



Pearson UK – Funding News

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Funding News provides a regular round-up of 16-18, 19+ and apprenticeship funding, and related news from government departments, funding agencies and other relevant organisations.

Key funding news this week is the latest version of the Skills Funding Agency's simplified funding catalogue for 2014/15 and the initial publication of the simplified funding catalogue for 2015/16. The Agency also published the new rules that awarding organisations have to follow when making submissions for 19+ funding. Other news includes updated guidance on Traineeship eligibility rules, an update on the latest on the funding for Higher Nationals, the latest mapping of national engagement programmes for young people, and David Cameron talks about education priorities.

Skills Funding Agency – Latest 2014/15, and first 2015/16 simplified funding catalogues

The Skills Funding Agency published their latest update of the [2014/15 simplified funding catalogue](#) last week which lists all provision the Agency has approved for public funding in 2014 to 2015 and their funding rates. The list includes information on the availability of qualifications for 24+ advanced learning loans.

The Agency also released the first [2015/16 simplified funding catalogue](#). Again, the catalogue lists all provision the Agency has approved for public funding in 2015 to 2016 and includes information on the availability of qualifications for 24+ advanced learning loans. The funding rates aren't included as yet but will be added shortly. The 2015/16 version of the catalogue will be updated on a quarterly rather than a monthly basis.

Skills Funding Agency – Technical guidance for awarding organisations for approving qualifications for 19+ funding

Alongside the release of the 2015/16 simplified funding catalogue the Agency also released the new technical guidance awarding organisations have to follow when submitting qualifications for 19+ funding. Certain qualifications (for example GCSEs, A levels, iGCSEs in English and maths that are part of the English Baccalaureate, and Technical Certificates and Tech Levels which meet DfE requirements for inclusion in 16 to 19 Performance Tables) are approved automatically (all automatically approved qualifications are listed on pages 10 and 11). For all other qualifications awarding organisations continue to have to make submissions, and all submissions must include letters of support from end users (HEIs or employers or FE and training providers).

A change in the technical guidance rules, which reflects Ofqual's withdrawal of the QCF, is that qualifications no longer need to be on the QCF before a submission can be made for 19+ funding. This means awarding organisations can now apply for 19+ funding for NQF qualifications.

Skills Funding Agency – Traineeship supporting information updated

The Agency updated their [Traineeship supporting information](#) last week following the recent policy change. It is available on the [Traineeships programme section](#) of the website which includes support for employers and training organisations, information about who Traineeships are aimed at, and information about eligibility for employers and training organisations. The information reflects the wider eligibility criteria, which now includes all 16- to 24-year-olds qualified below Level 3. The factsheets for learners and businesses have also been updated.

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – Funding Higher Nationals

We have been receiving a few queries about the loan funding for Higher National Certificates and Diplomas and what will happen in the future so we've provided a quick summary of the current situation.

The proposal in the BIS consultation, [the future development of loans in further education](#) (released June 2014, closed August 2014), was that Higher Nationals loan funding move to the Skills Funding Agency. The outcome of this consultation was first due out in November, and then at the end of January. We now expect it to come out early this year.

Hefce do currently directly loan fund further education colleges, sixth form colleges, and private providers for Higher Nationals in the following way. This is all subject to change following the outcome of the consultation.

- The way Hefce fund further education and sixth form colleges is to [designate colleges](#) for student support purposes via the Student Loans Company. This means students can access government loans and grants.
- The application window for further education and sixth form colleges, new to Hefce, to apply for direct funding from Hefce for 2015-16 closed on 28 July 2014. The next available window will open in spring 2015 for entry in 2016-17, and Hefce will provide further details on how to apply in 'due course'.
- The way Hefce fund alternative providers and academies is to [designate specific courses](#) for student support purposes via the Student Loans Company. This means students can access government loans and grants.
- No applications for specific course designation for any new HND or HNC courses have been accepted since the September 2014 application window. The approach to specific designation of HND/C courses for 2015/16 will be reviewed in light of the outcomes of the consultation.

We will update you with any news in future issues of Funding News.

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – Higher education funding priorities for 2015 to 2016

For anyone delivering HE the release by BIS of the [higher education funding priorities for 2015 to 2016](#) will be of interest. At the end of January 2015 BIS issued its annual Grant Letter to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) – confirming that the total funding available to universities is expected to rise from £11.1 billion to £12.1 billion in 2015 to 2016.

Education Funding Agency – Mapping engagement programmes for young people

The EFA have added an updated spreadsheet and pdf documents to their webpage on [mapping engagement programmes for young people](#). The documents map national engagement programmes for young people aged 16 to 18 year-olds (up to 25 year-olds for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) to provide Local Authorities, educational institutions and other 16 to 19 providers with a summary of the engagement programmes available across England. They detail the main features of each engagement programme and notes whether programmes can be combined for the benefit of participants. The information will be updated in April 2015 and the EFA will review its value in July 2015.

Local Government Association – Report on achievement and retention in post-16 education

The Local Government published this [report](#) this week which provides a statistical overview of drop out and success rates for post-16 education and skills in England. Their executive summary gives an overview of retention, achievement and the cost of those who drop out. They estimate the cost to the exchequer, of post-16 learning aims that were started but not successfully completed, to be £814 million in 2012/13. This represented around 12% of the funding allocated to provision for 16 to 18 year olds. This figure has fallen across schools, FE and Apprenticeships in the last two years, with total costs to the Exchequer down by around £164 million (17%) since 2010/11.

Conservative Government – David Cameron speech on education priorities

In a [speech](#) setting out the government's education priorities David Cameron promised to protect 'flat cash;' per pupil spending, but admitted this would reduce in value with inflation. The Association of Colleges has said that restricting this budget protection to schools was 'desperately disappointing' for further education and sixth form colleges. The speech also included a promise that by 2020 'three million more apprenticeships' would be created, and that this would be paid for by reducing the benefit cap to £23,000. The cap on university places will also be removed from 2015-16.

Pearson – Steve Besley's Policy Watches

The latest from Steve Besley includes [Policy Eye - week ending February 6 2015](#), [Pocket Watch – Ofsted ring the changes to inspections](#), [Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in January 2015](#), [Policy Eye - week ending January 30 2015](#), [Pocket Watch – What now for Academies?](#), [Policy Eye - week ending January 23 2015](#), and [Pocket Watch – Policy Lessons from this year's BETT show](#). As usual, find these and the archives on the [Pearson UK](#) website.

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