

Government proposals to reform vocational qualifications for 16-19 year olds in England

A consultation published by the Department for Education (DfE) on 7th March 2013



What reforms does the consultation propose?

On 7th March 2013, the DfE published a consultation proposing reforms to vocational qualifications for 16-19 year olds. The DfE is asking for views on their proposals to:

Performance tables Change the:

- process and
- set of characteristics

by which level 3 vocational qualifications are judged for inclusion in 16-19 performance tables.

Categories for vocational qualifications

Introduce two separate categories of vocational qualification:

- 'Applied General' and
- 'Occupational'

in addition to academic qualifications.

Funding Establish whether 19+ learners should be funded to take vocational qualifications that:

- meet the new characteristics but
- do not conform to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).



What is the proposed timeframe for implementation?

When will the new policies come into effect?

The DfE proposes that any policy announcements following this consultation will come into effect in full for the 16-19 performance tables from 2018.

What are the interim measures?

There will be interim criteria which existing qualifications will be required to meet during a 'Grace period' for the 2016 and 2017 performance tables. [Learn more on page 8.](#)

What about learners starting in September 2013?

This consultation does not impact 2015 performance tables, so learners starting a 2-year course in September 2013 will not be affected.



How can I contribute my view on the consultation proposals?

At this stage, the DfE is running a public consultation and none of these proposals has become policy.

The DfE is requesting feedback on the consultation by **10th May 2013**, and is due to announce its response in **June 2013**, at which point they will confirm any changes to policy.

You can:

- **view** the consultation document and **respond** directly to the DfE [here](#)
- **join the debate** and submit your views in the [Pearson Co-Creation Hub](#) opinions will help inform Pearson's response to the consultation.

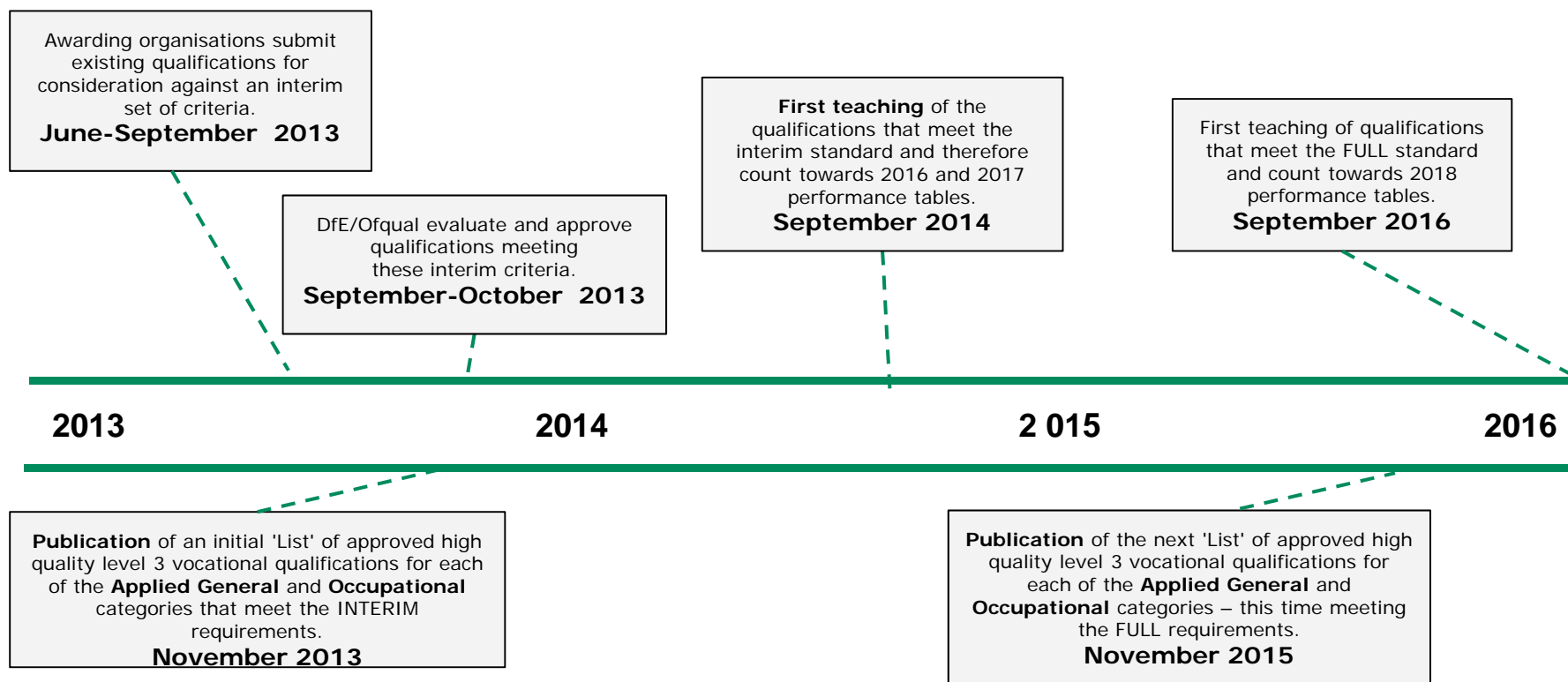


What is the timeline for the consultation?



What is the proposed timeline for the reforms?

The DfE is proposing a similar process for these reforms as for the 14-16 high quality non-GCSE qualifications:



The DfE is proposing a **2 year transition - or 'Grace' - period** for implementing this set of reforms, similar to the 1 year 'Grace period' schools will be familiar with from the Key Stage 4 reforms. The DfE will identify existing qualifications which only partially meet the full set of characteristics as long as the awarding organisation has committed to redeveloping them to meet the full set of characteristics by 2016. The DfE will then publish a list of these qualifications which meet the 'interim standard' in November 2013. These qualifications will be eligible for performance tables in 2016 and 2017. [Learn more.](#)

What are the proposed criteria for inclusion in 16-19 performance tables?

Please refer to the full consultation document on the [DfE website](#) for more detail.

Applied General	Occupational
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Size – at least 150 GLH per year.• Grading – Pass/Fail not acceptable.• External assessment<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 'significant amount' required, but no further specification of what this amount should be.• Synoptic assessment• Appropriate content• Progression – specifically to further study.• Proven track record	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Size – at least 150 GLH per year.• Employer endorsement• Assessment<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ external assessment is not mandatory, nor is grading.○ Strong emphasis on employer involvement in assessment.• Progression – to employment or further study.

What does the 'interim standard' mean in the timeline?

The DfE is proposing a **2 year transition - or 'Grace' - period** for implementing this set of reforms, similar to the 1 year 'Grace period' schools will be familiar with from the Key Stage 4 reforms. The DfE will identify existing qualifications which only partially meet the full set of characteristics as long as the awarding organisation has committed to redeveloping them to meet the full set of characteristics by 2016. The DfE will then publish a list of these qualifications which meet the 'interim standard' in November 2013. These qualifications will be eligible for performance tables in 2016 and 2017.

Courses starting in:

- **September 2013**

There is **no impact** on courses starting from September 2013.

Courses starting in:

- **September 2014**
- **September 2015**

For **2-year courses starting September 2014 and September 2015**, it is proposed that:

- only those **'Applied General' qualifications which meet the size and content requirements**, and
- those **'Occupational' qualifications which meet the size and employer endorsement requirements**

referred to as the **'interim standard'** will be recognised in performance measures.

How do these proposals relate to the 16-19 Study Programme?

The consultation document makes reference throughout to the Study Programme, and it is clear that the DfE has considered how these proposals will fit alongside Study Programmes.

We will be working with the DfE during the consultation period to seek clarification on the relationship between the Study Programmes and the proposed 16-19 vocational qualifications reforms.

How will this affect Study Programmes starting in September 2013?

Study Programmes have been through a full and thorough consultation process and are now a confirmed policy; the 16-19 vocational reforms are still in a consultation phase.

There is no indication in the consultation document that you need to make any changes at this stage to how you are implementing Study Programmes from September 2013.

What's the difference between the size required for the Study Programmes and for Performance Measures?

The consultation is proposing that a qualification must be at least 150 GLH in size to qualify for headline performance measures. The Study Programme stipulates a qualification 'of substantial size' - of at least 300 GLH - at the heart of the programme.

What about entry to HE Institutions and UCAS tariff points?

Do these proposals impact entry to HE institutions?

There is no indication that this consultation will have any impact on entry criteria to Higher Education (as defined by UCAS).

What is the relationship between 16-19 performance tables and UCAS tariff points?

There is **no** relationship between 16-19 performance tables and UCAS tariff points, and the DfE has no jurisdiction over the UCAS Tariff. The UCAS tariff system is also currently under review and we will keep you updated with any developments on this.



Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland

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Only schools and colleges in England are affected by this consultation.

For more information on education policy in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland contact:

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