14–19:
opportunity and excellence

annexes

department for
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Contents

VOLUME 2

Annex 1

Inquiry into A Level standards

1 The issues raised by headteachers' representatives and some examiners, in September 2002, about the grading of last year's A and AS Level examinations led to widespread concern about the stability of the A Level system. Mike Tomlinson was asked to carry out an independent inquiry to ensure that the concerns expressed were carefully and thoroughly investigated.

2 The high level of concern last autumn among students, parents, teachers and the media, was, in part, a reflection of the fact that A Levels have been the 'Gold Standard' qualification for many years. The prime concern is to restore confidence in the system and ensure that A Levels provide accurate, reliable and respected recognition of the attainments of all young people who take them. Pupils, teachers and parents starting or contemplating their AS and A2s should be aware of the continuing importance we place on AS and A2 Levels and their development.

3 Mike Tomlinson's two reports provide a sound basis for restoring confidence in the A Level system. The QCA and the relevant Awarding Bodies are urgently taking forward Mr Tomlinson's recommendations to secure the effective delivery of the 2003 examinations and to ensure that the problems of last summer cannot be repeated. In his final report, Mike Tomlinson offers an assurance that the actions he has recommended will "…secure the standards and integrity of next year's [2003] examinations." Mike Tomlinson, for the 2003 examinations only, will observe and report publicly to the QCA Board on the awarding process.

4 While the immediate need is for short-term stability, this should not prevent us from making necessary improvements to the system. Mike Tomlinson's report recommended a number of medium and longer term improvements to the arrangements for setting, maintaining and judging A Level standards in order to provide assurances that the A Level standard is being maintained year on year. It is important

that the correct balance is found between the need for a period of consolidation and the need for further evolution of the A Level system. Where change is necessary we can give an assurance that it will not be made without timely and effective consultation.

5 Mike Tomlinson's final report makes a number of medium- and long-term recommendations which have implications beyond the A Level examination system, and which need to be considered as part of the wider development of our 14–19 reforms.

6 He recommends that, in the long term, the A Level system should be simplified so that AS and A2 examinations are assessed, graded and awarded separately. The purpose and need for such a change needs to be looked at alongside developing thinking in this paper on how best to mark students' successful completion of the 14–19 phase of their education. The Working Group on 14–19 Reform is asked to consider the merits and implications of decoupling the AS and A2 to create two free-standing qualifications, as recommended by Mike Tomlinson.

7 In his final report Mike Tomlinson also recommended that, as part of the development of our 14–19 reforms, the scope should be examined for reducing the total burden of external assessment derived from GCSEs and A Levels. The 14–19 Working Group is being asked to consider this and, where appropriate, make recommendations.

8 Mike Tomlinson's report calls for increased professionalisation of examiners. The Department clearly has a major part to play in creating the conditions for greater professionalisation. This is being taken forward with the QCA and the Awarding Bodies.

9 Mike Tomlinson makes recommendations for increased use of ICT in qualifications, both in marking and as a medium for examining and assessment. The QCA will be establishing an expert group consisting of its fellow regulators and Awarding Bodies to take this work forward. The QCA have been asked to develop costed options for the possible investment of public funds.

Annex 2

The 14–19 curriculum and qualifications

1 This annex sets out in detail the action we plan to take following the Green Paper consultation on the 14–19 curriculum and on qualifications.

The 14–19 curriculum

2 The Green Paper confirmed our commitment that during their period of compulsory education all young people should follow a broad and balanced programme. At the same time there was considerable support from both teachers and young people for our proposals to introduce greater flexibility and choice in the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Our conclusion is that the curriculum should provide for greater flexibility and soften the transition at 16, and provide greater coherence through to 19, whatever programme a student chooses to follow after 16.

The curriculum at Key Stage 4

3 The Green Paper proposed that subjects should be mandatory for all pupils during the 14–16 phase only if they met one of two overlapping criteria:

- they provide an essential basis for progression across all areas of learning, and for keeping young people's options open; or
- they are essential for personal development, contributing to young people's spiritual, cultural, social and moral development.

4 This commanded widespread support, so we now intend to amend the curriculum at Key Stage 4 so that:

- English, mathematics, ICT, science, citizenship and PE remain compulsory within the National Curriculum;

- work-related learning is added at Key Stage 4 as a requirement for all pupils; and

- religious education, sex education and careers education remain as statutory requirements.

5 As explained in Volume 1, Chapter 3, we would expect to see the development of ICT skills delivered through other subjects. In due course, it may be appropriate to withdraw ICT as a separate National Curriculum Requirement. Similarly we believe there is scope to co-ordinate better the delivery of citizenship, religious education, sex education and careers education. We will wish to consider how such co-ordination can be promoted through developments in the way these areas are specified.

6 This reduced statutory requirement reflects our trust in the commitment and capacity of schools, working together and with further education providers, to continue to offer all young people a broad and balanced experience.

Work-related learning

7 Consultation supported our view that a broad and balanced education should include some work-related learning, so that young people are fully prepared for an adult life in which they will contribute to the country's economic well-being. This applies as much to young people who will progress through to higher education as to those who intend to start work – perhaps in a Modern Apprenticeship – at an earlier stage.

8 Employers have been critical about how prepared young people are for the world of work, both in their ability to apply their learning in a work context, and in their understanding of the skills, attitudes and behaviours that are required in the workplace. Making work-related learning part of all young people's learning post-14 will help to address these concerns. Young people's engagement in this area as well as in other activities, often out of school, will develop and help provide evidence of the wider key skills important to employers.

9 We do not expect that this new requirement will need additional curriculum space, as it should be delivered across the curriculum rather than as a discrete subject. We intend to make work-related learning a requirement at Key Stage 4 to ensure that all young people receive suitable and quality provision. This can include the period of work experience that most young people undertake during Key Stage 4.

10 Young people should develop some understanding of the day-to-day expectations of employees, their working practices and environments and their rights and responsibilities. They should also have opportunities to develop their enterprise capabilities, addressed by Howard Davies in his report: *Enterprise and the Economy in Education*, including the ability to handle uncertainty and respond positively to change, to create and implement new ideas and ways of doing things, to make reasonable risk/reward assessments and to act upon them in their personal and working lives. The development of this enterprise capability will be a clearly articulated outcome of the work-related learning strand at Key Stage 4. Alongside careers education – on which new non-statutory guidance will be issued in time for schools to review their existing careers education programmes for September 2003 – young people will develop a knowledge of the range of progression and career opportunities available to them.

11 Given that work-related learning is already well established in many schools as an option at Key Stage 4, we will be asking the QCA to consider what further guidance and support in sharing good practice, including integrating work-related learning across the curriculum, might be needed.

Entitlement at Key Stage 4

12 We intend to proceed with our proposal that modern foreign languages and design and technology should become entitlements within the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Schools will no longer be obliged to teach these subjects to all pupils, but will be required to ensure that they are available to any pupil wishing to study them. We intend to extend this type of entitlement to ensure that a school must also make available to pupils a subject in the arts and a subject in the humanities.

13 How schools provide the entitlement to access to these subjects will be a matter for local decision, and it could be met, for example, in

collaboration with other institutions. We will be asking the QCA to advise us on the appropriate nature and scope of the entitlement in these four areas. When curriculum changes take effect, we will ask OfSTED to monitor the impact of the changes carefully to ensure that entitlements are available as intended.

14 We have reflected most carefully on the concerns expressed during consultation – and during the passage of the Education Act – about the movement of modern foreign languages from compulsory requirement to entitlement. Our recently-published National Languages Strategy set out our plans to secure more firmly and effectively the place of language learning in society in general.

15 We will deliver our commitment to introduce a primary entitlement to language learning, so that by 2010 every primary school pupil at Key Stage 2 has the opportunity to study a language, supported by a new voluntary recognition system, to complement existing national qualification frameworks and the Common European Framework and give people credit for their language skills. Those who have acquired new language skills would have them accredited by certificate in a way that would have universal currency. This recognition system will be available for all learners, including school pupils, adult learners and university undergraduates. We want to move towards a position where young people choose to study languages rather than being forced to do so. At the same time, it will be for schools to decide how best to meet the needs of pupils who have an aptitude for languages; our intentions for changing language learning from requirement to entitlement reflect a change in the relatively inflexible statutory position and do not change the ability of individual schools to make language compulsory for their pupils if they wish to do so. Many schools may do so as a matter of school policy.

16 Design and technology will also continue to play an important role in the National Curriculum. As increased numbers of pupils opt for more substantial work-related learning programmes from the age of 14, we want to see the creative, practical and applied skills fostered by design and technology playing a key role. We are committed to a modernised design and technology curriculum, which will provide pupils with skills that contribute to adult and working life. But, as with modern foreign

languages, we do not think that design and technology should be required study for all pupils.

17 We will continue to support schools as they introduce new technologies. Over £1 million has been invested in training teachers in CAD/CAM, following its introduction in the 2000 revised National Curriculum. We are funding teacher and curriculum development projects in electronics, textiles software and primary food technology, which will update teacher skills and enhance the curriculum. We also want to encourage creative approaches to the design and making process. We will commission the QCA to carry out a research and development project to explore a new model of assessment that would reward good practice in design and technology and encourage creativity.

ICT

18 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) prepares young people to participate in a rapidly changing world in which work and other activities are increasingly dependent on access to, and skilful use of, technology. Young people begin learning ICT from the age of 5 and, through primary and early secondary school, develop the skills of exploration, analysis and presentation using ICT. Increasingly, ICT offers all learners access to ideas and experiences from a wide range of communities and cultures. It is important that all young people are able to use ICT responsibly, creatively and safely. Once people enter Key Stage 4, they need to progress and consolidate their ICT learning in a range of situations and purposes. Evidence suggests that ICT makes an important impact on achievement across the curriculum. We believe ICT is an essential part of learning to be continued and developed within the14–19 phase.

Other changes

19 We intend to proceed with proposals in the Green Paper to review the programme of study for science to achieve a core of science suitable for all learners. We will ask the QCA to take this work forward.

20 We remain committed to 2 hours of high-quality PE and sport each week provided in and out of school for all up to the age of 16. We shall ask the QCA to consider what guidance might be helpful to support

teachers in using the present programme of study to emphasise physical fitness, health and well-being.

Making the changes

21 The detailed implementation of these changes and the necessary regulations will be taken forward carefully. They will be the subject of further consultation and approval by both Houses of Parliament. As a first step, we will ask the QCA to advise us on the details of the various changes. The timing of the changes is subject to detailed planning but will not take effect before the academic year 2004/05 at the earliest. However, proposed changes to the disapplication arrangements will allow some increase in flexibility in 2003/04.

Disapplication of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4

22 Currently, arrangements allow for up to two of modern foreign languages, design and technology, and science to be disapplied for a pupil in order:

- to allow a pupil to engage in extended work-related learning;
- to allow a pupil to emphasise a particular curriculum area; or
- to allow a pupil to consolidate his/her learning across the curriculum.

Science may be disapplied only for the purpose of extending work-related learning.

23 The Green Paper acknowledged that these arrangements are unsatisfactory. They are complicated and are poorly understood by schools and parents. The language is negative, and despite their intention the arrangements are widely perceived as remedial. The curriculum changes we have outlined above will make these disapplication arrangements redundant.

24 We have already simplified the current arrangements and guidance has made it clear that disapplication need no longer be considered exceptional. But it will still be some time before the key curriculum changes we are planning allow the removal altogether of these disapplication provisions. We are currently consulting on a proposal

to align the regulations with our intentions for changes to the statutory curriculum.

These changes would:

- enable modern foreign languages and design and technology to be disapplied for any purpose that will benefit the young person educationally – effectively positioning the subjects as entitlements; and

- retain the current arrangements for science until a revised programme of study is in place, appropriate and relevant for all young people at Key Stage 4.

25 In order to promote and protect breadth within the curriculum, we intend that disapplication should continue to be to a maximum of two subjects.

26 These interim changes to the disapplication arrangements would take effect in time for the 2003/2004 academic year.

Entitlement after age 16

27 Choice and flexibility at Key Stage 4 must lead on to coherent and worthwhile programmes continuing from 16. The Green Paper emphasised that all young people should gain a solid grounding in the key skills that will equip them for future study, personal development and effective competition in the labour markets of the 21st century. It is essential that as many young people as are able to do so reach a reasonable standard in numeracy, literacy and ICT.

28 There was overwhelming support in the consultation for our proposal that all young people be entitled to continue until age 19 with study towards literacy, numeracy and ICT awards until at least Level 2 (for example, a good GCSE or the corresponding Level 2 key skill qualification) is achieved. We therefore intend to make this entitlement available from the 2004/2005 academic year.

GCSEs and A Levels

29 We intend the following action to implement and build on the Green Paper proposals:

- new GCSEs in vocational subjects were introduced in September last year. A wide range of support material has been issued to schools and colleges during the summer term to give them time to prepare;

- the QCA has a programme underway to develop new GCSEs, building on the momentum established by the introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects. This work is designed to strengthen the vocational element within the GCSE family of qualifications;

- there was strong support for our suggestion that 'hybrid' GCSEs should be introduced with a common core and optional vocational or general units. Combining general and vocational elements into a single GCSE bridges the gap between the two and provides for later progression along either general or vocational pathways. The QCA is developing pilot GCSEs for teaching from September 2003 in science and in geography-related areas – and these will be used to test out approaches to 'hybrid' qualifications. The two pilots will clarify the practicalities of integrating vocational and general study within a single specification;

- from September 2004, the QCA plan to introduce, under controlled conditions, other GCSE titles in vocational subjects that build on the existing provision. The QCA will consider within the development programme a number of single GCSE-sized qualifications;

- the GCSE development programme will also contribute to the work in hand to identify successor qualifications to the foundation and intermediate GNVQs;

- there was strong support too in consultation for the suggestion that the sharp distinction between general and vocational subjects, and their respective labels, should be abolished. We have asked the QCA to advise on moving to a single label for A Levels. This will signal the equal value we place on the vocational and academic progression routes; and

- we said in the Green Paper that we would develop an A Level in critical thinking. We will ask the QCA to start development work with a view to introducing criteria for such an award to complement the existing AS Level and Advanced Extension Award (AEA).

Pace and progression

30 There was extensive support in the consultation, especially from young people, for the principle that students should be able to progress at a pace that is consistent with their abilities. There was support too for our view that some students might take GCSEs early or skip them, to start AS Level courses earlier. Others might take GCSEs after 16 if the extra time would help them to secure good grades. However, there were concerns that accelerated pace could harm a student's social and emotional development, and that greater breadth could be more important than early qualifications attainment.

31 The emphasis in the Key Stage 3 strategy of motivating, stretching and supporting young people will underpin their readiness to proceed more quickly or slowly later in the 14–19 phase. Pace should be seen in an 11–19 context. But whatever the appropriate pace for young people, arrangements need to be set in the context of clear progression routes, and a consistent approach across key stages and institutions, so that students are not subjected to a "stop-start" experience with periods when they simply mark time.

32 There is already much good practice in this area but it needs to be more widespread. We do not intend to be prescriptive about what should happen in particular circumstances. This is best left to local judgement and discretion. Instead, we intend to encourage greater use of existing flexibilities and freedoms supported by practical guidance drawn from the existing good practice in schools and colleges:

- we will ask the QCA to develop, by September 2003, further guidance on curriculum and staff planning for different paced learning by individuals, drawing on experience from the 14–19 pathfinder projects;

- the QCA will continue to work with the Awarding Bodies to facilitate the transition from AS to A2 for students who embark early on AS

courses, and then transfer to another institution for an A2 from a different Awarding Body;

- we will record in the secondary school performance tables any AS Levels taken early, and consider whether other changes to the tables are needed to make sure that they do not discourage early or late entry for qualifications, where this is in the student's individual interests;

- arrangements for those with special educational needs, who comprise up to 20% of pupils, need to ensure proper support and access to the curriculum so that pupils can make progress at a pace that is appropriate to them and makes the most of their abilities; and

- the role of the Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth will develop to provide for gifted and talented young people throughout the 11–19 age range.

Wider activities

33 The Green Paper set out clearly how the wider activities pursued by many young people outside the formal curriculum make a critical contribution to personal development. The benefits are widely welcomed by both employers and by higher education. In our consultation young people said they would welcome a greater acknowledgement of activities and achievements outside the classroom. Our Working Group on 14–19 Reform will consider this as part of their consideration of a unified framework of awards at 19.

34 All young people should be involved in wider activities and experience during the 14–19 phase of their education. In drawing up and reviewing Individual Learning Plans (see paragraph 3.44), young people should be encouraged to consider how to integrate such activities into their learning. The Connexions Service has an important role in signposting young people towards these activities.

35 The inclusion of citizenship in the National Curriculum, the addition of work-related learning for all young people at Key Stage 4, the commitment to two hours of high-quality PE and sport each week, provided in and out of school for all up to the age of 16, will broaden horizons. From the recent spending review we have allocated additional

resources, so that by 2005–06, every young person will have some experience not just of the world of work, but also of business and enterprise, before they leave school. Further details will be announced in the Spring. Further opportunities both pre and post-16 include the Summer Activities initiative and the Millennium Volunteers programme.

36 We believe too that creativity should form a central part of the education of all our young people. We enjoy an excellent international reputation for the vitality, quality and range of our creative industries, our arts, museums and galleries, our architecture and our wider cultural heritage. We will continue to work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in ensuring that the education and cultural communities work closely together to deliver opportunities to 14–19 year-olds both within and outside formal education. In particular, the Government will at least double the size of the Creative Partnerships programme, which is already giving young people in disadvantaged areas of the country the chance to work on exciting projects with artists and other creative professionals.

37 The Learning and Skills Council's funding arrangements for Curriculum 2000 provide for enrichment activities post-16. The Department, together with the LSC and the QCA, has established a series of development projects to stimulate thinking and develop best practice in post-16 active citizenship provision. These build on citizenship within the National Curriculum and will help to promote a citizenship focus throughout the 14–19 continuum. Their outcomes will inform decisions on the expansion of post-16 citizenship provision from 2004/05 onwards.

Annex 3

Supporting local delivery

1 This annex sets out in detail progress and decisions following the Green Paper that will encourage local collaboration and innovation, and help schools, colleges and other local partners to deliver 14–19 learning that reflect local needs and circumstances. Many of the actions set out in this annex will be taken forward as part of, or in concert with, the *Success for All* reform strategy for providers in the learning and skills sector published last November.

Increased flexibility at Key Stage 4

2 The Increased Flexibility programme started in September 2002. It draws together schools and colleges to create over 270 local partnerships. We expect the partnerships to involve over 2,000 schools and 30,000 pupils. The programme will give these young people access to specialist vocational teaching expertise and additional resources by:

- enabling 14–16 year-olds to study at a college, or with a training provider, for one or two days a week throughout Key Stage 4;
- providing opportunities to work towards worthwhile qualifications (including the new GCSEs in vocational subjects); and
- giving young people the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding in a work context.

3 Most partnerships will receive £100,000 funding, split over 2002–04. A few will get more than that (over £200,000 in some cases) to take account of rural issues or other local factors.

4 The programme is being supported by Learning and Skills Development Agency consultants offering expert advice direct to schools. More than 160 local networks of practitioners will share experience and expertise at grass roots level. Local LSCs have overall responsibility for funding, monitoring and support arrangements.

The programme will be closely monitored and evaluated – both by independent researchers working for the DfES (NFER) and by Ofsted.

5 A further tranche of funding will be made available to the programme in 2003–2005 and will enable a second cohort of over 30,000 14–16 year-olds to begin part-time vocational courses from September 2003.

Institutional leadership

6 Developing the necessary leadership, management and organisational skills in secondary schools and colleges to operate a more complex, flexible and collaborative set of 14–19 arrangements on the ground will be a challenging task.

7 The programmes run by the National College for School Leadership, for headteachers in post as well for those aspiring to headship and for middle managers, will be adjusted where necessary in the light of new demands and opportunities for leadership development emerging from the pathfinders. The Networked Learning Communities Programme may be of particular value to leaders involved in collaboration between institutions, and we anticipate that future cohorts of NLCs might include networks involving organisations from both the school and college sector.

8 The new leadership college will be developing and covering leaders in the learning and skills and higher education sectors. It will deliver a range of professional development programmes for leaders and senior managers in the sector. The college will draw on the experience of the pathfinders to ensure that they cover the skills required by the 14–19 agenda.

Initial Teacher Training

9 This transformation of 11–19 teaching must be reflected in arrangements for the initial training and continuing professional development of teachers building on the experience of the national strategies at primary and Key Stage 3 level:

- we shall monitor the operation of the new standards and requirements for ITT, that were introduced in September 2002, to ensure that trainees going into secondary education:

- are aware of the arrangements for progression through the 14–19 phase in school, college and work-based settings;

- are familiar with Key Skills as specified by the QCA and the National Qualifications Framework;

- know the progression within and from their own subject and the range of qualifications to which their subject contributes; and

- understand how courses are combined in students' curricula.

- learners in the learning and skills sector have a right to expect that teachers and other staff are appropriately qualified. We propose setting a target that, by 2006, 90% of full-time and 60% of part-time teachers in FE colleges will be qualified or enrolled on appropriate courses. This is a major task. We will be setting a target for FE colleges now, but aim that all staff across the sector should be qualified by 2010, except new recruits. We also propose to develop regulations under the Education Act 2002 to raise the quality of initial teacher training and enable a focus of resources to provide quality teacher training in shortage subjects. These regulations will ensure an increasing focus on raising standards in initial teacher training in further education and will thus provide progressive parity with similar arrangements in the schools sector;

- we shall work with the successor to the FE National Training Organisation to ensure that teachers going to work in FE colleges are prepared for the demands that the 14–19 agenda will make on them.

Continuing professional development of teachers

10 The 14–19 agenda will in particular require staff in secondary schools to become more skilled at managing a wider variety of differentiated programmes and pathways for their pupils, and in advising and supporting young people in making learning and career choices for the 14–19 phase. Subject teachers in schools and staff in other providing organisations will need to work together to develop teaching strategies that acknowledge the breadth of courses their pupils are taking.

11 We shall use the pathfinders to establish in more detail the challenge that the 14–19 agenda poses for established teachers and lecturers and, in the light of the work planned on 11–19 teaching and learning more generally, develop appropriate arrangements for organising the necessary CPD provision.

Local 16–19 planning

12 At 14–16, the vast majority of young people are based in schools, and this will continue. It is already possible for FE colleges to provide secondary education and the proposals in this document may lead to some increase in the numbers of 14–16 year-olds based in colleges.

13 At 16–19, provision is more varied. We intend to make it easier to make any structural changes that might be necessary to raise standards, and to ensure that local 16–19 provision matches the needs and aspirations of the young people and of the local community and economy. LSC-led Strategic Area reviews from 2003, which will cover all post-16 provision up to higher education, will help determine the configuration of provision in a local area which best meets local needs. Although they will consider the provision in every area for learners aged over 16, they will also take into account the capacity of institutions to contribute to the wider 14–16 curriculum and progression routes across the 14–19 phase.

14 Some local partners are looking at entirely new organisational models for integrated working among schools, colleges and training providers across a wider age range, including, for example:

- establishing a jointly managed sixth form, perhaps in a separate centre, which may eventually facilitate curriculum development for the 14–19 phase across the wider community;

- opening a community learning centre incorporating (all, or a selection of) pre-school, primary, secondary, FE, learner support, social and other services on a single site;

- more informal collaboration between schools, colleges and training providers to jointly plan and provide a 14–19 curriculum for their area, supported by ICT networks and a common approach to student guidance; and

- different aspects of all these approaches.

We are working with them to develop this thinking and to help them deliver within existing legislation.

15 The Learning and Skills Council has a duty to secure adequate 16–19 provision, and already has powers to influence the organisation of local FE and training provision. These have been supplemented by new powers in the Education Act 2002 to make statutory proposals to the Secretary of State for changes to local sixth form provision as part of a wider reorganisation of post-16 learning in the area, either to follow up the findings of a local area inspection; or to increase local participation and achievement, or improve the range of opportunities open to young people in the area.

16 In identifying the need for any local reorganisation and developing proposals, the LSC will consult widely and work in close collaboration with other local bodies such as LEAs, schools, colleges, diocesan bodies, training providers and employers to develop proposals which fully reflect local circumstances and the views of local stakeholders.

17 We have recently completed a consultation on regulations and guidance, setting out the manner in which the LSC may make proposals for schools reorganisation, and will make the findings widely available in February 2003. Ministers will consider the responses carefully. It is expected that the new regulations will come into force on 1 April 2003.

Performance tables

18 Performance tables are an important tool for recognising and judging institutional performance. We recognise the impact which they can have on the policies and behaviour of individual schools and colleges. That may affect the extent to which greater flexibility of curriculum and pace, and more systematic collaboration, take hold locally. The Green Paper contained a range of proposals designed to ensure that performance tables supported – and did not hinder – 14–19 objectives. We proposed:

- reporting a wider range of qualifications in secondary school and post-16 tables, so that institutions had no disincentive in offering a full range of opportunities tailored to individual pupil needs;

- ensuring that AS taken early is recorded in secondary school tables, to remove a possible disincentive to accelerated progression; and

- recasting post-16 performance measures to reflect national targets for Level 2 and Level 3 attainment, to reinforce the focus of institutions on achieving those targets.

19 These proposals were strongly supported in consultation. Depending on the results of consultation and on successful piloting, these changes will be introduced at the earliest practicable date. Changes are not straightforward and will require considerable further discussion with key stakeholders. We will set out further details – and consult – as part of our normal annual consultation on changes to performance tables.

20 Consultation also highlighted some additional issues. The key concerns were:

- that schools would not be prepared to vary rates of progression for individuals – particularly in relation to slower progression – if they thought this would have a detrimental effect on their reported performance; and

- that the "competitive ethos" fostered by institutional-based performance tables is inimical to collaboration – and, in particular, that institutions would be reluctant to share responsibility for the education of individual students unless they received appropriate credit in the tables for doing so.

21 We take these issues seriously and have begun to explore in depth with educational partners what the specific barriers in performance tables are and how we might deal with them. We have not ruled out further change to the way tables are compiled, beyond those already planned and in train. But the issues are complex and will need to be carefully thought through: for example, the implications for post-16 tables of recognising in the secondary school tables the performance of students who progress on a slower track. We shall continue to work on these issues and will consult and report on progress as part of the annual round of consultation on the tables.

Area inspections

22 Area inspections were introduced in October 1999 to drive up participation, retention, achievement, and standards of teaching and learning. They examine quality, coverage and cost-effectiveness of 16–19 education and training across an area and any action needed to raise local standards. Since April 2001, area inspections have been undertaken jointly by the ALI and Ofsted, under the Common Inspection Framework.

23 To support the 14–19 agenda, we will extend the age range covered by these inspections. During 2003, area inspections will be developed to cover 14–19 provision in place of the current 16–19 inspections. An area inspection report covering 14–19 provision will provide local partners with an objective picture of 14–19 learning in their area and encourage collaborative planning and delivery to ensure the best possible configuration and quality is available to learners. The LSC and relevant LEA(s) will be expected to work together and, with local partners, to produce a co-ordinated action plan in response to a 14–19 area inspection. A programme of re-inspection of all or elements of an area inspection will also be introduced during 2003.

24 It is important that inspection arrangements for pre- and post-16 providers reflect and acknowledge priorities within the 14–19 agenda. Ofsted and ALI are committed to ensuring that inspection for schools, colleges and other providers recognises the ways in which institutions are managing key elements of 14–19 provision, such as collaboration with other local providers and supporting students in their transition between institutions. Arrangements for inspection of schools and providers in the learning and skills sector will evolve over time to reflect good practice in 14–19 learning. The inspectorates are consulting on a draft framework for 14–19 area inspections which will supplement the Common Inspection Framework.

Recognising the costs of collaboration

25 The Green Paper acknowledged the need to provide funding for young people following vocational courses and to support the costs of collaboration between schools and colleges. Responses to the consultation contained mixed views on funding mechanisms, particularly on how funding should be channelled to support

collaborative programmes. Some 14–19 pathfinders starting in 2003 will test and evaluate alternative ways of funding these arrangements, such as channelling funding through schools, or separately funding both the school and college. We are determined to avoid introducing further bureaucracy into these arrangements.

26 We also take seriously the consultation responses that argued for additional investment to deliver new 14–19 opportunities and coherent collaborative arrangements.

27 We will use the pathfinders to assess the scale and nature of additional costs that may arise from new patterns of 14–19 provision, and how those are best funded. In the meantime, we propose to allow LEAs to fund pupils who attend both school and college at a weighting different from 1:0. The weighting could be less than 1:0, to reflect availability of funding direct to the college; or greater than 1:0, to reflect the need for the school to make payments to the college greater than its own savings from the pupil's part-time absence from school.

Post-16 funding

28 The LSC is responsible for all post-16 recurrent funding and is committed to reflecting the objectives of the 14–19 agenda in its funding arrangements. There has been extensive public consultation and agreement on the core principles which should underpin post-16 funding; and an ongoing programme of converging funding methodologies for school sixth forms, further education and work-based learning.

29 The LSC's existing post-16 funding systems already contain extensive flexibility with weighted funding to reflect the actual costs of different types of learning, and funding tailored to reflect flexible patterns and different forms of learning. To support 14–19, funding decisions will take account of existing good practice, and evidence from evaluation of the pathfinders. Proposals for further reform of the 16–19 framework will be integrated with existing LSC plans for development of new integrated funding arrangements, but we do not propose to change the current arrangements for funding 14–16 provision through LEAs.

Diversity and specialisation

30 Policies on diversity and specialisation have an important contribution to make to our 14–19 strategy.

31 **Specialist Schools** are expected to be innovative and already are often leaders in the development and use of vocational courses and work-related opportunities in the context of the school's chosen specialism. We will expect them to be in the forefront of further developments in this area. The 2002 guidance for schools applying for specialist school designation draws attention to the 14–19 Green Paper proposals. The guidance makes clear that demonstrating awareness of 14–19 developments will be a positive aspect of applications. Similar expectations have been made clear in the guidance for all existing specialist schools seeking re-designation. One of the four areas for specialist schools' objectives and targets is: "the increased take-up of vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and post-16". The guidance also emphasises the importance of collaboration with other schools

32 **Leading edge collaboration and innovation.** There will be an important role for strongly performing schools carrying out advanced work to facilitate learning partnerships and innovation within a collaborative network of leading edge schools.

33 Delivery of a wider range of Key Stage 4 options and the promotion of vocational education are already priority areas for collaborative working through the Specialist Schools programme, and we envisage those themes being important elements in the activities of schools taking a leading role in collaboration and innovation.

34 There will be one 14–19 pathfinder project in an LEA that is already a **Diversity Pathfinder**. The two programmes are underpinned by similar principles, e.g. the value in collaboration between schools to enhance teaching and learning. The processes used to implement, monitor and evaluate all the pathfinder projects will be aligned to maximise their potential and to reduce the administrative burden on the participating LEAs.

35 **Learning and Skills Beacon status** is awarded to those LSC-funded, Ofsted/ALI-inspected providers that have achieved outstanding inspection reports and are assessed as suitable by the LSC. The Learning

and Skills Beacons are expected to disseminate their good practice and participate in collaborative activities to benefit other providers in the sector. These will include schools, colleges and work-based learning providers, and all their learners.

36 The Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) programme, which is being implemented by the LSC, supports colleges and work-based learning providers to develop, maintain and deliver excellent specialist provision. CoVEs will offer learners from all backgrounds access to the high-quality vocational training they need to succeed in the modern economy. The programme's main focus is on meeting employers' intermediate skills needs, but CoVEs should also work closely with schools, offer progression to Higher Education where appropriate, and work closely with employers, sectors and other key organisations.

Annex 4

14–19 Pathfinders

1 This annex summarises the objectives and funding for 14–19 pathfinders. Pathfinders are designed to test local delivery in a range of settings and will be a key means of identifying and spreading good practice.

Objectives

2 The objectives of 14–19 pathfinders are to:

- test out a range of ideas and discover new ones;
- develop best practice in 14–19 education and training to guide the steps to, and pace of, a staged national roll-out;
- see how 14–19 policy will fit with other policies, identify barriers to a coherent 14–19 phase and design ways to overcome them; and
- show that a coherent 14–19 phase can be achieved in a variety of locations with different social circumstances and different mixes of schools and colleges, including those with young people with special needs.

3 Key aspects of pathfinders in 2002/03 will be:

- collaboration (in a range of geographical areas);
- broader curriculum offerings (testing out entitlement);
- variations in pace of learning;
- post-16 access to continued Level 2 in literacy, numeracy and ICT;
- extending work-related programmes;
- the development of enterprise capability;
- innovative use of vocational learning including new GCSEs; and

- enhanced advice and guidance.

4 In addition, the pathfinders will be expected to:

- cover the whole 14–19 phase;
- include advice, guidance and support;
- include development of individual learning plans;
- where appropriate, link with related pathfinders and programmes to enhance provision in a coherent way; and
- set area and institutional targets for attainment and participation.

5 Pathfinders will be expected to evaluate their performance and the Department will also commission an independent evaluation.

Funding

6 We have made available £5 million in 2002-03 to support 14–19 pathfinders and the LSC have agreed to provide a further £5 million and to manage the pathfinders jointly with the Department.

7 We hope to extend the number and extent of pathfinders in 2003/04 and 2004/05 as resources permit. We plan to issue the prospectus for year two in spring 2003.

Sharing good practice

8 We are planning a forum to bring pathfinders together as a national group to exchange experience, and local/regional conferences at which individual pathfinders will exchange good practice with other institutions in their areas not yet involved in the pathfinder programme. We are considering the most effective methods of widely disseminating best practice and this will include compiling a manual of best practice guidance to be circulated to pathfinders, potential pathfinders and other institutions and partnerships. Best practice will also be showcased on our website: www.dfes.gov.uk/14–19 pathfinders. We want all to benefit and will expect pathfinders to network locally, regionally and nationally to share their experience.

Annex 5

Supporting choice: advice and guidance

1 All young people should be provided with the support they need to help them to:

- choose a learning programme at 14 that engages them in learning until they are 18/19;
- achieve their longer-term learning and career aspirations; and
- overcome barriers to participation and achievement that arise during the 14–19 phase.

Individual Learning Plans

2 The Green Paper recognised the importance of planning for the start of the 14–19 phase and proposed that young people should have a review towards the end of Key Stage 3, leading to the development of an individual learning plan (ILP) that would:

- record progress made during Key Stage 3;
- help inform specific choices about the subjects/learning programme they will study during Key Stage 4;
- establish *broad* learning and career goals for the whole 14–19 phase, including identifying wider development activities that the young person might participate in; and
- provide the basis for ongoing monitoring and review of progress during the 14–19 phase.

3 There was strong support for more structured planning at the end of Key Stage 3, although there were calls for the process to be flexible, non-bureaucratic and built on existing good practice. There was also support for a toolkit to facilitate the production and ongoing review of

plans, developed from existing Progress File materials. There was a further call for more clarity about the respective roles of schools, Connexions and others in this process.

4 In the light of this feedback, we propose that schools should have overall responsibility for managing the review process, ensuring that there is a discussion with each young person and their parent/carer. The exact arrangements will depend on the wider pastoral support system in the school, but we would expect that form tutors will often be the right people to exercise these responsibilities, drawing on support from other agencies, such as the Connexions Service.

5 The ILP, and the toolkit that supports it, will be voluntary, although there will be a broader expectation that all *schools* will put in place arrangements to prepare young people to make effective choices at age 14. We will develop guidance and supporting materials, reflecting the experiences from the 14–19 pathfinder projects, and monitor the workload implications of the review process.

6 For young people who may become disengaged from school, the increased choice and flexibility, and improved coherence and quality of programmes, will help to raise their aspirations and those of their parents and wider communities. This, in turn, should contribute to improved motivation and improvements in behaviour, attendance and achievement. For young people who may need additional support in making their choices because they are at risk of disengaging, or have dropped out of education already, we would expect a Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) or other key worker such as a Learning Mentor to be involved in the process. The decision about when they would participate in the review for each individual case would be determined locally.

Ongoing advice and support

7 As schools become more experienced in delivering a more flexible curriculum, and with greater options for choice, we anticipate that they will become more confident in helping young people to consider their options and to make their choices. However, the Connexions Service – which will be rolled out nationally by 2003 – is well placed to provide advice and guidance to those who choose a non-traditional route, where a broader knowledge of the range of options available outside

the school is needed. Schools might also want to organise presentations from local FE colleges, work-based training providers, employers and Education Business Links Organisations, so that young people understand the range of opportunities open to them, particularly in post-16. Opportunities should also include better understanding and awareness of higher education and could include short visits to universities. Closer collaboration between providers will help to facilitate this activity.

8 Connexions will continue to have a key role in signposting young people towards wider personal development opportunities, and in linking them to agencies beyond the classroom – voluntary and youth organisations and specialist services, such as adolescent mental health support.

9 The Green Paper also recognised the importance of an effective curriculum-led careers education programme, to develop the skills that young people of all abilities need to plan and navigate their progression through learning. It promoted the idea that schools should begin to deliver careers education earlier than Year 9. It trailed a new non-statutory framework for careers education that would identify learning outcomes for careers education in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and in post-16 learning, and drive up quality and consistency across all schools by providing a benchmark for them to review existing careers education programmes.

10 The proposal to begin careers education earlier was strongly supported. And in our subsequent consultation on the draft framework itself, many people argued that we should go further, by extending the duty on schools to provide careers education (which currently applies only to Years 9–11), to Years 7 and 8. Given the overwhelming view that young people will need more support in making their learning and career choices for the 14–19 phase, we have decided to make the necessary regulatory amendment that will give effect to this change. To help those who wish to, or already do, provide careers education from Year 7 in advance of the legislative change, we will issue the final version of the framework to schools in time for them to develop a revised careers education programme for delivery from September 2003.

Annex 6

Working Group on 14–19 Reform

Terms of reference

1 The Working Group is invited to consider the three overlapping strategic directions for change identified in the Department's response to its consultation on the Green Paper, *14–19: extending opportunities, raising standards*, and to make recommendations.

2 The Government is looking for progress over time towards:

- strengthened structure and content of full-time vocational programmes, and to offer greater coherence in learning programmes for all young people throughout their 14–19 education;
- assessment arrangements for 14–19 year-olds that are appropriate to different types of course and styles of teaching and learning, with the overall amount of assessment manageable for learners and teachers alike; and
- a unified framework of qualifications that stretches the performance of learners, motivates progression, and recognises different levels of achievement.

3 In considering these three overlapping areas the Group should identify and propose action to resolve the range of issues affecting an effective 14–19 strategy that have not been already addressed by the agenda set out in the Government's response to its 14–19 Green Paper. The Group is asked specifically to consider the recommendations for the longer term identified by Mike Tomlinson in his second report into A Level standards. The Group is also asked specifically to consider the following:

Coherent learning programmes:

4 To examine and, where appropriate, make recommendations on how:

- programmes, particularly predominantly vocational programmes, should be better structured to offer clear progress and achievement;
- such programmes can be more readily understood as part of a clear framework, progressing from Key Stage 4 to further options in skilled employment or higher education;
- such programmes might be developed to achieve broad public recognition and currency with employers and HE providers as a distinctive choice with respected outcomes;
- the qualifications goals in programmes can best provide an appropriate combination of general and specialist education;
- 14–19 programmes generally can help promote the acquisition of essential, practical skills for life, and how also they might encourage the development of analytical, problem-solving and thinking skills and the confidence and ability to present and argue conclusions;
- the contribution of employers to the design and delivery of this framework could be strengthened; and
- additional breadth and complementary study should be included within the post -16 element of 14–19 programmes, particularly for the most able students.

5 Though this aspect of the Group's work should encompass all learning within the 14–19 phase, the priority is to address 16–19 programmes of study outside the A Level route.

6 The Group should focus on programmes from Level 1 to Level 3 and should reflect the needs of learners at all levels. The Group should include the contribution of the Key Skills qualifications, including the wider Key Skills. The Group will note that the structure and promotion of Modern Apprenticeships have been the subject of a recent major

review under the chairmanship of Sir John Cassells and the reforms that are being taken forward by the Learning and Skills Council.

Assessment arrangements

7 To examine and, where appropriate, make recommendations on how the nature and amount of assessment for 14–19 year-olds should develop to ensure that arrangements:

- are fit for purpose and match the teaching and learning styles appropriate to both qualification and course of study;
- are manageable for students, taking account of the amount of assessment during the 14–19 phase and during examination periods;
- ensure manageable administrative costs on schools, colleges, training providers and awarding bodies;
- motivate all learners, including support for those facing physical or social barriers to learning and slower learners so that perception of earlier failure is avoided;
- maintain sufficient independence and transparency to deliver consistent, reliable standards; and
- command the support of employers, higher education and the wider public, including young people.

This strand of work, which should focus on the principles underpinning effective assessment rather than looking at the detailed arrangements within individual qualifications, will include the assessment of all general qualifications which may be undertaken by young people from the start of Key Stage 4 to the age of 19. It should, however, consider Mike Tomlinson's recommendations for the decoupling of the AS and A2 to create two free-standing qualifications.

8 It should take account of the assessment required at the end of Key Stage 3 to provide a basis for wider curriculum choice at 14.

9 The work of the Group on assessment should include GNVQs and A Levels in vocational subjects but excludes NVQs, other occupational qualifications and the requirements of Modern Apprenticeships (but the work of the Group on coherent learning programmes must include NVQs and other occupational qualifications).

A unified framework of qualifications

10 To examine and, where appropriate, make recommendations for a unified framework of qualifications for the 14–19 phase of education that will:

- provide a challenge for all students, including the most able;
- embrace the full range of programmes of study;
- raise standards of achievement at 19;
- provide a template for a broad and engaging educational experience;
- deliver consistent robust standards and be capable of rigorous, impartial assessment; and
- be capable of commanding a wide range of support among key stakeholders, in particular higher education and employers.

11 The Group should advise on the practical steps that would be necessary to implement such a model, on potential costs and on a process for implementation that would minimise the risk of adverse impact on young people's education or the management of the education system. In doing so, it should consider the merits and implications of decoupling the AS and A2 to create two free-standing qualifications as recommended by Mike Tomlinson, as a practical step towards the implementation of such a model.

12 The Group should include all education and training undertaken by young people in the 14–19 phase. The Group should consider how the achievement of a Modern Apprenticeship should be integrated within the awards structure.

Cross-cutting considerations

13 The Group should have regard to the following cross-cutting priorities:

- to increase post-16 participation and attainment, and to narrow the attainment gap;
- to enhance diversity and breadth of provision, local innovation and student choice;
- to meet the needs of low achievers and those who face significant obstacles to learning;
- to reduce the significance of 16 as a potential break point and focus on outcomes at 19; and
- to reduce unnecessary burdens on the system, especially on teachers and learners.

14 The Group will be expected to:

- consult and take account of the views and requirements of key stakeholders including employers, higher education and young people themselves;
- take account of the ways in which these issues are managed in other countries;
- ensure that proposals take due account of the need for value for money and cost-effectiveness in the use of resources; and
- take into consideration the early emerging evidence from the 14–19 pathfinder projects.

15 The Group should issue an interim report on its findings within a year, with a view to finalising its work within 18 months. It will also be expected to provide interim reports on progress with aspects of its work at intervals to be agreed.

Annex 7

Implications for schools and colleges and timetable for change

Transforming the 14–19 phase: the implications for schools and colleges – and illustrative timetable for change (subject to resources)

Implications for schools and colleges

1 Heads and principals will note that there are several key challenges in the 14–19 strategy set out in *14–19: opportunity and excellence:*

- in the shorter term we are introducing a range of measures designed to introduce greater flexibility and individual choice for young people and – through the Tomlinson Inquiry recommendations – to secure stability and confidence in existing qualifications systems; and

- in the longer term we are seeking to develop – though the Working Group on 14–19 Reform – a more flexible curriculum and qualifications framework.

2 The main purpose of the shorter term measures for flexibility and choice is to enable schools, colleges and other providers to respond better to the needs and circumstances of individual young people. There is little within the changes that the best institutions are not already seeking to do, or indeed are doing, already. The new measures we are putting in place are largely enabling measures, intended to remove barriers and give encouragement to all institutions to adopt the innovative best practice that they will want to provide to their students.

3 The key areas where heads and principals will want to focus their planning and their staff and organisation development are likely to be:

- individual planning at the end of Key Stage 3, and the role of the Connexions Service in supporting this process;

- greater flexibility in Key Stage 4, the new entitlements and the requirement for all young people to undertake some work-related learning during Key Stage 4. Earned Autonomy and the Power to Innovate will also have important contributions to make here and elsewhere;

- a greater emphasis on pace consistent with young people's abilities;

- the new teaching and learning strategies;

- greater collaborative working between institutions and other providers; and

- closer links with local employers and businesses.

4 They may also wish to work with others to develop bids for the future rounds of pathfinder projects so they can be at the leading edge of contributing to new ways of working and the identification of best practice.

5 These areas are set out in Chapter 3 of *14–19: opportunity and excellence* and the associated annexes. The timetable for specific changes is set out below.

Illustrative timetable for change

ACADEMIC YEAR 2002/03

QUALIFICATIONS

- GCSEs in vocational subjects introduced for first teaching in September 2002.

CURRICULUM

- 'Increased Flexibility for 14–16 year-olds' programme started in September 2002 with first Year 10 cohort. Funding covers cohort over two years.

- National Languages Strategy announced in December 2002.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

- Ongoing roll-out of Modern Apprenticeships three-year national marketing campaign (April 2002 to March 2005).

- Entry to Employment in pathfinder stage. Eleven pathfinders which encompass local LSC and Connexions Service partnerships, are running across all Government Office regions.

ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- Ongoing national roll-out of Connexions Service (to be completed April 2003).

- New framework for careers education issued to schools, colleges and work-based training providers by February 2003.

- Financial help leaflet, including information on EMAs, Learner Support Funds, Connexions Card, and Dance and Drama Awards is available from February 2003.

PATHFINDERS

- First tranche of 14–19 pathfinders start in January 2003.

- 14–19 Pathfinder Prospectus for year two (2003/04) issued in Spring 2003 to LEAs and local LSCs.

INSPECTIONS

- 14–19 Area Inspections begin – the first will be in March 2003. The LLSCs and LEAs in the areas to be inspected will be notified at least 8 weeks in advance of the inspection.

PERFORMANCE TABLES

- Consultation in Spring 2003 on extending the secondary school performance tables to include all approved qualifications achieved by 16 year-olds.

SUCCESS FOR ALL

- The *Success for All* strategy to reform further education and training was launched in November 2002.

- First LSC-led Strategic Area Reviews in April 2003.

- New Standards Unit established within the Department to lead on improving teaching and learning post-16 in January 2003.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2003/04

QUALIFICATIONS

- Piloting of 'hybrid' GCSEs in science and geography-related areas – first teaching in September 2003 for schools volunteering to be included in pilot programme.

CURRICULUM

- Changes to Key Stage 4 disapplication arrangements affecting modern foreign languages and design & technology. Introduced for start of 2003/04 academic year.

- QCA guidance on different-paced learning to be available in the autumn term.

- Second cohort Year 10 begin two-year part-time vocational courses under the Increased Flexibility programme in September 2003.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

- First tranche of pilots to develop enterprise capability amongst young people at secondary school, integrated with the work-related learning experience at 14 plus.

- National roll-out of Entry to Employment (E2E) programme (from September 2003), which will replace Life Skills, preparatory training and Level 1 programmes.

ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- Guidance on the role of schools, Connexions and others in the construction of Individual Learning Plans issued by September 2003.

- Information available to all young people and their parents on the range of options available to them, including financial support, during the 14–19 phase, by October 2003.

- Revised careers education programmes delivered from September 2003.

- Connexions Direct rolled out by April 2004.

14–19 PATHFINDERS

- Second tranche of 14–19 pathfinders start in September 2003.

- 14–19 Pathfinder Prospectus for year three (academic year 2004/05) issued in spring 2004.

PERFORMANCE TABLES

- Pilot secondary school performance tables, based on a sample of schools and exploiting the full range of qualifications approved for use pre-16, published in early 2004.

- Consultation on extending the post-16 performance tables to include all approved qualifications achieved by 16–18 year-olds in Spring 2004.

WORKING GROUP FOR 14–19 REFORM

- 14–19 External Working Group to report to the Department on long-term reform by the end of 2003.

CITIZENSHIP

- Completion of post-16 Citizenship development projects (rounds 1 and 2) by July 2004.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching and learning frameworks for post-16 learning and teaching in the first 4 curriculum areas (science, construction, business studies, entry to employment) implemented from September 2003.

- 11–19 Teaching and Learning Strategy pilots start.

- New leadership college for the learning and skills sector and higher education opens in September 2003.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2004/05

QUALIFICATIONS

- Controlled expansion of GCSEs in vocational subjects available for first teaching in September 2004.

CURRICULUM

- Second tranche of pilots to develop enterprise capability amongst young people at secondary school, integrated with the work-related learning experience at 14 plus.

- New entitlement until age 19 to study literacy, numeracy and ICT to Level 2 to be available from September 2004 onwards.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

- Entitlement to a Modern Apprenticeship place for young people who reach required entry standard introduced from September 2004.

ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- Education Maintenance Allowances national roll-out begins September 2004.

- Improved arrangements for providing childcare support in place for September 2004.

14–19 PATHFINDERS

- Third tranche of 14–19 pathfinders start in September 2004.

- 14–19 best practice manual developed from pathfinder experience and widely circulated in July 2005 to inform national roll-out.

PERFORMANCE TABLES

- 2004 secondary school performance tables reporting all qualifications approved for use pre-16 published in late 2004/early 2005 (depending on outcome of trials and consultation).

- Pilot post-16 performance tables based on a sample of schools and exploiting the full range of qualifications approved for use by 16–18 year-olds published early 2005.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Further four post-16 teaching and learning frameworks introduced in health and social care, ICT, mathematics and land-based further education and training.

NOT BEFORE ACADEMIC YEAR 2004/05

QUALIFICATIONS

- New A Level in critical thinking to complete the suite currently comprising the AS and AEA. For first teaching not before September 2004.

- AEAs available in further general subjects, and piloted in some vocational subjects.

- Longer term development work on GCSEs continues, including 'hybrid' designs.

CURRICULUM

- Key Stage 4 disapplication arrangements revoked as new Key Stage 4 curriculum changes introduced.

- Modern foreign languages and design & technology moves from a requirement in the Key Stage 4 curriculum to an entitlement for pupils entering Year 10 not before September 2004.

- New Key Stage 4 entitlement to a subject from the arts and a subject from the humanities for pupils entering Year 10 not before September 2004.

- Work-related learning to be a requirement for all entering Key Stage 4 not before September 2004.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2005/06

QUALIFICATIONS

- Further piloting of 'hybrid' GCSEs.

CURRICULUM

- Every young person has the opportunity to develop enterprise capability before they leave school.

PERFORMANCE TABLES

- 2005 post-16 performance tables reporting all qualifications approved for use by 16–18 year-olds published in late 2005/early 2006 (depending on outcome of trials and consultation).

NOT BEFORE ACADEMIC YEAR 2005/2006

CURRICULUM

- Revised programme of study for science available for teaching (not before September 2005).

14–19 education and training in other countries

This note has been drawn up by John West, visiting fellow at the Centre for Labour Market Studies, Leicester University. It makes use of information from the 2000 OECD study *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making Transitions Work* including background reports and reviewers' notes on individual countries, and also of the country descriptions on the Eurydice database.

Introduction

The responses to the Green Paper *14–19: extending opportunities, raising standards* make clear both the degree of interest and enthusiasm for improving this phase of education, and the wide variety of views on how best to do so. In that context the Department thought it would be helpful to publish some information on the systems of education and training impacting on the same age group in a range of other countries.

The purpose of this note is therefore to stimulate and inform debate. It does not seek to draw conclusions about whether the features and developments described are desirable in themselves, still less whether they could be replicated effectively – or at all – in England. But we hope that it will help by showing what can, and has, been done in other countries in this phase, what kinds of developments will work in which contexts and with what kind of consequences, and – sometimes – which seemingly good ideas do not seem to take off at all.

The countries featured are designed to show a range of practice in the context of developed countries not unlike ourselves in economic and cultural terms. They are:

Australia
Canada
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Netherlands
Sweden
United States of America

Each country, it would be fair to say, wishes its secondary education and initial training system to:

- contribute to the production of citizens with a good level of general education, capable of participating actively in society and of achieving self-fulfilment;

- act as an efficient platform for higher education, helping decisions as to who should benefit from that stage of education, and providing a good base for subsequent studies; and

- prepare its students for participation, either immediately or rather later, in the world of productive work.

However, each country attempts to achieve such objectives while respecting other core social values such as the desire for equality, for common initial experiences and the strength of desire to recognise merit and ability, factors which differ in their strength between countries. Other important variables include:

- the historical pattern of educational curricula and institutions – most countries seek to reform by adapting what was there before and what their populations are used to;

- the size of the higher education sector, which differs considerably between countries, and which therefore affects secondary education differently in each. It also needs to remembered that in most of the countries considered there is a formal division between university- and polytechnic-based higher education; and

- the extent to which the labour market is organized on occupational lines, and in particular the extent to which a vocational qualification is needed in order to gain a 'licence to practise' in a particular occupation; this clearly influences both the amount and the type of vocational education.

This note explores particular features of the systems in different countries:

- the organisation of secondary education;

- the handling of general (or academic) education;
- the treatment of vocational education and initial training;
- the degree of a common strand of education and skills for all;
- the handling of disadvantage and drop-out within the system; and
- the approaches to graduation from secondary education.

There is, of course, a danger in looking at such features in isolation. Even without the difficulties caused by different cultural and historical contexts, one cannot necessarily 'cherry pick' the most desirable features, without taking into account their corollaries: for example, it may well be that the broad upper secondary general education that one observes in many countries up to the age of 18 is not unconnected with long durations spent in higher education where learning in the chosen subjects of study has to start a lot further back than under systems where subject specialisation occurs earlier. Lengthy tertiary studies can in turn lead to queues of eligible applicants who cannot secure an immediate place, and to late entry into full-time work (with attendant lost earnings) by those who do gain a university place. Whether such corollaries are inevitable is a matter for debate, but it is as well to have an eye to the possibility of their existence.

This note deals with secondary education, roughly speaking from the ages of 12 to 19, though in some cases this phase, particularly in its vocational aspects, can extend well beyond 19. It concentrates chiefly on the 16–19 phase (upper secondary), not because this is more important than 12–16 (lower secondary), but rather because, as we shall see, differences in the organisation of the earlier years are less than those in the upper secondary stage. In all the countries the age at which compulsory full-time school ends is either 15 or 16, though some German *Länder* require part-time attendance until the age of 18, and in the Netherlands young people must either do a year of full-time education after the age of 16, or else undertake two years on a part-time basis.

1. The organisation of institutions of secondary education

How is the secondary phase of education and initial training organised in other countries? There are different ways to split the phase, if that is felt desirable – by vocational or academic purpose, by age, by institution, by ability, or by some combination of these factors.

SPLITS BY AGE

In the United States and Canada, the *High School* is a comprehensive institution aiming to cater for all stages and types of education in the 14-18 phase, though some vocational pupils will attend dedicated centres in some places. Similarly, in Australia, there are comprehensive general secondary schools, catering for the great majority of students, though the relatively small numbers of younger people undertaking apprenticeships or other vocational education after the age of 16 look to the TAFE colleges, outside the school system, for off-the-job training and the organisation of their programmes. In the case of strictly academic streams 'straight through' institutions can be found in the *Gymnasium* schools of Germany and the Netherlands – where the upper secondary stage, though discrete, is generally in the same institution as the lower secondary phase.

However, splits by age are common. Denmark's comprehensive *Volkschule* ends at 15/16, as do France's *collège*, Sweden's *Grundskula* and Finnish comprehensive schools. In all these cases a change of institution for the upper secondary stage is needed.

In those cases where there is a transfer between institutions at 15/16, it is usual for there to be some form of formal assessment and leaving certificate to mark that stage and to inform decisions on the upper secondary phase, though this takes different forms. Thus, in Sweden, there is a school leaving certificate from the *Grundskula*, with grades awarded by teachers, though supported by a system of national tests; entry to a recognised programme at upper secondary requires passes in Swedish, English and mathematics, and decisions on over-subscribed secondary programmes are taken on the basis of the grades awarded in the certificate. Similar arrangements apply in Finland and in Denmark, where, however, pupils can opt for exams. In France, the *Brevet National* is taken at the end of the lower secondary *collège* and consists of examinations in French, mathematics and history/geography/civics

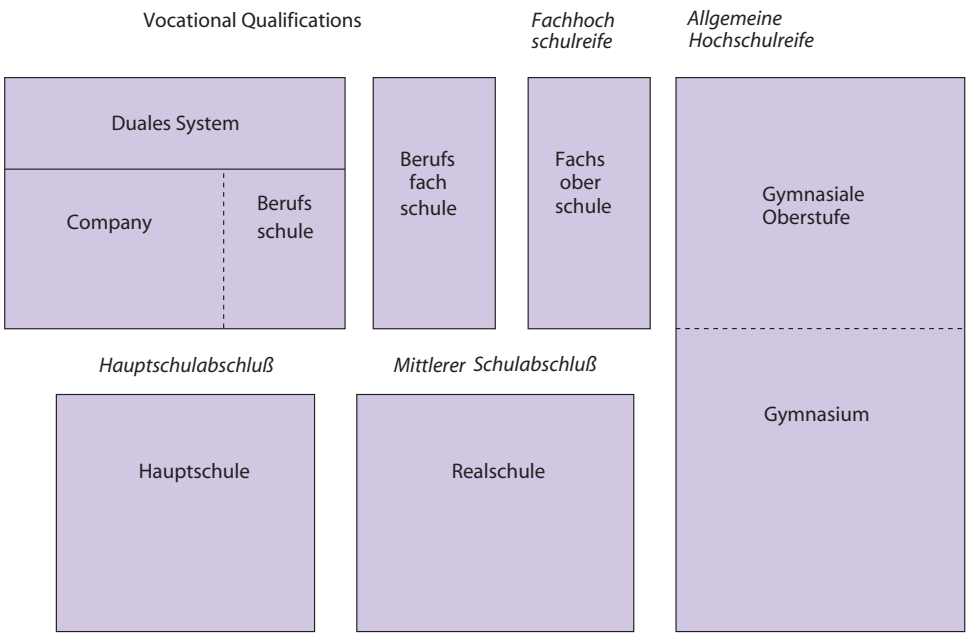
together with teacher grades for schoolwork. In Germany and the Netherlands, certificates of lower secondary education apply where students leave institutions at the end of the lower secondary stage (i.e. the non-academic *VBO/MAVO* groups in the Netherlands and the *Haupt-* and *Realschule* pupils in Germany); in both countries the award of the certificate depends in part on teacher assessments, though supplemented by examinations in the Netherlands and in some German *Länder*. In many countries, the school leaving certificates are – in a sense – an extension of annual formal assessments of pupil progress which can result in streaming decisions or requirements to repeat a year. In the USA, Canada and Australia, no formal certificate is awarded before the end of High School.

SPLITS BY ABILITY

In most cases, with some exceptions such as private schools and special schools for those with learning difficulties, the main lower secondary institution is comprehensive. But two countries have clear divisions in terms of ability at the lower secondary stage. In Germany pupils are divided, in more or less equal proportions, between three types of school at the age of 12 – the *Hauptschule* for the least able, the *Realschule* for the middle group, and the *Gymnasium* for the most able in academic terms.[1] Decisions on allocation between these schools are ultimately made by the school authorities, though parental views are taken into account and there is a right of appeal. The first two types of school end at 15/16, whereas the *Gymnasium* carries on into its upper stage (*Gymnasiale Oberstufe*) to 18. Rather similar arrangements apply in the Netherlands, where the streams of pre-vocational education (*VBO*) and middle school (*MAVO*) are distinct from *HAVO* (general secondary education) and *VWO* (university preparation), though increasingly the first two and the last two are taught together in the same institutions, and indeed some schools teach all four streams.

1 Germany also has some *Gesamtschulen* for all abilities, though they constitute a small portion of the school system as a whole.

German Secondary System



Differentiation by ability at upper secondary level more often takes the form of separation into vocational and academic tracks than institutional separation on ability grounds alone. Again some countries attempt so far as possible to contain all upper secondary students within the same institution (USA, Canada, Sweden, and to a considerable degree Australia).

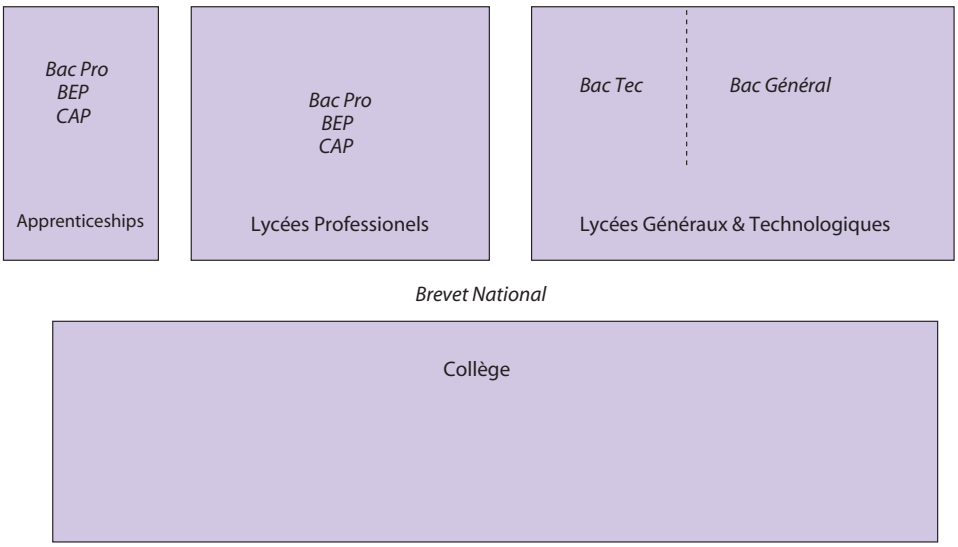
VOCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC

Countries differ, too, in their arrangements for delivering vocational education. Some attempt to cater for vocational education alongside academic options in the same institution, some have specific vocational establishments for young people, and some tend to cater for young people taking vocational choices in an establishment which offers, and is perhaps dominated by, adult vocational students. As we have seen, the USA and Canada offer vocational choices within the context of the general High School. The same is true in Sweden, where 14 of the 16 national programmes offered in comprehensive upper secondary schools are vocational in nature. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the large all-age *TAFE* and *ROC* establishments in Australia and the Netherlands cater for 16–19 year-olds undertaking occupational courses and apprenticeships. In between, we see dedicated vocational institutions primarily for young people:

- in Germany there is a complex and targeted system of vocational education institutions: as well as *Berufsschulen* providing one- or two-day release within the apprenticeship system, there are dedicated full-time vocational colleges in the form of *Berufsfachschulen* catering for certain occupations where apprenticeship is not the model, and *Berufsoberschulen* specifically geared to producing candidates for the polytechnic *Fachhochschulen* within the higher education system;

- in France the *lycée professionnel* is dedicated to providing vocational options, principally the *CAP* and *BEP* certificates, and the *Baccalauréat Professionel*, as well as providing complementary education within the apprenticeship system. On the general side, the general and technological *lycée* provides the other two *baccalauréat* versions; and

French Secondary System



- Denmark and Finland both have specifically vocational colleges. Though these also cater for adults (and students who have completed upper secondary education who undertake a subsequent vocational qualification), they are primarily conceived of as institutions for young people.

Despite the evident variety, there is a distinct emphasis on providing a fairly common curriculum to all pupils in the lower secondary phase, even where they are separated by ability in terms of the institutions they attend. The existence of formal certificates at the end of this phase

depends largely on whether there is an institutional transfer, with teacher assessments playing a considerable and sometimes sole role even where decisions on opportunities later on depend on certificate results. For countries with occupationally organised labour markets there is a preference for having separate institutional arrangements for vocational tracks at the upper secondary level, though it may be difficult to sustain dedicated vocational establishments for young people where only a minority undertake such tracks. In cases where vocational options are offered in the same institution as general education, these programmes tend to be of a rather broad nature, and do not give a 'licence to practise' in particular occupations.

2. Handling general education

All countries place a considerable stress on general (or academic) education though emphases vary depending on the weight put on the rather varying rationales of:

- providing the 'basics' for life, and future study of whatever kind;
- ensuring a common background of knowledge and culture as a basis for civil society; and
- providing a basis for selection to, and study in, programmes of higher education.

However, arrangements differ in the encouragement or discouragement of specialisation, in views on coherent subject combinations, in the boundaries of what is considered to be included in general education, and in status hierarchies within general education.

LOWER SECONDARY

There is considerable uniformity amongst countries in the content of general education at the lower secondary level. In the European countries considered here there are requirements for a wide range of subjects to be learned, and limited scope for options at this stage; such patterns, though not on a statutory basis, are also very common in the USA and Canada. For example, in the French *collège* students have to study for a prescribed number of hours in French, mathematics, a modern foreign language (and a second one in the third year),

combined history/geography/civics, the full range of natural sciences, technology, the arts and PE. In the Netherlands, the common early secondary education applicable for all streams (*basisvorming*) requires 80% of curriculum time to be spent on the compulsory subjects of Dutch, English, a second modern foreign language, history/politics, geography, economics, mathematics, the three natural sciences, technology, two arts subjects, ICT and life skills[2]. In Germany, though there are different schools for children of different ability, all teach German, a foreign language, mathematics, sciences, geography, history, social studies/politics, art, sport and religious education. At the lower secondary stage, the variations between schools in terms of subjects covered (as opposed to the level of instruction) are minor, with labour market studies being taught in the lower *Hauptschule* and a second foreign language required in the *Gymnasium*.

In France and the Netherlands, students have the opportunity to specialise a little towards the end of the lower secondary stage, with a more intensive technology option in the *collège* in the final year, and in the final two pre-vocational years of Dutch *VMBO*[3] one of four broad industry sectors (engineering, business, care or agriculture) can be chosen with courses pursued at different levels. In addition, France has specialised programmes for those with school problems, focusing on work-related education and basic vocational preparation.

UPPER SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION

Countries vary considerably in the size of their general streams. In the USA, only around 10% of High School students see themselves as specialising in vocational topics[4], and in Australia it is rare for upper secondary students to pursue a full-time vocational option. In France, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, where there are distinct general streams, these account for rather under half of all students[5], while in Netherlands and Germany the proportion pursuing a solely academic curriculum is around a third.

2 A recent review, though, considered the *basisvorming* to be somewhat overloaded and some slimming down is being undertaken.

3 The merged version of *VBO* and *MAVO* at the end of the lower secondary stage.

4 Students' own classification as reported in background report for OECD; up to a quarter are officially defined as vocational specialists. The USA tends not to have discrete vocational pathways, but rather offers vocational options within the High School curriculum. Nearly all students take one vocational option, but relatively few have vocational education as a significant part of their curriculum.

5 Key data on Education in Europe, figure E4; 1999-2000, European Commission.

NON UNIVERSITY-BOUND GENERAL EDUCATION AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL

Clearly, preparation for university is an important purpose of general education at this level. In Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, there is a specific *Gymnasium* group with this firmly in prospect. In Sweden and Finland, too, success in general programmes earns an entitlement to higher education, though such entitlements are not confined to the academic streams. However, some countries have evolved a rather less intensive version of general education which is not so specifically geared to university. The upper phase of the Dutch *HAVO* and the Danish *HF* are similar to the university-oriented programmes of *VWO* and *Gymnasium* respectively, but last two rather than three years; students of these programmes can upgrade if they show ability. These less intensive variants are particularly geared to entry into non-university higher education. Somewhat less formally in the USA there is a generally understood distinction between *'college prep'* and *'general'* tracks, with the latter concentrating far more on the basics until graduation; roughly similar numbers are in each track.

TECHNOLOGY AND VOCATIONAL OPTIONS WITHIN GENERAL EDUCATION

In some cases, technological subjects are regarded as lying within the sphere of general education, and as attracting the same, or nearly the same, kudos as academic subjects. In Germany there are *Fachgymnasien* specialising in business and engineering, and leading to the same *Hochschulreife* qualification via the *Abitur*. Denmark offers the *HTX* (technical) and *HHX* (commercial) options alongside its purely academic curriculum. And the *Baccalauréat Technologique*, though a separate qualification in France, is provided by the same lycées as give access to the *Baccalauréat Général*. Interestingly, in neither country are these qualifications regarded as sufficient to earn a vocational qualification proper, though they do provide a good basis for advancement to vocational courses within universities or polytechnics.

SUBJECT COMBINATIONS AND REQUIRED SUBJECTS

All the countries considered here have – in law, as requirements for the terminal certificates, or as near universal practice – a common core of required subjects which continues into the upper secondary phase of general education. Continued study of the national language and literature is universally required, as is mathematics at some level. In all cases save Australia, science and the humanities are also required, as

frequently is a foreign language and sport. Citizenship (Australia), careers guidance (Canada), the arts (Netherlands, Finland, Sweden) and a second modern foreign language (Finland and the Netherlands) also feature as mandatory subjects during the upper secondary phase, though not all are studied in depth, or indeed for every year of upper secondary education, and frequently they are not examined.

In addition, a number of countries have study 'lines' within general education, requiring students to pursue a group of related subjects. Such groupings are generally accompanied also by requirements for a core of subjects regardless of specialisation (see above). Examples of this approach can be seen in Sweden, where the two academic national programmes are in the natural sciences on the one hand, and in social sciences and languages on the other[6]. In Denmark the *Gymnasiet* has two variants – languages or mathematics and science. The French *Baccalauréat Général* requires study to be in one of three lines: literary – involving French, philosophy and foreign languages; economics & social sciences; or science – involving natural sciences and mathematics. The Netherlands *VWO* and *HAVO* requirements focus on one of the subject combinations of culture & society, economics & society, science & health or science & technology. In Germany, too, there are declared subject groupings similar in nature to those in France, but – somewhat in contrast – their purpose is not to encourage specialisation but rather to force variety by requiring the German *Gymnasium* student to take at least one subject from each group. The USA, Canada, some Australian states and Finland, on the other hand, operate a credit-based system which means that – beyond the compulsory subjects – a wide range of electives can be chosen within the recognised upper secondary system.

The presence of a wide range of required subjects in lower secondary education, and the continuation of many of them into the upper secondary phase is a particularly striking feature of all the countries considered. The absorption of some vocational or quasi-vocational topics into the ambit of general education is also interesting, as is the fact that the occupations in question are limited (engineering and business), and that they are manifested in fairly academic terms. With the exception of North America, there is a fairly explicit division between academic and vocational tracks. In some cases, there is also an explicit

6 A further Swedish national programme, perhaps neither clearly academic nor plainly vocational, concerns the visual and performing arts.

division between the premium academic paths which will lead to university, and the study of general education subjects below this level.

3. Handling vocational education

As we have seen, in many of the countries vocational education is undertaken by more than half of the upper secondary students. Furthermore, in each country in recent years, there have been moves to bolster, upgrade or revive vocational education and training in the face of one or more of:

- concerns about economic competitiveness and the relevance of education to a changing labour market;
- concerns about a drift towards academic tracks, generating perhaps unrealistic aspirations for higher education; and
- worries that general education does not motivate or get the best out of certain students.

We have already noted the very limited exposure to vocational matters in the lower secondary stage, beyond the relatively few students who are considered to be struggling with general subjects. What then are the models and approaches for delivering vocational education and initial training at the upper secondary stage?

VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In the USA, Canada and Sweden, as we have seen, vocational education is offered alongside general upper secondary courses, in the case of the North American countries in the form of elective options, and in Sweden as 14 grouped programmes with specialised occupational options within them. We have already noted the relatively small (and declining) numbers on dedicated vocational programmes in the USA, in favour of general education at below the *College Prep* level. The small incidence of vocational education at upper secondary level, though, should be seen in the context of very large vocational programmes in the USA and Canada at the higher education and *Community College* levels. To a degree, what has happened in these countries is that serious vocational preparation has shifted to a later stage of education, and

there is in effect no aspiration to equip upper secondary graduates with qualifications required by specific occupations in the labour market[7].

In Finland and France, there are dedicated institutions for young people undertaking vocational studies, and these do produce appreciable numbers with recognised occupational qualifications outside apprenticeship. A similar pattern of college-based occupational training occurs in the Netherlands (though there the ROCs are not specifically concerned with young people), and in Denmark and Australia, though in these cases vocational education is more likely to be part-time and/or merged with apprenticeship. In Germany, too, outside the large apprenticeship system, there are dedicated vocational schools and colleges providing recognised occupational qualifications.

One of the features of occupationally organised labour markets where particular qualifications are expected or required is that students who have pursued general secondary studies are likely to reappear in the vocational colleges in order to 'double qualify'. Appreciable numbers of Finns who have achieved the general upper secondary school leaving certificate 'go back' to undertake vocational courses at the same apparent level at vocational institutions;[8] 20% of Danish general students 're-qualify' occupationally; and 15% of those entering the German apprenticeship system have already gained the academic *Abitur*.

APPRENTICESHIP

All of the countries considered here have some kind of apprenticeship system, with historical roots. However, its nature, their attitude to it in the past, and therefore its role in the present differ very significantly.

The classic apprenticeship country is, of course, Germany with its *Duales System,* through which around two-thirds of young Germans pass, many immediately after leaving *Haupt*- or *Realschule* at 15. The German system is organized into 370 recognized occupations[9] each with a syllabus for practical training, a framework for theoretical learning and

7 In the USA there are a considerable number of State licensing regulations which require practitioners of particular trades to hold relevant credentials. This, however, does not amount to a national system, and individuals generally fulfil such requirements by attending relevant courses at Community Colleges after they have graduated from High School.

8 No doubt encouraged to do so further by the fact that eligibility to unemployment benefits in Finland is in part contingent on having an occupational qualification.

9 Not every occupation is entitled to recognition for the purpose of apprenticeship training (*annerkannte Ausbildungsberuf*); certain criteria have to be met.

assessment requirements agreed by the two sides of the sector concerned. Firms are approved to take apprentices by local industry chambers, and follow the practical training syllabus, sometimes using group training centres to supplement their facilities, while paying a trainee wage. Concurrently, colleges – the *Berufschulen* – provide both continuing general education and theoretical off-the-job courses relevant to the trades concerned, usually on the basis of release for one or two days per week. Most apprenticeships last for three years.

In our sample of countries, Denmark exemplifies a rather different approach to apprenticeship, while maintaining this form of training as a very significant feature of its 14–19 system. Here the line between college- and employer-led provision is not as clear as in Germany, and numbers, at around 40%, are not quite so high. Typically, the Danish system starts with a year in college in a relatively broad occupational grouping, and the opportunity to sample a range of occupations before finally determining which one of 200 trades to specialise in. Thereafter, training takes place in 'dual' mode with practical elements provided by employers alongside college inputs of relevant off-the-job training and general education. Most employers are not identified until after the young people start their programme. Employers pay apprentice wages, though they are subsidised for that portion which equates with college release. A 'journeyman's test' is taken after 3–4 years, consisting of theoretical examinations and practical tests, administered by the college, but also involving representatives of the two sides of industry[10]. There is a facility for colleges to provide simulated practical work if sufficient employers cannot be found – this applies in around 10% of cases.

Smaller, but nevertheless not insignificant, apprenticeship systems are present in France, the Netherlands and Australia, accounting for around 10-20% of young people. Though perhaps neglected over the years, attempts have been made to revive them. In the Netherlands and France, the emphasis has been on equating the qualifications gained by apprentices with other more prestigious vocational qualifications (in France this means that one can attain qualifications up to higher education level while in apprenticeship mode). In Australia, a modernisation initiative has involved opening up new apprenticeship occupations, reducing regulation, encouraging the creation of Group Training Companies to support small firms, and – again – putting

10 If an apprentice fails the practical tests three times, his employer may be fined.

qualifications gained through apprenticeship on a par with others in the established educational system.

The USA and Canada have very small apprenticeship systems confined in the main to a few traditional trades and to workers in their late twenties. Though there have been efforts to introduce 'youth apprenticeships' for school age trainees, they do not appear to be expanding fast. Finland and Sweden, too, are attempting to introduce an apprenticeship option from a low base – in the case of Sweden, apprenticeships having purposely been abolished in the 1970s. However, both these countries deliberately compensate for the lack of a significant apprenticeship system through requiring a significant period of their school-based vocational programmes to be spent on work experience: in the case of Sweden's *APU* a minimum of 15 weeks is aimed for; and Finland requires a 6-month period within its 3-year vocational programmes to be spent on an employer's premises.

GENERAL EDUCATION WITHIN VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

We have already seen how certain subjects are compulsory within general upper secondary education. There is also a compulsory core of general education within most vocational tracks. And in systems such as those of the USA and Canada, vocational subjects are taken as electives within a general High School curriculum.

In Germany we have noted that there is a legal requirement to undertake education on at least a part-time basis until 18. This is reflected in the curriculum of the *Berufsschulen,* where a third of the available curriculum time is taken up with German, social studies, economics, religious education and sport, in addition to those subjects (often including mathematics, science and sometimes a foreign language) specified in their occupational off-the-job training. The syllabus is designed so that able and willing students can gain the middle school leaving certificate (*Realschulabschluß*) if they have not already got it. Similarly there are rather more substantial components of general education in the full-time *Berufsfachshulen* and *Oberfachschulen* such that, in the latter case, the equivalent of the *Gymnasium's* leaving certificate (the *Allgemeine Hochreife*) can be achieved. In this way, educational, as well as occupational, progression links are built into the vocational system.

A general education core of about one-third is built into the full-time Swedish vocational programmes, involving eight subjects including Swedish, English, mathematics, social studies and science. In Finland, the general education component is rather smaller at 15% but includes continuing studies in two foreign languages, the mother tongue, mathematics, science, art, PE and social studies. All of the 30 sectoral variants of the French *Baccalauréat Professionnel* have a common general education component comprising around half of the time allocation, and which includes French, a foreign language, history/geography, art, civics, mathematics, physics and personal education. These broadly mirror the core subjects for the two other 'Bacs' in the French system. Even the lesser vocational certificate in France, the *CAP*, has requirements for French, mathematics /physics, history/geography and civics; the rather more general *BEP* demands a foreign language too.

ENHANCING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

As noted earlier, most countries are attempting to upgrade their vocational education systems, sensing threats either from a tendency amongst parents and students to migrate to general education, resulting in deferral or complete absence of vocational preparation, or from concerns by industry about the preparedness of young people. Though few countries have an explicit aim of parity of esteem, and, indeed, some systems plainly position vocational education as for the less academically gifted, many of the upgrading efforts do involve importing features of the more academic pathways. We have already noted the enhancements being made to apprenticeships. Some of the other more notable approaches are:

- in the USA, many education professionals are unhappy with the large number of young people staying with low level 'general' options outside the routes that will lead to college (*College Prep*) and without undertaking any serious vocational education. The long-standing Carl D Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act provides federal funds specifically for vocational programmes, recognising their high costs and assisting in the development of work-experience. Career academies have been established in many High Schools, as a 'school within a school' to focus on a specifically vocational curriculum for a particular group of occupations, involving employers and Community Colleges;

- in a number of countries, particular efforts have been made to link vocational programmes with higher education, recognising that this prospect acts as a powerful attraction to students and parents. This development often goes hand in hand with an expansion of vocational programmes in higher education and the creation of specialised vocational institutions within higher education. Thus in the USA and Canada *Tech-Prep* programmes involve two years of specifically vocational programmes in High School, articulating with, and giving some exemptions from, Associate Degrees in higher education. In Finland all vocational programmes have been increased from two to three years, giving an entitlement to higher education; the Finns aim to expand higher education to attract 60-65% of young people, principally through the development of the higher vocational *AMK* institutes which already recruit some 30% of their students from upper secondary vocational programmes; and

- in France the *Baccalauréat Professionnel* was introduced to replicate the prestige, and many of the features, of the two established 'bacs'. It too carries the prospect of access to higher education, though that is not its prime function. The design of the 'Bac Pro' effectively incorporates the established, but less prestigious, *CAP* and *BEP* qualifications such that students can readily progress from these to the more ambitious *baccalauréat*.

In the absence of a strong occupationally organised labour market, where young people have to qualify vocationally before taking up a recognised trade or profession (and where many with even advanced academic secondary qualifications do so), it would seem that developing routes to higher education from vocational programmes is essential to maintaining the viability of vocational programmes at the secondary phase. This factor may explain some of the academic drift that appears to have occurred within vocational programmes, and efforts to establish 'equivalencies' with academic qualifications within a unified framework. Apprenticeship provides a way of linking the secondary phase firmly with the labour market, which has been an attraction for most countries in recent years. However, the success of efforts to revive it have been mixed: there have been modest successes when it already had a reasonable base, and where the qualifications it offers can be equated with those elsewhere in the system; but reform initiatives have had less success where apprenticeship has customarily

been for older workers in traditional industries. A further tactic for developing vocational education has been to expand it at tertiary level, particularly within the recognised higher education structure. In this way vocational preparation is deferred after general secondary education, rather than being replaced by it. If this occurs, it is even more important for remaining vocational programmes at secondary level to link with the higher versions, for otherwise they become dead ends both educationally and occupationally.

4. Key skills

In most of our countries there has been concern of some sort or the other about the level of 'wider' skills within all forms of secondary education. In many cases, this concern emanates from employers, who consider that young people do not have the flexibility, appreciation of the conventions of working life or the personal qualities that will make them effective in modern business conditions. But some concerns go beyond this: that discipline-based academic subjects, or at least the way they are conventionally taught, do not foster the self-motivated learning and study skills that are needed in higher education; that too little is done to develop civic awareness; and that the spirit of enterprise should be developed.

Strenuous efforts to strengthen basic skills have been made in the USA through school effectiveness initiatives, and the system for requiring weak pupils to repeat a class in lower secondary schools in many European countries helps identify and remedy weaknesses in communication and numeracy. In Sweden, the introduction of entrance requirements (in Swedish, English and mathematics) for participation in all upper secondary national programmes has highlighted deficiencies in the performance of *Grundskola* leavers, leading to remedial programmes. And we have seen how continuing study in mother tongue, mathematics – and often many other general subjects – is required in many countries, whatever upper secondary programme is being followed. These core programmes often include civics and/or social studies as subjects in their own right.

Many countries approach the question of broad work-related competencies from the point of view that providing exposure to working life itself will develop these. We have already noted the extensive work placements required by Sweden and Finland within

their full-time vocational programmes. The Finns have further developed tests of competence in their vocational qualifications system in order to capture some of the less tangible aspects of skill. And, naturally, apprenticeship countries consider that the development of work-related competencies go hand in hand with the large proportions of time spent on-the-job. Work-experience is more limited on lower or general secondary tracks, but:

- Swedish *prao* consists of short periods of work-experience as an entitlement during lower secondary school. Upper secondary students also have an expectation that they will undertake work-experience;

- in the USA, numerous school-to-work programmes have been fostered with federal aid, involving close links between employers and schools, for example to bring realistic work projects into the school environment, provide *co-op* work placements and work shadowing opportunities; and

- in very many countries, upper secondary students will undertake paid work, though not as part of their studies. Levels can be high – in Denmark and Australia 40% of 15–19-year-old students outside apprenticeship programmes are employed; in Canada and the USA the proportion is 30%.[11] There are, of course, mixed views as to the desirability of this pattern, but in some countries it has become part of the economy of secondary, and indeed higher, education, sometimes – as in Denmark – becoming part and parcel of a system of longer and more gradual transition between school and work.

Formal and considered inventories of desired common competencies have achieved prominence in two countries:

- in the USA the *SCANS*[12] workplace competencies include handling resources, interpersonal skills, information handling, understanding of social and technological systems, and use of technology; and

11 OECD 2000, op cit, Appendix 3, Table 4.1

12 The acronym stands for *'Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills'* (1991)

- in Australia the 'Mayer' *key competencies* comprise handling information, communicating, planning and organising, working with others, using mathematics, solving problems, using technology and cultural understanding.

It is not quite clear what methods of implementation have been used to promote these competencies, but in the USA the approach has broadly been to use them to inform curriculum design, and in Australia the focus has been on using them as the basis for teacher assessment judgements. A rather different slant is taken in Canada, where *applied academies* within High Schools teach academic subjects but re-interpreted into the context of work-related and occupational settings.

In both France and the Netherlands, specific requirements for supervised independent study have been built into upper secondary general programmes in the light of concerns about 'spoon feeding' and insufficient study skills. In Finland, a concerted attempt across government to promote entrepreneurship has included placing it within the curriculum framework for schools.

In the main concerns about the range of student competencies are tackled either by the inclusion of compulsory subjects (eg. continuing mathematics and language) or by the inclusion of experiences likely to promote certain competencies (eg. work-experience, project work and private study). The direct use of generic competencies for syllabus construction or for assessment appears as yet to be an art in its infancy.

5. Handling disadvantage and drop-out

All of the countries considered here have high 'staying on' rates after compulsory schooling. Rates of non-participation a year after the end of compulsory schooling range from 2% (Germany) to 20% (Canada).[13] Taking a broader measure – the proportion of 15–19 year-olds in education and training, proportions vary from 88% (Germany and the Netherlands) to 75% (Canada)[14]. Nevertheless all countries are concerned about non-participation and drop-out and have a range of programmes to prevent and remedy them. We have already noted, at

13 OECD, *op cit*, Appendix 3, Table 2.4; 1996 figures. The UK figure is shown as 26%.

14 OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 2001, Table C1.2, 1999 figures. The UK figure is shown as 72.5%

one end of the spectrum, the legal requirement to attend at least part-time education in the Netherlands and parts of Germany. Most countries, though, do not have such a statutory requirement, but apply a range of different measures.

CAREERS ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

A prevalent means of prevention is of course a well-developed and active Careers Service. In Denmark, for example, there are careers teachers, specially trained for this role, in both general and vocational institutions, as well as guidance agencies outside the education system. Municipalities have a statutory obligation to follow up all young people under 20 who drop out of education without achieving a qualification (schools and colleges are obliged to notify them). A range of education and training opportunities are offered and two interviews a year are held to check progress. Benefit sanctions can be implemented for those who refuse help. Similar measures are taken in many countries.

EARLY VOCATIONAL COURSES

Specifically vocational courses at lower secondary level are rare, though – as we have seen – the Dutch *VMBO* has a definite pre-vocational slant in the final year of compulsory schooling, including the choice of an occupational area. Vocationally orientated measures more clearly targeted at children who are 'at risk' are taken in France through special *SEGPA* classes at the lower secondary stage, aimed at steering children with acknowledged educational problems through to gaining the basic *CAP* vocational qualification. *Collèges* can, in the final year, make arrangements for pre-vocational training leading to the *CAP* for pupils with behavioural difficulties or who have failed repeatedly in their academic work; these courses include at least six weeks in industry. In addition, catering for a rather wider group of younger students who are positively interested in early vocational training, *CLIPA* classes can be mounted for 14 year-olds in vocational *lycées*, *collèges* or apprenticeship centres; these involve internships in companies, but must also allow options of returning to mainstream education.

INDIVIDUALISED AND REMEDIAL PROGRAMMES

A fairly common approach to early drop-out in the upper secondary phase is the provision of special programmes, outside either regular

general or vocational education, where more individual courses and experiences can be implemented. In this vein Sweden has 'individual programmes' outside its 16 national programmes, designed for those who do not have the necessary *Grundskula* passes in Swedish, mathematics and English, and for young people who are uncertain about which of the national programmes to take. As well as targeting the 'missing' Swedish, mathematics or English, these programmes give the opportunity to sample different kinds of work. In general they last around a year and are designed specifically for 're-insertion' into a regular national programme, with a success rate of around 60%.

The Danish *EGU* courses are similarly designed for the less able or the undecided. If, following sampling, admission to recognised trade training cannot be achieved then this programme supports entry to an unregulated trade, through the necessary skill formation combined with work experience and continuing general education. A further Danish variant, the *FUU*, consists of individualised training, particularly for creative or media occupations, though there is some concern that it is somewhat casually used by those who could – and perhaps should – take a more substantial programme.

In the USA, the *Job Corps* is a federal programme for 16–24 year-olds providing two years of training focusing on personal skills, basic skills and work while staying on a special residential site. This is particularly aimed at those with disadvantaged domestic backgrounds. It is backed up by a special job placement agency. Typically, two to three grades improvements in English and mathematics are recorded and 80% of completors enter jobs or higher education. *Youth Service Canada* is a federal programme under which voluntary organisations provide community work designed to develop life and employability skills.

SECOND CHANCES TO QUALIFY

We have noted the ability, and sometimes the requirement, for weak students, to repeat classes at primary and secondary level in many countries, and the ability to 'catch up' on earlier qualification stages, such as is the case in Germany where the certificates indicating satisfactory completion of *Haupt-* or *Realschule* can be gained at a later point. Going considerably further than this in providing a second chance for many dropouts is the *General Education Development* in the USA, which results in a certificate generally acknowledged to be the

equivalent of a High School Diploma. *GED* achievements are indeed classified in the statistics along with High School Diplomas, and 15% of all diploma holders achieve their diplomas through the *GED* route. Recent reforms of adult education in the Netherlands have aligned its qualifications with those for secondary education such that equivalencies can be gained later in life.

Most European countries seem to be cautious about providing entirely different educational options for disadvantaged or disaffected students during compulsory education. However, flexible programmes, which are clearly outside the mainstream, feature at the upper secondary stage, offering a mixture of career orientation through sampling, catching up with basic education with a view to rejoining the mainstream, and training for basic jobs. The ability to gain qualifications after their main target age can provide a powerful incentive for those who regret having dropped out.

6. Graduation

All the countries we have surveyed have a concept of overall qualification at the end of the secondary phase, though this can in many cases be achieved long after the typical ages for such graduation. As a result of this concept, we can cite graduation rates for the countries which range from 74% (Sweden) to over 90% in the Netherlands and Germany[15]. Again, in all cases, the requirements for graduation reflect the entire programme, not just separate components of it, though not every subject will necessarily be examined or formally assessed.

UNIFIED SYSTEMS

Approaches in systems where there is no formal division between general and vocational programmes include:

- the USA's High School Diploma, which is gained through satisfying a given number of *Carnegie Units* indicating the total 'volume' of study. Teachers award grades for subjects, supplemented by external tests in some States; individual school boards determine the required

15 Upper secondary graduates to total population at typical age of graduation. OECD 2001, *op cit*, Table 2.2. Australia only has a graduation rate in respect of those pupils taking general upper secondary education (67%), which excludes students taking purely vocational qualifications. As we have no upper secondary graduation concept, no figures are given for the UK.

subjects, though there is a great deal of commonality about these. The diploma records courses taken and grades achieved, and is used for selection for entry to higher education, though some universities require further tests. The *Advanced Placement* tests produced by an independent testing agency have achieved a good deal of currency over and beyond the High School Diploma for students aiming for more prestigious higher education;

- though obviously the various national programmes in Sweden carry their own certification requirements, the pattern is the same for all, with each individual course within a programme having a certain volume weighting linked to the number of teaching hours, and attracting grading by teachers on a four point scale, the lowest of which is a 'fail'. Tests are used as a moderating instrument and can be claimed as of right by students disputing their grades. A leaving certificate is issued and eligibility for university[16] triggered if 90% of courses are passed.

PARALLEL SYSTEMS

Other systems, while keeping vocational and general streams clearly separate, have fairly evident parallels for their certification:

- the French *Baccalauréat Général* and *Technologique* are gained through external examinations in all the subjects required. Seven papers are required for the *Baccalauréat Professionel* though coursework also counts;

- in Finland successful completion of both the general upper secondary courses or the three-year vocational courses gives eligibility for higher education. General pupils have to pass examinations in three languages and either mathematics or general studies. For vocational qualifications the requirements are satisfactory assessment by teachers in all the components of the course, satisfactory reports from the employer providing the required work placement and demonstrations of competence.

16 Though there can be a considerable wait before a university place becomes available.

SEPARATE SYSTEMS

As we have seen, a number of countries have entirely separate systems for academic and vocational education. Nevertheless, a common feature is that in each case a combination of topics is required – either subjects in the case of academic awards, or achievement in both vocational and general education in the case of vocational awards:

- we have noted the 'journeyman's test' for combining practical and theoretical components for recognized training occupations in Denmark. Students on the Danish academic stream take 10 papers in an external *studentereksamen* covering the range of required subjects;

- the Dutch general *VWO* and *HAVO* students take examinations in Dutch, English and the subjects specified in their chosen subject groupings. Examination results are averaged with teacher assessments to produce an overall grade. For vocational qualifications, the *ROCs* set their own examinations, tests and assessments based on nationally laid down templates. *VWO* students are entitled to a university place, and *HBO* (higher vocational education) is accessed either by *HAVO* or by upper secondary vocational *MBO* qualifications, the latter often procuring some credit within the higher vocational system;

- the German *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* gives – as it name implies – general access to all higher education. It is accessed through the *Abitur* examination which involves four subjects, one of which is taken orally. Examination grades are combined with teacher assessments for non-examined subjects. Qualifications under the apprenticeship system are administered by local industry Chambers using the specifications laid down by the two sides of industry. They include both practical and theoretical elements, and often make use of centrally produced tests from testing agencies.

The prevalence of grouped awards, both for academic and vocational streams, is striking. Different balances of internal and external assessment are used, with some evidence that purely internal assessments may suffer diminished credibility, particularly in mass general education systems, and are being supplemented by external tests, either on a private or public basis. In the vocational qualifications

sphere, there tends to be greater latitude about methods of assessment. It is noteworthy that even examination-orientated systems do not necessarily examine all the subjects required for graduation.

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