

Study Programmes for 16-19 year olds

Consultation Response Form

The closing date is: 4 January 2012

Your comments must reach us by that date.

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Education website (www.education.gov.uk/consultations).

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Reason for confidentiality:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
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Please mark an X in one box below that best describes you as a respondent.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General FE Colleges (GFEs) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sixth Form Colleges (SFCs) | <input type="checkbox"/> Academies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schools with Sixth Forms (SSFs) | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Private Providers (IPPs) | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Specialist Providers (ISPs) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Authorities (LAs) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provider or Stakeholder Organisations | <input type="checkbox"/> Awarding Organisations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learner | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Association | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Please Specify: The Sixth Form Colleges' Forum represents 92 of the 94 officially designated Sixth Form Colleges in England.

Q1) Will the measures listed in the consultation document be sufficient to ensure that the 16-19 study programmes principles are followed?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

- Although they are not compulsory we believe that in broad terms providers will adhere to the outline principles and oversight by Ofsted will provide some quality assurance.
- However, the scrutiny that Ofsted can provide will be necessarily limited and this may be particularly a problem in school inspections where there is no longer a requirement to grade sixth form provision.

Q2) How will this programme of study need to be tailored for part-time students?

Comments:

- Part-time programmes will need to retain coherence and have elements of support activity, work experience and English and maths where appropriate.
- As we move to full participation up to age 18, there should be less demand for part-time programmes and therefore no reason why all the outline principles and elements should not be present.

Q3) How will the proposals affect different providers?

Comments:

- The main impact of these proposals on Sixth Form Colleges will be the requirement for those without Maths and English at GCSE Grade C or above.
- English is less of an issue as most Colleges already insist that students study English to at least GCSE Grade C and success rates in Colleges are generally good.
- Mathematics is much more problematic and many Colleges have abandoned the requirement for all students to follow Maths to at least GCSE Grade C. If this is to be reintroduced then good alternative pathways must be found for students to achieve mathematics or functional maths to the required level.
- There is a history of disaffection and repeated failure in Mathematics which can seriously undermine the whole of a student's programme and this history should not be repeated.
- It will take great skill to create the stepping stones and pathways that all can follow successfully.
- We are concerned that this requirement, coupled with an increasing Ofsted reliance on success rates as the primary accountability measure will encourage some providers to restrict entry to only those students with prior maths and English qualifications at GCSE grade C or above.

Professor Wolf's report stressed the importance of all young people studying English and maths, and particularly achieving A*-C in GCSE English and maths. As part of the implementation of Professor Wolf's recommendations, in the short term we will set out a clear expectation that English and maths must be part of a study programme for those students who have not achieved A*-C in GCSE in these subjects. It is important that providers support as many of their students as possible to achieve at least a C at GCSE as it is the GCSE that offers the best employment prospects and opportunities for progression.

In addition, the Secretary of State has signalled his ambition for the vast majority of 16-19 year olds to be studying maths within 10 years.

Q4) In line with this ambition for all to be studying maths post-16 in the next decade, we would be interested to know what you feel could be done to encourage more young people who have already achieved GCSE A*-C to study maths. What would this provision look like?

Comments:

- Previous attempts to 'bolt-on' an additional maths qualification through key skills or similar has been met with considerable student resistance. Integrating mathematics into subjects where it has a use and obvious benefit – science, geography, psychology, design, engineering is much more successful.
- Universities and employers should be encouraged to actively promote the benefits of additional Maths qualifications by showing how these qualifications can support successful progression. At present there is no real incentive for students to follow Mathematics beyond GCSE as it is perceived as a 'hard' subject with little practical relevance.
- Internships and other work experience can be a platform to encourage further study in mathematics provided the employer shows how mathematical skill really supports activities in the workplace and career progression.

Q5) What can we do to simplify areas where colleges/employers have particular concerns offering students opportunities in the workplace, e.g. insurance, health and safety?

Comments:

- Insurance and Health & Safety are often perceived as barriers but their removal or simplification can also create barriers where the employer is loathe to take on an intern/placement for fear of litigation if something goes wrong or the student gets injured.
- The basic principle should be that employers should afford the same rights and protections to interns/placements as to any employee.

Q6) What more can we do to remove barriers to providing high quality internships?

Comments:

- It takes enormous time and effort to build relationships with employers and this is the key to good placements. Current funding cutbacks are making this more difficult because Colleges cannot afford to invest someone's time to do this job effectively.
- A central government funded employers' scheme which managed a directory and register of places would be an efficient way of finding good placements. Rather than all providers building these for themselves there would be a central directory/website to manage all placements.
- Where there is much competition for places (Universities, Colleges, schools all competing in one area) you may need a quota system to avoid all the places going to one 'favoured' provider.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

All DfE public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

In addition, SFBac publications were provided to support the SFCF response.