



## Pearson UK – Funding News

12 June 2015

*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.*

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Funding news this week includes the announcement of the earn or learn taskforce, in-year cuts of £3 billion, £900 million of which will have to come from BIS and the administration of arms lengths bodies in the DfE, changes to which qualifications will be accepted by the Home Office for people who need to prove their English language ability, and a speech from Nick Gibb about the academic curriculum. Skills Funding Agency news includes an updated list of apprenticeship training agencies (ATAs), the news of no growth requests being approved until after the budget on 8 July and the digital skills qualifications review.

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## Prime Minister's Office

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### Earn or learn implementation taskforce

To ensure the government is on track with creating 3 million apprenticeships Prime Minister David Cameron announced a new implementation taskforce to make sure young people are earning or learning. Downing Street announced [10 implementation taskforces](#) alongside their announcement of cabinet committees. The taskforces will focus on housing, health and social care, earn or learn, immigration, childcare, tackling extremism in communities, troubled families, exports, digital infrastructure and inclusion, and Syrian returners. The terms of reference for the earn or learn taskforce is to 'help businesses to create two million new jobs to achieve full employment; support three million new apprenticeships; make sure that all young people are either earning or learning' and is made up of key conservative MPs. It complements the announcement made in the [Queen's Speech](#) to bring forward legislation to help achieve full employment and provide more people with the security of a job by requiring ministers to report annually on job creation and apprenticeships.

- Minister for the Cabinet Office, Paymaster General (Chair) (The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP)
- Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (The Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP)

- Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP)
- Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP)
- Secretary of State for Education, Minister for Women and Equalities (The Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP)
- Chief Secretary to the Treasury (The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP)
- Minister of State for Employment (The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP) Minister of State for Business, Innovation, and Skills (Nick Boles MP)
- Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Lord Bridges of Headley)

## Treasury

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### In year cuts of £900 million to BIS and the administration of arms lengths bodies in the DfE

After pledging £30 billion of fiscal consolidation, in the [Manifesto](#) made up of £13 billion cuts to public services, £5 billion from reduced tax evasion, and £12 billion of benefit cuts, the Chancellor announced on the 4 June the [in-year budget review process](#) which identified savings to be made in the meantime, the idea being that where cuts need to be made it is sensible to bring them in earlier. Whitehall departments outside of protected areas like the NHS, schools and aid have found a further £3 billion savings this financial year. Almost a third of the savings will be made by cuts to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (£450 million) and the administration of arms lengths bodies in the Department for Education (£450 million). The [BBC](#) has reported that grants given to the poorest university students could be cut as part of BIS savings.

## Home Office

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### Secure English language tests (SELTs)

The Home Office has announced [changes](#) to the arrangements for SELTs. From November 2015 people who need to prove their English language ability for the purposes of settlement, nationality or limited leave, will need to take a Home Office approved SELT and other English language qualifications (such as ESOL) will not be accepted. The new system means that settlement and citizenship applicants need to take tests at approved test centres. Further information on SELTs is available on the [applying for a uk visa: approved english language tests](#) and the [approved English language qualifications](#) pages of the gov.uk website.

## Department for Education

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### Nick Gibb and the academic curriculum

On 11 June, in a [speech](#) at an event hosted by [Policy Exchange](#), Schools Minister Nick Gibb set out the government's plans to reinforce the importance of a core academic curriculum for all pupils. Measures already taken to 'restore academic subjects to the heart of the curriculum in all schools' are outlined and he stated that the government will also, in due course, set out details of the government's expectation that secondary school pupils should take English Baccalaureate subjects at age 16.

## Skills Funding Agency

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### Updated list of apprenticeship training agencies (ATAs)

The Skills Funding Agency has updated the [national register of ATAs](#). K10 has been added to the list. Apprenticeship training agencies recruit, employ and arrange training for apprentices on behalf of employers who are interested in employing an apprentice but cannot currently commit to the length of time needed for a full apprenticeship. The page also includes guidance and the application form to become a recognised ATA.

## No growth requests until after the budget on 8 July

The Agency has written to training providers to inform them that no skills programme growth requests can be met until after the Budget on 8 July. The freeze applies to the government's priority skills programmes – apprenticeships and traineeships – and includes 16-18 apprenticeships where there are normally no caps on growth if a provider can evidence demand from young people. The letter explains that when growth requests are re-instated apprenticeships and traineeships will remain the priority.

## Digital skills qualifications review

As part of their review of digital skills qualifications the Agency would like to hear from curriculum leads in digital skills provision. They want to know more about the different types of provision on offer that lead to the development of digital skills, outside of apprenticeships (and give examples – basic digital literacy, digital skills that adults need in a variety of work environments, or specialist and advanced qualifications that lead directly into digital job roles). The Agency are asking for curriculum leads in digital skills provision willing to share their experiences, to respond to the [digital skills qualifications review](#) by Friday 26 June.

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### 2015 to 2016 simplified funding rates catalogue – the usual reminder

The latest list of qualifications approved for 19+ funding (and loan funding) can be found on the Skills Funding Agency's [simplified funding rates catalogue](#). The funding [Hub](#) is the key source of confirmation of funding eligibility but the Agency also publishes the catalogue to ensure providers know as soon as possible when a qualification is confirmed for 19+ funding. Awarding bodies now have to make a submission for every qualification to be approved for 19+ funding on a quarterly basis and the next update of the catalogue will be on 1 July.

On 1 May 2015 we published an [update](#) confirming the final situation on funding for 19+ learners in England studying BTEC First qualifications. There are BTEC First qualifications available in each sector, which are funded for pre- and post-19 learners. This means that you can co-teach 16-18 and 19+ students on the same qualification, which will be funded for the academic years 2014-15 and 2015-16. The only exception is in the Vehicle Technology sector where our qualifications do not meet the minimum learner threshold required to be eligible for 19+ funding. A sector-by-sector list of funded qualifications is provided.

## Steve Besley's Policy Watches

The latest from Steve Besley includes [Policy Eye - week ending June 5 2015](#), and [Pocket Watch - Unravelling the Education Bill](#). Find these and more on the [Pearson UK](#) website.

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Information is correct at the time of writing and is offered in good faith. No liability is accepted for decisions made on the basis of information given.