workforce

The total UK employed workforce (aged between 16 and 64) counted for 29.56 million people in July 2012, which is an employment rate of 71.2%. There has been a slight increase in the employment rate recently, however, since the pre-recession peak in employment in May 2008, the number of unemployed people has increased by 978 000 ⁽⁶⁾, many of which were aged between 16 and 24.

² Population at 1 January 2012, Eurostat.

³ Old-age-dependency ratio, Eurostat, 2012

⁴ Projected old-age dependency ratio, Eurostat, 2012

⁵ Migration statistics quarterly report May 2012, Office for National Statistics, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_264614.pdf

⁶ Labour market statistics September 2012, Office for National Statistics, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_276985.pdf

Unemployment rates vary on a regional basis with Northern Ireland, the South West of England and Wales being hardest hit since the recession (⁷). This period has also witnessed a rise in people employed on a part-time, temporary and self-employed basis. Public sector employment is shrinking and fewer people are likely to be employed in the public sector in the coming years as the Government continues to enforce austerity measures. The regions most dependent on the state sector are Northern Ireland, parts of Scotland and Wales as well as parts of Northern England. There is a trend towards more managerial, professional and associate professional/technical jobs in the UK, with business services (such as accountancy, law and consultancy) accounting for the largest amount of jobs growth. Some public service occupations in the health and care sector are also likely to see an increase. Skilled trade occupations, administrative/secretarial jobs and machine and transport operatives are, however, in decline. People with no formal qualifications or low skills have found it increasingly difficult to find employment in recent years, specifically for the age groups 15-24 and 50-64 as detailed in the table below.

Table 2: Employment rates by sex, age and highest level of education attained (%) in 2007, 2009 and 2011 (⁸)

	TIME	2007			2009			2011		
GEO	ISCED / AGE	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU 27	0-2	25.3	67.5	44.2	22.7	64.1	43.3	21.6	62.1	43.3
	3-4	48.8	81.3	59.1	46.2	80.3	57.4	44.4	79.8	60.4
	5-6	61.6	88.9	74.8	58.1	88.0	74.5	55.5	87.1	74.9
	No A.	5.3	75.7	6.7	5.5	75.6	63.8	5.6	73.6	61.6
	TOTAL	37.3	79.8	55.6	35.0	78.6	56.5	33.6	78.0	57.5
UK	0-2	43.1	66.2	61.0	37.7	63.6	49.9	34.5	62.1	49.4
	3-4	62.6	83.2	76.7	56.5	81.3	69.9	53.3	81.7	70.2
	5-6	78.8	90.6	81.0	71.8	89.6	74.6	70.0	87.8	73.5
	No A.	3.5	80.4	3.9	3.6	80.2	73.4	5.4	80.6	66.6
	TOTAL	52.9	81.6	65.1	48.4	80.3	65.1	46.4	80.2	65.1

⁷ Mapping the route to growth, rebalancing employment, CBI, June 2011, <http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/1053900/2011.06-mapping-the-route-to-growth.pdf>

⁸ Employment rates by sex, age and highest level of education attained (%). 2007, 2009, 2011, Eurostat, 2012

1.3 Economy structure

The UK has a market-based economy and is a major international trading power. Financial services as well as pharmaceutical, petroleum, automotive, aerospace, telecommunications and other technological industries play an important role in the UK's economy with the services industry being the largest contributor. The UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was the seventh largest in world in 2011. Since the GDP fell in 2008 and 2009, a modest growth in the economy occurred in 2010 and 2011, whilst we have seen a small decrease in the GDP in volume terms so far in 2012.

1.4 Regulation of the labour market

The UK labour market is demand led, but skill shortages exist in sectors such as medicine, health, engineering and certain other specialist, technical occupations ⁽⁹⁾. Sector Skill Councils work to identify skills shortages in the labour market and collaborate with industry and employment and skills bodies to fill gaps. Immigration regulations may also be altered to allow more foreign workers from outside the EU/EEA in to the country to fill vacancies on a needs basis, although the current UK Government is committed to reducing immigration.

1.5 Welfare and employment policies

In 2013 the UK Government will begin introducing reforms to the benefit system so that it pays more to work than to stay on benefits. Further initiatives include modernising the Jobcentre Plus services and creating closer links with local authorities, employers and providers. In England the Youth Contract was announced in 2011 and provides opportunities, such as apprenticeships and work experience, to young unemployed people. Moreover, in the UK the Work Programme supports benefit claimants in need of assistance with job seeking and training opportunities. The Work Programme is run by service providers under contract to the Department for Work and Pensions and allows providers to tailor support to individual needs. Providers are paid largely on finding sustainable work for the claimants.

1.6 Value of VET in the labour market

The amount of job roles requiring intermediate and higher skills and education is rising in the UK and it is expected that it will become even more important to possess specialist skills and higher education in the coming years to qualify for a more technologically advanced labour market. Whilst a number of occupations will continue to exist for unskilled and low skilled employees, more and higher paid jobs will increasingly require intermediate (upper secondary/technician) level and higher education qualifications.

⁹ Tier 2 Shortage Occupation List – Government-approved version, UK Border Agency, November 2011, <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/workingintheuk/shortageoccupationlistnov11.pdf>.

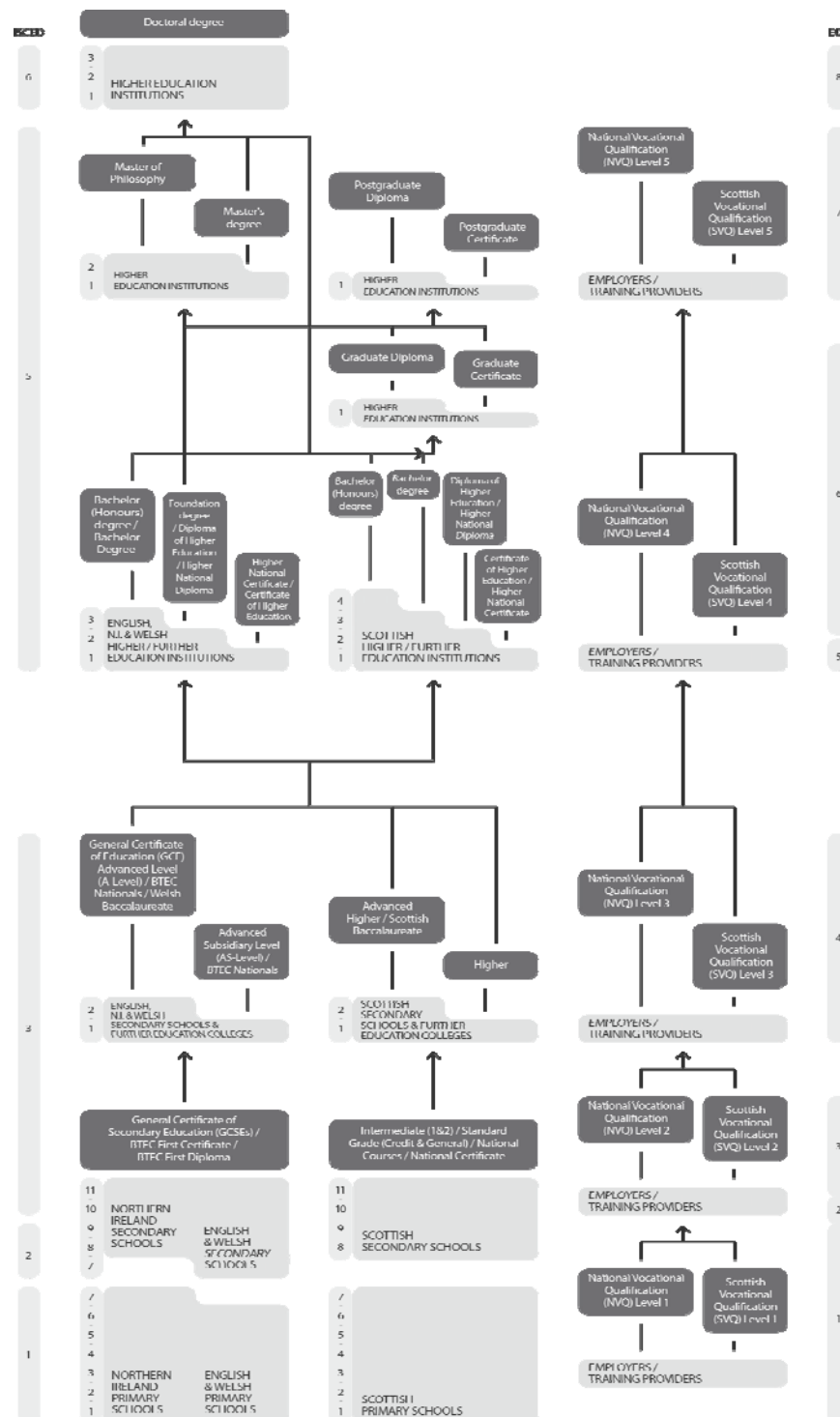
There is a large variety of VET qualifications in the UK and some enjoy a higher regard in the labour market than others. Employers are generally well aware of sector specific qualifications; however, research has found evidence that frequent changes to qualifications can lead to confusion regarding their value and relevance (¹⁰).

¹⁰ Review of Vocational Education – the Wolf Report, Wolf, A. 2011,
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/The%20Wolf%20Report.pdf>

CHAPTER 2

2. Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective

2.1 Diagram of the national education and training system



2.2 Government-regulated VET provision

Formal VET in the UK is organised within several national qualifications frameworks. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) contains mainly vocational qualifications in England and Northern Ireland. General academic qualifications are contained in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and higher education qualifications are included in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ). Most programmes included in the QCF are vocationally related qualifications organised within eight levels in addition to an entry level. The Credit and Qualifications Framework of Wales (CQFW) also contains the QCF qualifications in addition to Quality Assured Lifelong Learning in Wales within the same levels as the QCF. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) comprises all formal Scottish qualifications registered to 12 levels. The SCQF also contains the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS). The NQF includes qualifications that are available in parallel with QCF/CQFW qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Formal qualifications that do not follow the rules of the QCF can be found on the NQF. The purely outcomes-based NQF was introduced before the other frameworks and does not use a credit system to quantify learning. The QCF, CQFW and SCQF describe levels, qualifications and units in terms of learning outcomes as well as credits and notional learning hours. The UK qualifications frameworks correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as described in the table below:

Table 3: National qualifications frameworks in relation to the EQF ⁽¹⁾

EQF	QCF	SCQF	CQFW	FHEQ	NQF
8	8	12	8	8	8
7	7	11	7	7	7
6	6	10/9	6	6	6
5	5/4	8/7	5/4	5/4	5/4
4	3	6	3		3
3	2	5	2		2
2	1	4	1		1
1	Entry 3	3	Entry 3		
	Entry 2	2	Entry 2		
	Entry 1	1	Entry 1		

¹¹ Qualifications can cross boundaries: QAA, July 2011, http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quals_cross_boundaries.pdf

2.2.1 Access to VET and progression opportunities

Entrance requirements and further study or work pathways are mentioned within the description of qualifications within the UK qualifications registers. There is not always an automatic right to progression from one level to the next within the frameworks as education providers and examination boards retain the right to set the entry requirements to individual qualifications. However, the unit-based structure of qualifications opens up the possibilities for transfer of credit between qualifications, although credit is only accepted at education providers' discretion and in line with recognition of prior learning guidelines. Most pupils take examinations for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) at age 16 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The grades achieved here play an important role in determining the future study opportunities within VET. The most common entrance qualification to VET in Scotland is called the Standard Grades.

The age to which individuals are required to take part in education or training will be raised in England to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015. All 16-17-year olds in England that wish to proceed further already have a guaranteed place in education or training. The 'September Guarantee' process helps local authorities find suitable education or training places to applicants wishing to participate. The 'Opportunities for All' pledge offers the same guarantee for 16-19-year olds in Scotland.

Entrance requirements to apprenticeships vary depending on the occupational area and the level of the apprenticeship framework. Apprenticeships in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are available at three levels with qualifications at QCF level 2, 3, 4 and 5. Scottish apprenticeships correspond to SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7, 8 and 9 as well as 11. Competition for some apprenticeship places is fierce and good GCSE/Standard Grade grades in English and mathematics are sometimes necessary.

An Access to Apprenticeship scheme was introduced in 2011 to assist 16-25-year olds in England who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) to gain the necessary skills to enter a full apprenticeship. This preparatory training mainly takes place in the workplace and can last up to six months. It is currently open to 10 000 applicants per year.

The Pathways to Apprenticeship programme is in operation in Wales. This programme is a one-year full-time CQFW level 2 vocational qualification programme designed to give 16-24 year olds the foundation skills to progress onto and complete a full apprenticeship with an employer. Level 2 training includes associated essential skills and other relevant accredited vocational qualifications. In 2011, 283 learners took part in the programme with 65% of those successfully gaining an apprenticeship. A further 2 000 pre-apprenticeship places were made available from 2011/12. Traineeships are furthermore available for 16-18-year olds in Wales and provide needs-based training to help learners progress to further learning, apprenticeships and employment. The Steps to Employment scheme also helps

unemployed adults to access work experience and training in preparation for employment and further learning.

Scottish learning providers offer additional skills training opportunities, through the Targeted Pathways to Modern Apprenticeships scheme, that are designed to help young people gain the skills to enter apprenticeships or employment. Training is targeted towards seven key sectors and programmes include employability skills, basic occupational skills, employer experience and lead to a recognised vocational qualification or certification.

Opportunities for permeability between VET and higher education exist within the UK. Candidates holding QCF level 3/SCQF level 6 and 7 vocational qualifications may be allowed access to selected first cycle university programmes at institutional discretion. The Curriculum for Excellence has been introduced in Scotland and creates opportunities for students to combine subjects, which will mean a larger variety of secondary qualifications will be used to apply for tertiary education in the future. 15.2% of applicants accepted to higher education study in the UK in 2011 came from a further education background. This shows a downward trend from 2007 when 25.7% of applicants were accepted with a further education qualification ⁽¹²⁾. Additionally, there are good articulation options for progression from higher VET programmes at QCF levels 4 and 5 / SCQF levels 7 and 8, such as Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND), to the second or third year of a Bachelor degree in a related field in the UK. However, admission and transfer arrangements are made at the discretion of the admitting institution.

The UK has the main building blocks to support the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) in place. ECVET aims to give people greater control over their individual learning experiences and promote mobility between different countries and different learning environments. A group of ECVET experts, led by Ecorys, are involved in promoting ECVET principles to support transnational mobility and are engaging in testing ECVET through Lifelong Learning Programme funded projects.

2.2.2 VET Provision to target groups

Around three million learners in the 19+ age group are supported in England by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) each year. Below is a table showing slight variations in numbers:

¹² Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS)
http://www.ucas.ac.uk/about_us/stat_services/stats_online/data_tables/edbackground

Table 4: Indicative learner numbers (19+), SFA ⁽¹³⁾

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Total learners	3 129 000	3 280 000	2 927 000	2 818 000
of which apprenticeships	460 000	645 000	650 000	655 000

The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) estimated in 2011 that there were around 1.5 million learners in the 16-19 age bracket in England. The table below displays how they are spread across different types of training:

Table 5: Numbers of Young People in Learning in England (16-19) (estimated), YPLA ⁽¹⁴⁾

(Thousands)	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Total participation	1 535	1 543	1 577
Colleges and other providers	872	863	865
School Sixth Forms	441	449	465
Apprenticeships	215	222	240
Specialist provision for learners with LDD ⁽¹⁵⁾	8	8	8

As displayed above, there is an upward trend in numbers of apprentices in the UK. Below is a table showing the latest available numbers of apprenticeship starts in the UK nations:

Table 6: Apprenticeship starts 2010/11 ⁽¹⁶⁾

England	457 200	Wales	7 400
Scotland	26 400	Northern Ireland	9 400

Apprenticeship starts for under-19s in England were up by 22% from 2007/08 numbers, 59% for 19-24-year olds and 39% for those over 25. A further rise in apprenticeship starts of 45 000 occurred in 2011/12 which took the annual total of starts in England to over 500 000. 53% of apprenticeship starters in England in 2011/12 were female. Scottish Modern Apprenticeship starts rose from 18 500 starts in 2009/10 and the total number of apprentices in training in Scotland in March 2012 was 36 262 of which 33% were female. In 2010/11, 45% of Apprenticeship starts in

¹³ BIS, New Challenges, New Chances, Skills Investment Statement 2011-2014: Investing in a World Class Skills System, 2011, <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/11-1374-skills-investment-statement-2011-2014.pdf>

¹⁴ 16-19 Funding Statement, December 2011, YPLA, https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/16-19_Funding_Statement.pdf

¹⁵ Learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities

¹⁶ ReferNet UK Policy Report Survey 2012. Data provided by the NAS, SQA, DfES and DEL.

Wales involved people in the 16-24 age bracket. There were a further 11 204 Foundation Modern Apprenticeship starts that year in Wales, of which approximately 50% were 16-24-year olds.

VET is available across most levels of the qualifications frameworks in the UK. It can be found in the shape of school-based programmes which combine general academic study with vocational elements, broad vocational programmes and specialist occupational programmes that take place both in a school setting and a work place. VET is offered on a full-time and part-time basis and students may attend schooling on a block-release or day-release basis from employers or attend evening or weekend learning. Moreover, a large number of qualifications exist within the qualifications frameworks in the UK and there are more than 170 awarding organisations in the UK. There were in excess of 18 000 regulated qualifications on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications in 2010/11 ⁽¹⁷⁾. An overview of some of the main types of qualifications is provided below.

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in vocational subjects is available at lower secondary level in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and is normally studied along with general academic subjects.

The main BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) qualifications comprise Awards, Certificates and Diplomas at First (QCF level 2), National (level 3) and Higher National (levels 4 and 5) levels. These programmes combine theoretical and practical vocational education and can form part of an apprenticeship programme. First and National programmes are offered at secondary level whilst the Higher Nationals are higher education qualifications with a vocational orientation. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) offers HNCs and HNDs at tertiary level following the SCQF credit structure.

The Diploma programme is available in England at Foundation, Higher and Advanced level that correspond to QCF levels 1-3. The Diploma consists of language, literacy and ICT learning in addition to a vocational specialisation. The Diploma can be combined with other academic or vocational qualifications and also include workplace training. This programme is currently being phased out.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are competence-based, practically oriented qualifications that are often assessed in the work place and also often taken in conjunction with an apprenticeship. Many NVQs have been adapted to the credit-based QCF, but purely competence-based programmes still exist within the NQF. Many of the similar Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are also available within the SCQF and those that are not will progressively migrate into it. NVQ and SVQs are available at five levels ranging from semi-skilled worker level to higher education level.

¹⁷ Annual Qualifications Market Report 2012, Ofqual, <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/news-and-announcements/130-news-and-announcements-press-releases/896-ofqual-publishes-the-annual-qualifications-market-report-2012>

National Certificates and National Progression Awards (NPAs) in Scotland are vocational qualifications that are placed at SCQF levels 2-6. These are National Qualifications Group Awards in which students accumulate credits and smaller qualifications towards qualifications that allow entry to more advanced study and employment. National Certificates are primarily aimed at people in full-time education and NPAs are shorter programmes for employees or people returning to work. These courses are more prevalent in the tertiary college sector, but also available in schools.

Skills for Work courses may be studied in secondary schools in Scotland, often in partnership with a local tertiary college and employer. These programmes form part of the National Courses and provide an introduction to vocational learning and include experiential learning which prepares learners for further VET and employment.

Vocational subjects at upper secondary level are available in the General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A level) programme too. The GCE A levels in Applied Subjects replaced the Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) at Advanced level. These are work-related qualifications designed to combine a broad area of study with a focus on a specific industry sector.

Apprenticeships in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are offered in the shape of Apprenticeship Frameworks which include a work contract, a technical and occupational qualification within the QCF/CQFW and Functional Skills/Essential Skills/Key Skills/GCSEs. Apprenticeships are available at Intermediate (corresponding to QCF level 2), Advanced (level 3) and Higher level (levels 4 and 5). Scottish Modern Apprenticeships correspond to SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7, 8 and 9 as well as 11 and are accompanied by SVQs, HNDs or other qualifications.

In Northern Ireland, Steps to Work is a return to work programme in England that combines essential skills training in literacy and numeracy with a QCF level 2 or 3 vocationally related qualification. This programme was replaced by the Youth Employment Scheme in 2012.

2.2.3 Finance and governance of VET

Governance of VET in the UK rests with the UK Government and Government departments in the Devolved Administrations. Different regulatory bodies exist in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Devolved Government legislation does not include detailed regulations, such as lists of approved qualifications, but the law provides for the Government Minister to issue lists of approved qualifications following advice from the relevant advisory body. There is a complex institutional framework in the UK VET sector with the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) sharing policy making responsibilities in England. The policy making authorities for VET in Northern Ireland are the Department of Education (DE) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and the Scottish and Welsh Governments in Scotland and Wales respectively.

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) is one of very few bodies involved in VET to operate UK-wide. The UKCES is a social partnership of employers, trade unions and representatives from the Devolved Administrations that works towards greater investment in skills to assist enterprises and the UK economy. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service works in partnership with the learning and skills sector in England and is tasked with developing resources to assist education providers to implement initiatives and improve quality. National Skills Academies (NSAs) are employer-led organisations developing the infrastructure and learning resources needed to deliver specialist skills to industry sectors. NSAs also strive for training programmes resources to be up-to-date and relevant in the current job market.

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) was established in 2012 as an executive agency of the DfE in England. It carries forward the work of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), Partnerships for Schools and the maintained schools funding division of the DfE. Aside from funding learners between 3 and 19, the EFA furthermore supports the building and maintenance programmes for schools, academies, free schools and sixth-form colleges. The Skills Funding Agency's main function is to fund and promote adult further education and skills training in England. A funding reform is under way and a simplified, learner-led system will be fully implemented from 2013/14. Much of school-based VET is Government funded, but employers fund an increasing part of workplace training, such as in-company training and learning through specialist consultants and agencies. A growing number of education providers now receive funding directly from the Government rather than through local authorities. These are Academies, Free Schools, University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools. Privately funded training providers also operate within the UK VET sector.

The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, commonly known as the Scottish Funding Council, is the strategic body for funding of teaching, learning, research and other activities across all levels of tertiary education in Scotland. Public schools are funded through and accountable to local authorities, with one exception being directly funded by Scottish Government. Funding of VET in the Northern Ireland further education sector and for providers of specific government-funded programmes is overseen by the DEL. VET funding in Wales is the responsibility of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

In England, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) holds responsibility for inspection of schools and further education colleges. Ofsted now focuses on bringing providers falling short of required standards up to a satisfactory standard and only inspecting providers with a high ranking if they are considered to drop in performance. Higher education provided at FE colleges is subject to quality review by the Quality Assurance Agency through their Integrated Quality Enhanced Review methodology which includes peer review, developmental engagement and summative review. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations

Regulation (Ofqual) is the regulator of all vocational qualifications within the QCF for England and Northern Ireland. The SQA, DfES and the Council for Curriculum and Examinations Assessment (CCEA) also regulate qualifications in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Schools and colleges are inspected by Education Scotland, Estyn in Wales and the Education and Training Inspectorate in Northern Ireland.

2.2.4 VET providers

There is a range of education and training providers within the UK VET sector. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, providers include secondary schools, school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, further education (FE) colleges and higher education institutions. FE colleges represent the largest group of VET providers offering education to learners that are 16 years old and upwards, including a large number of adult learners. FE colleges offer learning at various levels, but most of the courses are offered at QCF/CQFW level 3. Students may attend FE colleges on a full-time or part-time basis and combine the study with an apprenticeship. In Scotland, VET is also mostly offered in FE colleges, but also in secondary schools and higher education institutions. There are currently 42 FE colleges in Scotland, however, regional partnerships or mergers are being undertaken as part of a major restructuring of the landscape of Scottish colleges. 341 colleges exist in England, of which 219 are general FE colleges, 94 are sixth form colleges and 28 are other types of colleges. There are 14 FE colleges and 4 designated FE institutions in Wales; the number of colleges is expected to reduce by August 2014, as mergers are pursued in the FE sector. There are 6 FE colleges in Northern Ireland.

University Technical Colleges (UTCs) are recently established VET institutions for 14-19-year olds in England. UTCs are formed through partnerships between universities, colleges and businesses to match national curriculum requirements to local needs and include work placements. UTCs combine core skills with early subject specialisation and links to higher education. Similarly, Studio Schools have recently been introduced into the UK education system. These are small institutions offering vocational qualifications, general qualifications (such as GCSEs) as well as teaching through enterprise projects and work placements. Lifelong Learning Partnerships consist of a variety of education providers ranging from voluntary sector providers to further and higher education institutions as well as employers and trade unions. Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) exist across the UK and work, along with the Institute for Education Business Excellence, to provide employment related learning services and work experience to young people. EBPs offer students mentoring, enterprise activity and professional development to prepare them for working life. Entrepreneurs are furthermore being brought into the classroom in schools, colleges and higher education institutions through the Enterprise Champions programme and Enterprise Societies.

There are currently in excess of 170 awarding organisations recognised by Ofqual, the Welsh Government in Wales and the Council for Curriculum and Examinations Assessment in Northern Ireland. These organisations are listed in

Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications and are subsequently entitled to award accredited qualifications within the QCF, NQF and the CQFW. There are presently more than 25 registered awarding bodies (including all higher education institutions with degree awarding powers) offering qualifications within the SCQF and also more organisations issuing qualifications in conjunction with the SQA, which is the main awarding body in Scotland. The FE and skills sector in England comprises, in addition to FE colleges, some 900 independent training providers and some 2 500 training organisations with which colleges and providers subcontract.

2.2.5 Teachers and trainers

Different training and registration requirements exist at secondary education level to further and higher education level. In England teachers working in state-maintained secondary schools must meet the requirements of the Teaching Agency, which includes a degree level qualification, GCSE level subjects in English, mathematics and science in addition to completing an induction year and obtaining Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The same statutory requirement to hold QTS is not in place for teachers employed by academies or Free Schools. An academy may be required through its funding agreement to employ teachers with QTS, but the Department for Education may agree to relax this requirement if the academy requests this. Similar arrangements apply in Wales, where those qualifying to train to teach in maintained secondary schools are required to meet the QTS standards set by the Welsh Government. Those teaching in the FE colleges are usually referred to as lecturers and those teaching work-based learning are normally called trainers. In England lecturers and trainers were required to obtain Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status and register with the Institute for Learning (IfL) until earlier this year. The UK Government has, for England, however, recently revoked the requirement for FE teachers to complete a period of professional training, partake in continuing professional development (CPD) each year and register with the IfL. These regulations may be replaced with discretionary advice to employers on appropriate qualifications and CPD, although the requirement to possess recognised qualifications, such as the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) or equivalent, has been retained for the next academic year. The criteria to teach at FE level will now be made more flexible in line with the criteria for teaching at higher education level where the education provider decides upon the suitability of the teaching staff.

Teaching qualifications are available from higher education institutions and Ofqual-recognised awarding organisations. Teacher training also takes place in-house, and in both colleges for further and higher education. Associate Teachers work with less responsibility than Full Teachers in terms of curriculum development and delivery. In the FE sector, Associate Teachers are often known as instructors or trainers and should work under the supervision of a Full Teacher. FE lecturers in Northern Ireland must possess a qualification registered at QCF level 5 or higher in a subject area relevant to the subject taught as well as a teaching qualification, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Education for Further Education (PGCEFE). In Wales,

lecturers are required to hold Certificate of Education, PGCE(FE) qualifications or Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and those employed as teachers in institutions in the FE sector in Wales are required to have, or to be working toward, these relevant teaching qualifications. Scottish secondary teachers must hold a first degree, a teaching qualification such as the Postgraduate Diploma in Education, and register with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). However, teachers, trainers and lecturers at tertiary FE level do not need to register with the GTCS, although it is desirable and strongly suggested by the Inspectorate, but are required to hold a GTCS recognised further education teaching qualification. The General Teaching Council for Wales registers secondary teachers, who must possess a university degree, GCSE subjects and a teaching qualification as in England. FE teacher qualifications available in England and Wales include the PGCE for FE, which is a postgraduate programme leading to Full Teacher status, and in England the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS), which is a short introduction to FE teaching, the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS), and the DTLLS which is the minimum qualification needed to obtain Full Teacher status.

In England the IfL will continue to operate as a practitioner-led professional body, but with voluntary membership only. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service has taken over the responsibilities of the Quality Improvement Agency and the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and works to develop professional standards and teaching qualifications for the FE sector in addition to disseminate innovation and best practice. Ofsted is the inspection agency for the quality of teacher education in England.

2.2.6 Challenges, difficulties, success stories

The UK Government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) published the *Skills for Sustainable Growth* (¹⁸) report in 2010, which amongst other points sets out a plan to increase the number of adult apprentices. There is a general political consensus in the UK that apprenticeships are important in dealing with the country's intermediate skills deficit. The number of employers currently taking on apprentices has risen in recent years. Incentives are in place to further enhance employer engagement in apprenticeships with particular emphasis on small and medium enterprises. Cost factors to employers, such as administration, apprentices' time away from the workplace and employees' time spent to train apprentices has been found to be a reason for not participating, particularly by smaller employers. Despite this, research has shown that apprentices provide good value for money for employers in the long-term in terms of increased, specialised skills, employee loyalty, new innovative ideas and as future management material (¹⁹). Whilst most

¹⁸ Skills for Sustainable Growth, BIS, 2010, <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf>

¹⁹ Review of Apprenticeships Research, Institute for Employability Research, University of Warwick, <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/About-Us/~media/Documents/IER-Apprenticeships-Literature-Review-final-July-2012.ashx>, 2012

apprenticeship providers are perceived to offer quality training, some providers have been criticised for shortening the training too much and not providing sufficient off-the-job education. This has prompted the UK and Welsh Governments to specify minimum duration of apprenticeship programmes. Programmes are further regulated through the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England and the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales. The last few years have witnessed a rise in adult (over 25 year old) apprentices who now outnumber under 19-apprentices. In England, the Young Apprenticeship programme that offered 14-16-year old pupils the opportunity to undertake industry specific VET alongside the GCSE programme will be closed for the last pupils in 2012/13 as the costs of running the programme is considered too high in the current economic climate. 9 400 pupils started on the Young Apprenticeship programme in 2010. Scottish Modern Apprenticeship starts have increased in recent years as a result of a successful partnership between employers, training providers and the public sector.

The *Wolf Review* ⁽²⁰⁾ identified that too many vocational qualifications at lower secondary level in England were considered equivalent to GCSE subjects and that some of these vocational equivalent qualifications were easier to complete and obtain good grades in. Consequently, the report describes a situation in which students may be guided into completing qualifications that are less well regarded in the labour market to gain good grades, which in turn reflects well on the school's ranking. The *Wolf Review* recommended that only good quality vocational qualifications were to be considered equivalent to GCSE subjects in terms of the school ranking exercise, which the Government has acted upon.

The Scottish education system is changing with the introduction of the new Curriculum for Excellence for learners between ages 3 and 18 that is designed to give learners a broad and individual choice of subjects, as well as support and extend the development of reflective practice, employability skills and citizenship awareness. Several mergers are planned amongst Scottish colleges in the coming years in a bid to create larger and more efficient entities tailored to regional needs. The Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council are currently engaging with Scottish higher education institutions (HEIs) on Outcome Agreements for some of which more formalised articulation arrangements will be a benchmark upon which they are measured and funded. Outcome agreements are specific to regions and match college provision to regional needs.

The Wales Review of Qualifications 14-19 outlines how the Welsh Government will ensure that qualifications for 14- to 19-year-olds are understood and valued and meet the needs of our young people and the Welsh economy. A further review into the qualifications currently on offer is due to be completed in November 2012. The aims are to identify the qualifications that are most relevant, valued and understood and to ensure that these are available to learners. It will also consider issues related to assessment and measurement of performance. The Welsh Government has also

²⁰ Review of Vocational Education – the Wolf Report, Wolf, A. 2011, <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/The%20Wolf%20Report.pdf>

recently completed a consultation on requiring FE staff including support staff to become registered in the same way as there remains a requirement for teachers who have gained QTS to register. It is likely that these proposals will be in the Education (Wales) Bill which will be submitted to the National Assembly for Wales in summer 2013.

Ofsted's latest annual report ⁽²¹⁾ showed that no colleges in England received an outstanding ranking for teaching and learning. Recommended changes to the FE teacher role are detailed in the *Professionalism in Further Education* report ⁽²²⁾ issued this year. Recommendations include a simplified teacher qualification and abolition of the associate teacher role as well as removal of the professional registration requirement for FE teachers.

2.3 Other forms of training

Continuing professional development and non-formal training is generally conducted on a voluntary basis unless there are specific requirements for training in professionally licensed trades. Despite this, the UK has a high participation rate in adult education and continuing training of the workforce. 59% of UK workplaces that responded to the UKCES' *Employer Skills Survey 2011* ⁽²³⁾ had arranged on-the-job or off-the-job training for employees in the preceding 12 months, with on-the-job training slightly more popular. More Scottish and Northern Irish employers provided training than in England and Wales. Larger companies were also more likely to arrange formal training than smaller companies. Only 38% of businesses reported operating with a yearly training plan, ergo workplace training was often arranged on an ad-hoc basis. The type of training provided varies greatly from induction training and health and safety to technical, job-specific skills training.

2.3.1 Training providers and programmes

A diverse range of organisations provide non-formal and informal training in the UK, including public and private enterprises, voluntary organisations, uniformed services, health and care services, professional education and registration bodies as well as trade unions. Unionlearn is the TUC's learning and skills organisation that supports unions' learning and skills work. E-learning is growing in use in the UK. NEN – the Education Network - works throughout the UK towards improving standards and access to ICT and e-learning by providing learning resources via broadband internet connections. Community learning comprises predominantly unaccredited, non-formal and informal adult learning organised in places such as

²¹ The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2012/11, Ofsted, <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/annualreport1011>

²² Professionalism in Further Education, Interim Report of the Independent Review Panel, Lord Lingfield, 2012. <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/p/12-670-professionalism-in-further-education-interim.pdf>

²³ UKCES Employer Skills Survey, 2011, <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/ukces-employer-skills-survey-11.pdf>

libraries, museums, community centres, union learning centres, universities, extended schools, children's centres, colleges and workplaces. Community learning can be short courses, but can also last in excess of a year. Learning can be undertaken online, in self-organised study groups and through professionally qualified teachers. The Learner Access and Engagement programme allows FE Colleges in Northern Ireland to offer learner support in collaboration with non-statutory providers, such as voluntary, community and private organisations. This local type of training is aiming to provide unemployed adults, disengaged learners and other disadvantaged groups with employment related education that can lead to progression to formal further education.

2.3.2 Sectoral training programmes and qualifications

The UKCES' *Employer Skills Survey 2011* ⁽²⁴⁾ shows that the sectors in which employers provided the most on- and off-the-job training to employees were health and social work, and education and public administration. Provision was also high in the electricity, gas and water, financial services and mining and quarrying sectors.

2.3.3 Workplace learning

The *Learning and Talent Development Survey 2012* ⁽²⁵⁾ from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) shows that the institute's members believe in-house development programmes, coaching by line managers and on-the-job-training to be the most effective employee development practices. This type of training is perceived to be more closely tailored to specific job roles than qualifications that form part of the formal education system, in addition to being more cost effective. E-learning is gaining popularity as a form of employee development in areas of health and safety, data protection and technology training, but is not considered by managers as equally suitable for all types of learning. The Workforce Development Programme advises Welsh employers on priorities and skills needs and assists them in accessing local training opportunities. The programme is flexible and includes advice on formal and non-formal training.

2.3.4 Funding mechanisms

Trade unions have statutory status for Union Learning Representatives and assist workers' training through the Union Learning Fund. The Wales Union Learning Fund helps workers in the up-skilling process and to gain essential skills to enter onto formal qualifications. The Welsh Government provides funding to people who have recently been made redundant or are at risk of being made redundant through the Redundancy Action Scheme II. This funding gives access to vocational training and training support.

²⁴ UKCES Employer Skills Survey, 2011,
<http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/ukces-employer-skills-survey-11.pdf>

²⁵ Learning and Talent Development Annual Survey Report 2012, CIPD,
<http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/5688%20LTD%20SR%20report%20WEB.pdf>

The majority of non-formal training in workplaces is employer funded. The Growth and Innovation Fund administered by the UKCES and the Skills Funding Agency helps enterprises in England develop innovative skills solutions including staff training and encourages partnerships between businesses and their industry and sector bodies. The UK Government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) supports community learning, such as Personal and Community Development Learning, Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy, Wider Family Learning as well as Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities through an annual budget.

2.3.5 Transfer possibilities

There are generally less transfer opportunities to further and higher education for qualifications obtained outside a formal qualifications framework in the UK. Increased requirements relating to accreditation and funding have placed added pressure on providers to deliver courses within qualifications frameworks. However, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) guidelines are incorporated into the QCF in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, whilst the Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Informal Learning form part of the SCQF in Scotland. There is also a RPL network connected to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Partnership which published a RPL toolkit in 2010 and which aims to increase and improve recognition of non-formal and informal learning as well as formal learning. In England, RARPA (Recognising And Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning) was furthermore devised by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education and the former Learning and Skills Development Agency to aid recognition and validation of learning that does not lead to a formal award. RARPA includes a staged process in assessing individual learners' achievement by taking into consideration their starting point, identification of learning objectives, recording of progress and end of programme assessment.

FE colleges in Scotland offer higher education access programmes organised through the Scottish Wide Access Programme. These programmes, which are designed to widen access and participation in higher education, last a year and may occasionally combine specific vocational elements with general academic subjects. Completion of this type of access programme will usually guarantee a place in an appropriate HNC/HND or degree programme. The Quality Assurance Agency offers a service called Employer Based Training Accreditation which connects employers to higher education institutions, verifies the quality and standard of in-company training and in some cases matches this to national qualification standards. This process promotes recognition of non-formal training and assists progression to formal education programmes.

2.3.6 Quality assurance mechanisms

Training organisations offering non-formal qualifications may register with the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education. Investors in People (IiP) is a nationally recognised business standard encouraging enterprises to invest in training. IiP certification gives an indication that an employer is committed to the development of workers.

2.3.7 Challenges, difficulties, success stories

According to the CIPD Learning and Talent Development Survey 2012 ⁽²⁶⁾, the continuing difficult economic situation which many businesses find themselves in has had a negative impact on the employee training budget of companies across the UK which saw an overall reduction during the past year, and may face further reductions.

²⁶ Learning and Talent Development Annual Survey Report 2012, CIPD,
<http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/5688%20LTD%20SR%20report%20WEB.pdf>

CHAPTER 3

3. Shaping VET qualifications

Skills development is the responsibility of the Devolved Administrations of the UK. Increasing skill levels of the current and future workforce is a priority of all four countries.

3.1 Methods used to anticipate labour market needs

The qualifications market in the UK is jointly driven by Government policies and private interests. This has led to a large choice of qualifications and awarding bodies. The economic situation has badly impacted young people's job opportunities. The *Labour Force Survey* (LFS) ⁽²⁷⁾ results are published regularly by the Office for National Statistics and contain labour market statistics. The LFS is used along with other national, regional and sectoral surveys and audits to determine labour market needs and gaps. Skills audits and surveys of employers' opinions are also important for this.

The creation of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) was aimed at involving employers more closely in the skills development process. These agencies function as strategic partnerships of stakeholders in education, business and industry and work towards increasing employers' influence on vocational qualifications by linking them more closely to labour market demands. SSCs are Government licensed through the UKCES. The UKCES provides labour market intelligence through the *Employer Skills Survey* ⁽²⁸⁾ and *Working Futures* ⁽²⁹⁾ in addition to other work, whilst the SSCs identify skills needs and shape the supply of training and education by creating Sector Skills Agreements. National Occupational Standards are developed by SSCs working with national and regional organisations in regard to funding and training provision. UKCES' *National Strategic Skills Audit 2010* ⁽³⁰⁾ (England) and 2011 (Wales) provide analysis of national and global employment and training. UKCES also issues an *Employment and Skills Almanac* ⁽³¹⁾, which is a comprehensive labour market resource. The last publication from 2011 identified productivity, employment, skills

²⁷ Office for National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, September 2012, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_276985.pdf

²⁸ Employer Skills Survey 2011: England Results, UKCES, July 2012, <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/evidence-report-46-uk-employer-skills-survey-2011-england-report.pdf>.

²⁹ Working Futures 2010-2020, UKCES, August 2012, <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/evidence-report-41-working-futures-2010-2020.pdf>.

³⁰ National Strategic Skills Audit, UKCES, 2010 and 2011, <http://www.ukces.org.uk/ourwork/nssa>

³¹ UKCES, Employment and Skills Almanac 2010, <http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications/er26-skills-almanac-2010>, published April 2011.

and inequality issues. Other stakeholders involved in providing information and recommendations for skills provision include the Confederation of British Industry, whose research suggests that employers believe increased apprenticeship funding and investment in training and skills development are vital to create business opportunities and economic growth ⁽³²⁾.

Regional Development Agencies (until March 2012 when they were closed down) and, in England, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) work towards improving local needs and bring together local and regional stakeholders in business and local authorities. LEPs and the new powers to English cities in the Localism Act are designed to give more freedom and a greater voice to local enterprises, which can influence vocational qualification design.

The Employability, Skills and Lifelong Learning Analytical Services Unit forms part of the Scottish Government and conducts research that supports policy developments in VET, higher education and lifelong learning. Topics for research include skills shortages and gaps and training opportunities. In Wales these functions are carried out by Knowledge and Analytical Services and the Labour Market Information Unit within the Welsh Government.

3.2 Design process and qualification designers

Strategic development of skills and lifelong learning in England is a shared remit between the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Education (DfE) with the latter responsible for students up to 19 years of age and BIS responsible for 19+ learners. Design of future VET will be influenced by the Wolf Review of pre-19 vocational education. Key recommendations of the Wolf Review regarding VET provision for 14-19-year olds are to include only a selection of good quality VET qualifications that are considered equivalent to the GCSE qualification to encourage students to choose qualifications with labour market value and also to support apprenticeships. BIS has published the *Skills for Sustainable Growth* strategy ⁽³³⁾ in response to the Wolf Review with details of a planned skills reform and the Wolf Review's recommendation of a pre-16 broad, general core curriculum; this has influenced the Government's recently announced changes to secondary education in England, which include a new lower secondary qualification to replace the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). The *Plan for Growth* ⁽³⁴⁾ strategy mentions that "the creation of a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe" is one of the key skills actions and

³² Building for Growth, Confederation of British Industry (CBI), http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/1051530/cbi_edu_education_skills_survey_2011.pdf

³³ Skills for Sustainable Growth, BIS, 2010, <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf>

³⁴ BIS and HM Treasury March 2011 – The Plan for Growth http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/2011budget_growth.pdf

measures to be achieved as the UK working age population has lower skills than the workforce in France, Germany, and the USA ⁽³⁵⁾.

Five key goals have been set by the UK Government to address these issues ⁽³⁶⁾:

- supporting more apprenticeships;
- housing more top universities than any other country except the USA;
- increasing participation of 16 – 24 year olds in employment or learning;
- narrowing the educational attainment gap, allowing everyone to meet their potential;
- establishing the lowest burdens from employment regulation in the EU.

The Strategic Partnership strategy provides the background for BIS financed projects in which enterprises, employer federations, trade unions, trade associations, public bodies and other stakeholders collaborate to solve sectoral and regional issues including learning and skills. The Diploma qualification was developed in England as part of an initiative to raise the perceived value of vocational education by creating a qualification that combines general academic study with specialist vocational education. The qualification was developed by the DfE, UKCES and the former Qualification and Curriculum Agency in consultation with Diploma Development Partnerships that consist of awarding organisations, employers and education providers.

The Scottish Government provides details of skills support in the *Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth* ⁽³⁷⁾ and the *Review of Post-16 Education and Vocational Training in Scotland* ⁽³⁸⁾ and started a reform of the post-16 education which aims to increase efficiency and flexibility in learner provision and value for money as well as better meet regional needs. A further aim is to simplify the skills system so it is easier to understand for both individuals and employers. The new Curriculum for Excellence includes more skills-for-work options for young people in addition to greater emphasis on entrepreneurship ⁽³⁹⁾. The group responsible for the review of the curriculum comprised representatives from national and local Government, higher and further education institutions, schools, regulators and awarding organisations in addition to business interest, teacher and parent organisations.

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government programme emphasises the importance of skills development in relation to economic growth and sustainable jobs. Qualifications are developed according to the CQFW Common Accord design

³⁵ BIS November 2010 - Skills for Sustainable Growth <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf>

³⁶ BIS and HM Treasury March 2011 – The Plan for Growth http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/2011budget_growth.pdf

³⁷ Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth, Scottish Government, 2010, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/04125111/0>

³⁸ Review of Post-16 Education and Vocational Training in Scotland, Scottish Government, August 2011, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/355876/0120235.pdf>.

³⁹ Innovation for Scotland, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/277577/0083339.pdf>

specifications, terminology, principles and systems required to ensure that the currency of assigned and awarded credit is fully quality assured.

The Northern Ireland Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) are working on implementation of the *Success through Skills – Transforming Futures* strategy, which aims to increase skill levels and collaboration between schools and FE colleges. The *Further Education Means Business* strategy emphasises further education's importance "to strengthen economic development, enhance social cohesion and advance the individual's skills and learning" ⁽⁴⁰⁾. The Entitlement Framework (EF) comes into force from 2013 building on the Vocational Enhancement Programme which encouraged collaboration between post-14 school provision and vocational FE college provision. Qualifications under the new Entitlement Framework will contain a range of courses that can be individually tailored to enhance students' employment chances and meet Government priority skills areas. The EF is a result of the recommendations from the *Further Education Strategy Review* and the *Post-primary Review* which emphasised the need for collaboration among schools and FE colleges as well as raising the profile of VET in general. DEL requires Northern Ireland colleges to submit annual development plans in line with the Government's priorities and adhere to Public Service Agreements (PSA) and Funded Learning Unit models regarding finances in relation to strategic priorities. One of the PSA aims is that 95% of all publicly funded college education and training ought to result in a qualification accredited within the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications ⁽⁴¹⁾. DEL furthermore works with higher and further education colleges and other stakeholders to develop the Widening Participation Strategy to involve under-represented groups, such as people from disadvantaged backgrounds and learners with disabilities or learning difficulties, in higher and further education.

In the UK, Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) and other standard setting organisations in association with employers develop, maintain and update National Occupational Standards (NOS) for training and qualification development purposes. SSCs also develop Sector Qualification Priority lists in relation to relevant employment and identifying skills gaps. NOS consist of units describing what individuals must be able to do, know and understand to perform specific jobs. NVQs / SVQs and many other vocationally related qualifications are largely based on NOS or, if relevant, learning outcomes that need to be met for certification. NOS are reviewed on a priority basis via Universal Services commissioning funded by the UKCES, to ensure programmes and qualifications include new technologies, innovations and working methods used in the labour market.

The largely unit- and outcomes-based VET system in the UK allows for flexibility in delivery of training. Adult learning in particular is often centred on individual learners' needs both in terms of content and delivery method. Training

⁴⁰ FE Means Business, DEL, 2007, www.delni.gov.uk/femeansbusinesspolicyproposals

⁴¹ Department for Employment and Learning, PSA Delivery Agreement 2, 2008, http://www.delni.gov.uk/updated_psa_2_-_skills_delivery_agreement-2.pdf

programmes aimed at young people, including apprenticeships, usually follow a more standardised structure. Qualifications and their broad content, unit and credit structure, learning outcomes and assessment standards are developed by awarding bodies in line with regulators' guidelines and industry experts' and other stakeholders' input.

Ofsted's newly introduced Learner View website allows FE college students in England to rate their college. The results will become available for users to search and view to gather an indication of the performance of a college.

Qualifications are developed by awarding organisations which operate independently from Government, but are regulated by competent authorities within the four nations. Most education and training programmes for young people that are publicly funded lead to a formally recognised qualification. This is part of the quality control process of VET.

CHAPTER 4

4. Promoting participation in vocational education and training

Below is a table showing that Government spending in England on 16-19 education and training is rising despite uncertain economic times and general cuts in public spending.

Table 8: Young Persons Learning Agency (YPLA) ⁽⁴²⁾ 16-19 funding statement for England ⁽⁴³⁾

Millions GBP	2010/11 Actual Spend	2011/12 Planned Spend	2012/13 Planned Spend
Total teaching and learning	7 407	7 458	7 528
Of which: Further Education (FE)	3 957	3 962	4 009
School Sixth Forms (incl. Academies & Special Educational Needs (SEN/ Special Schools post 16)	2 410	2 430	2 372
Apprenticeships	780	779	833
Specialist provision for learners with LDD ⁽⁴⁴⁾ 16-24	208	227	261
FE provision for learners with LDD 19-24	53	59	53

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) have announced that the overall investment in FE and skills education and training for students aged 19+ in the 2012/13 financial year will be £3.8 billion which will reduce to £3.3 billion by the 2014/15 financial year. The table below shows how 19+ education and training spending is spread:

⁴² The YPLA closed down in March 2012. Its functions have been transferred to the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

⁴³ 16-19 Funding Statement, December 2011, YPLA,
https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/16-19_Funding_Statement.pdf

⁴⁴ Learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities

Table 9: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), Skills Investment Statement for England 2011 – 2014 ⁽⁴⁵⁾

	2011/12 in GBP 000s	2012/13 in GBP 000s	2013/14 in GBP 000s
Adult skills budget	2 834 542	2 699 009	2 497 346
of which apprenticeships	644 000	698 000	726 000
Offender learning and skills service	133 600	131 800	130 400
Adult safeguarded learning	210 747	210 747	210 747
Learner support	151 398	163 768	176 800
Information Advice and Guidance	81 016	84 438	86 468
Skills infrastructure	61 922	71 446	55 161
Capital grants	304 724	278 658	224 871
Funding available to support the FE / skills sector	145 975	155 937	154 382
Government funding available for FE loans			129 000
Grand total	3 923.925	3 795 804	3 665 176

Research conducted by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education shows that the expenditure on adult skills development in the UK amounted to approximately £55 billion in 2007/08. The table below shows how the figure was spread across various sectors.

Table 10: Expenditure of adult skills development in England ⁽⁴⁶⁾

	National performance ⁽⁴⁷⁾	Public programmes ⁽⁴⁸⁾	Employee development ⁽⁴⁹⁾
Public sector	£12.9 billion	£1.2 billion	£7.7 billion £3.7 billion tax relief
Private sector			£16.2 billion
Voluntary and community sector	£0.13 billion	£0.5 billion	£3.15 billion
Individuals	£4.68 billion	£0.82 billion	£3.9 billion
Total	£17.71 billion	£2.52 billion	£34.65 billion

⁴⁵ BIS, New Challenges, New Chances, Skills Investment Statement 2011 – 2014: Investing in a World Class Skills System, <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/11-1374-skills-investment-statement-2011-2014.pdf>, 1 December 2011.

⁴⁶ Expenditure and funding models in lifelong learning, NIACE, 2010, <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/Expenditure-funding-models.pdf>

⁴⁷ Mainly post-compulsory college and university education.

⁴⁸ Mainly programmes in the voluntary and informal sector related to broader citizen and public value, such as libraries and museums.

⁴⁹ Training of staff for organisational ends.

An additional £16.25 million will be added to the Employability, Skills and Lifelong Learning Budget in Scotland as part of the Government's investment in construction, skills and the green economy in 2013/14. The current education budget and future spending plans are detailed in the table below.

Table 11: Scottish Draft Budget 2013/14, Education and Lifelong Learning ⁽⁵⁰⁾

Millions GBP	2012/13 Budget	2013/14 Draft Budget	2014/15 Plans
Learning	193.2	179.7	172.2
Children and Families	100.6	96.7	93.4
Employability Skills and Lifelong Learning	240.4	267.2	247.5
Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council	1 577.7	1 607.1	1 596.8
Student Awards Agency Scotland	558.0	744.4	854.6
Total Portfolio	2 669.9	2 895.1	2 964.5

The Welsh Government's budget for education spending is detailed below.

Table 12: Education and skills main expenditure, draft budget ⁽⁵¹⁾

Thousands GBP	2012/13 budget	2013/14 draft budget	2014/15 draft budget
Literacy and numeracy	5 512	7 512	7 512
Curriculum	122 653	125 060	125 060
Teaching and leadership	19 982	19 849	20 049
Qualifications	8 868	5 045	5 045
Post-16 education	555 875	563 006	563 006
Higher education	382 375	382 284	382 284
Education structures	3 943	2 943	2 943
Education standards	27 782	34 350	37 284
Pupil deprivation grant	32 433	36 370	36 246
ICT and information management systems	7 538	7 423	7 423
Total: Education and Training Standards	1 166 961	1 184 252	1 189 052
Employment and skills	34 986	31 657	31 657
Youth engagement and employment	18 663	19 746	19 746
Educational and careers choice	36 000	30 000	30 000
Total: Skilled Workforce	89 649	81 403	81 403

⁵⁰ Scottish Draft Budget, Education and Lifelong Learning, Scottish Government, September 2012, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/09/7829/7>

⁵¹ Education and skills main expenditure, Welsh Government, October 2012, <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/publications/121003draftbudgetexpallocations.pdf>

Access opportunities	4 984	0	0
Wellbeing of children and young people	62 630	47 288	47 423
Post-16 learner support	310 980	318 973	321 873
Pupil engagement	12 158	12 758	12 758
Total: Economic and Social Wellbeing and Reducing Inequality	390 752	379 019	382 054
Welsh language	24 976	25 076	25 076
Delivery support	4 191	4 049	4 049
Total Revenue: Education and Skills	1 676 529	1 673 799	1 681 634

The education budget in Northern Ireland is split between the Department for Education and the Department of Employment and Learning as shown below.

Table 13: Education budget Northern Ireland, current expenditure (⁵²)

Objective and spending area	2010/11 GBP m	2011/12 GBP m	2012/13 GBP m	2013/14 GBP m	2014/15 GBP m
Employment and skills	381.9	359.1	356.1	366.3	378.8
Higher education (including teacher training)	230.0	206.3	199.9	187.5	174.3
Student support and postgraduate awards	153.8	190.6	193.6	213.7	242.3
Labour market services	33.2	31.3	30.6	31.0	31.3
Total DEL	798.9	787.3	780.3	798.5	826.7
Schools mainstream	1 874.0	1 852.7	1 833.4	1 844.1	1 830.0
Schools infrastructure	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.3
Youth and community relations	29.5	30.5	31.4	32.2	33.1
Total DE	1 914.8	1 894.6	1 876.1	1 887.7	1 874.5

4.1 Incentives for individuals

The Right to Request Time to Train initiative is a legal right in England to allow workers in businesses with more than 250 employees to request time to take up work-related training. Training can be both formal and non-formal and take place in-house, at an external training organisation or be e-learning. The Trade Union Learning Fund is administered by Unionlearn and provides funding to develop the capacity of trade unions and Union Learning Representatives to work with employees, employers and learning providers, to encourage workplace learning. The

⁵² Budget 2011-15, Northern Ireland Executive, 2011,
http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/revised_budget_-_website_version.pdf

Scottish Union Learning Fund, the Wales Union Learning Fund and the Union Learning Fund for Northern Ireland fulfil similar roles.

The Youth Engagement and Employment Action Plan is the Welsh Government's plan to help young people move back into education, training and employment. Measures taken to achieve this include the Jobs Growth Wales that supports training and work experience. Individual Learning Accounts (ILA) are payments for unemployed 16+ year olds not currently in education in Scotland who wish to learn a new skill or develop their skills further within recognised training programmes. The review of ILAs in 2010/11 resulted in an enhanced focus on vocational and credited courses. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) organises the Training for Work (TfW) scheme in Scotland which funds unemployed people looking for work. TfW training must be tailored to local needs although a formal qualification outcome is not a mandatory element of the programme.

An Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of up to GBP60 per week is available to Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish students between the ages of 16 and 18 depending on the students' and their families' financial situation. The EMA is no longer available in England, but has been replaced with Bursary Funds available from schools and colleges for 16-19-year olds who struggle to afford the cost of their studies. Bursary Funds are specifically targeted towards vulnerable young people, such as those in care, on income support or those with disabilities, but also to other students struggling to afford transport, food or equipment costs.

4.2 Incentives for enterprises

The UK Government has made available an Apprenticeship Grant for Employers incentive (AGE 16 to 24) in England, providing financial assistance for businesses employing less than 1000 people to take on 16 to 24-year old apprentices within a formal apprenticeship programme. From April 2012, the Small Employer Incentive to Employ an Apprentice has also become available in England in the shape of payments to small enterprises that currently do not employ any apprentices, but wish to do so. The UKCES and the Skills Funding Agency furthermore administer the Growth and Innovation Fund (England only) ⁽⁵³⁾. GBP60 million has been made available for 2012/13 to help employers in England develop their own innovative skills solutions, which include increasing and updating the skill level of employees. The Employer Investment Fund ⁽⁵⁴⁾ is open to SSCs and has been created to stimulate employer investment in skills and their most effective use in the workplace.

Flexible Training Opportunities funding, delivered by SDS, helps Scottish businesses with up to 100 employees with up to half the costs towards individual employee training, which includes formal qualifications and units, other industry recognised awards and Masterclasses. The Young Recruits Programme is a Welsh

⁵³ GIF, SFA, <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/employers/growth-innovation-fund/>

⁵⁴ EIF, UKCES, <http://www.ukces.org.uk/ourwork/investment/eif>.

Government initiative that provides financial support to employers to take on additional apprentices in the 16-24 age bracket onto high quality apprenticeship programmes.

4.3 Incentives for providers

The Skills Funding Agency allocates funding to colleges and other providers of qualifications registered within the QCF that operate within the adult and skills sector in England. A simplification process of the 16-19 funding formula is under way and is due to be fully implemented in 2013/14. This is envisaged to free resources for providers to enable them to be more accountable, innovative and responsive to students and employers.

4.4 Guidance and counselling, structures and services

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) provides a Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service across Scotland. SDS works in partnership with education providers and job centres. Targets specified in the *More Choices, More Chances* strategy include young people at risk of becoming NEET. SDS has also set up the My World of Work website containing CIAG resources. The National Careers Service (NCS) was launched in England in April 2012 to provide advice on learning, training and employment for young people and adults in one place. An increasing amount of information is available online, but is also offered face-to face (for those aged over 19) and by phone (also for those under 19). The National Apprenticeship Service in England runs an Apprenticeship Vacancy Service, which includes an online search function. Careers Wales furthermore offers an all age careers guidance service. The Welsh strategy for further development of careers services is outlined in *Future ambitions: Developing careers services in Wales* ⁽⁵⁵⁾. Careers Wales has also introduced an Apprenticeship Matching Service available for employers and individual applicants. The Careers Service Northern Ireland also provides an all age CIAG service regarding employment, education and training opportunities. Northern Ireland Careers Services Advisors function in schools and job centres in Northern Ireland through a Service Level Agreement. The *Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy* is being implemented. The strategy has been developed around the key themes of improving careers education, access to careers information, careers advice and guidance as well as the quality and professional development.

CIAG is also offered in schools, colleges, higher education institutions and third sector bodies across the UK. Careers advice is available from trade unions as well and Unionlearn has developed their Strategy for Supporting Learners through their Union Learning Representatives, specifically targeting those who are disadvantaged in the workplace. Schools in England now have a duty to provide access to

⁵⁵ Future ambitions: Developing Careers services in Wales, Welsh Government, <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/research/101115futureambitionsen.pdf>. 2010

independent careers guidance for pupils in school years 9 to 11. Careers education and guidance is also provided by schools and colleges in Wales for students aged 13-19 and careers guidance forms part of the Learning for Life and Work area of learning in the lower secondary level curriculum in Northern Ireland schools. In England, FE colleges and higher education institutions also have advice centres and careers programmes on offer. Government funding for IAG provision in schools forms part of the overall school budget and it is left up to the discretion of the education provider how much is spent on IAG. Local authorities no longer have an obligation to provide IAG, but still have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people to take part in education and training.

4.5 Challenges, difficulties, success stories

Careers advice is offered by a range of professionals, including teachers and careers advisers employed in the education, social work and youth work sectors as well as job centre personnel. Their training varies from in-service training to formal and professional careers guidance qualifications. The Skills Commissions report *Inspiration and Aspiration: Realising our Potential in the 21st Century* ⁽⁵⁶⁾ suggested a number of improvements to the IAG service in the UK. The Careers Profession Task Force's report *Towards a strong careers profession* ⁽⁵⁷⁾ furthermore made detailed recommendations on raising the professional nature of the workforce. One area of concern identified was that careers advisers were too often under-qualified. Following on from this, the newly established Institute of Employability Professionals has recently introduced qualifications in employability services along with Education Development International, and the Careers Profession Alliance (CPA) is working towards creating one unified professional body, the Careers Development Institute, by 2013 which will maintain a register of Career Development Professionals that was launched in May 2012, and develop a framework for professional development of careers advisors in the UK. There are concerns that the recent switch in England from the Connexions service to the new system which includes the NCS has resulted in a service that is not yet fully operational especially in relation to face-to-face careers guidance for young people.

Qualifications in Career Development, such as those developed by LLUK, are available at QCF levels 4, 5 and 6, but the CPA's current voluntary registration requires a level 6 qualification for full registration. Qualifications at postgraduate level are also being developed. Scottish Careers Advisors are required to hold a postgraduate qualification in career guidance and development in addition to an SDS training plan. Northern Ireland Advisors in the Careers Service NI similarly should possess a relevant postgraduate level qualification as well as a work-based qualification.

⁵⁶ Inspiration and Aspiration: Realising our Potential in the 21st Century, 2008, <http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/fckimages/Inspiration%20and%20Aspiration.pdf>

⁵⁷ Towards a strong careers profession, Careers Profession Task Force, October 2012, <http://www.icg-uk.org/hres/towards%20a%20strong%20careers%20profession%20%20october%202010.pdf>.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Student Loans Company, the Skills Funding Agency and the HM Revenue and Customs are working towards introducing FE loans for learners in England wishing to study formal FE qualifications registered at QCF level 3 and above. These loans will be available to the 2013/14 academic year and it is hoped will increase participation in further education, although VET providers have expressed some concern over the impact on those wanting to learn who now have to take on the debt of a loan. Increased funding for adult apprentices has seen a commensurate rise in the number of new apprenticeships. The UK Government pledged to fund up to 360 000 apprentices (young and adult) in 2011 and plan to increase numbers of apprentices and employers offering apprenticeship places in the coming years. However, the UK faces a challenge in strengthening the impact on the value of vocational training for benefit claimants in light of funding only provided for full qualification and not individual units. Unemployed people may in some cases only require certain units of study programmes towards improving their employment prospects.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AGE 16-24	Apprenticeship Grant for Employers
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CCEA	Council for Curriculum and Examinations Assessment
CIAG	Careers Information, Advice and Guidance
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CPA	Careers Profession Alliance
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CQFW	Credit and Qualifications Framework of Wales
DE	Department of Education (Northern Ireland)
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland)
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (Wales)
DTLLS	Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector
EBP	Education Business Partnership
ECVET	European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training
EF	Entitlement Framework
EFA	Education Funding Agency
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
FE	Further Education
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
FQHEIS	Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland
GCE A level	General Certificate of Education Advanced level
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GTCS	General Teaching Council for Scotland
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IfL	Institute for Learning
IiP	Investors in People
ILA	Individual Learning Accounts
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLUK	Lifelong Learning UK
LSIS	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
NCS	National Careers Service
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NPA	National Progression Award
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Academy
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PSA	Public Service Agreement
QCDA	Qualification and Curriculum Development Agency

QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
QTLS	Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RARPA	Recognising And Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
TfW	Training for Work
UKCES	UK Commission for Employment and Skills
UTC	University Technical College
VCE A level	Vocational Certificate of Education at Advanced level
VET	Vocational Education and Training
YPLA	Young People's Learning Agency

Annex 1: Table

Table 1: Overview of UK education authorities

England	Policy making authorities	Standards and qualification development	Regulators and inspection agencies	Education providers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department for Education (DfE) – school education • Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) - post-16 further education college and higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) for National Occupational Standards (NOS) • UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) • Awarding bodies – curricula • National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) - apprenticeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) - school, further education and non-degree higher education qualifications • Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) – schools and further education colleges • Professional bodies – regulated professions, programmes • Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) – higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Academies • Further education colleges • Independent training providers • Higher education institutions

Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government – all levels of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) for National Occupational Standards (NOS) • UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) • Awarding bodies – curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Scotland - schools and further education colleges • Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) - school, further education and non-degree higher education qualifications • Professional bodies - regulated professions, programmes • Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) – higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Tertiary colleges • Private providers
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government / Department for Education and Skills (DfES) - all levels of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) for National Occupational Standards (NOS) • UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) • Awarding bodies – curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department for Education and Skills (DfES) - school, further education and non-degree higher education qualifications • Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn) - schools and further education colleges • Professional bodies - regulated professions, programmes • Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) – higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Further education institutions • Colleges • Higher education institutions

Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education (DE) – schools and teacher training • Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) – further education colleges and higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) for National Occupational Standards (NOS) • UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) • Awarding Bodies - curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) - non vocational qualifications • Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) - vocational qualifications • Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) – schools, further education colleges and other providers delivering publicly-funded training programmes • Professional bodies - regulated professions, programmes • Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) – higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Further education colleges • Private, community and voluntary sector providers • Training organisations • Higher education institutions
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