



## Pearson UK – Funding News

18 September 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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News this week includes information from BIS on the lifting of the moratorium on applications for various higher education gateways, news from the SFA about the acceptability of the IGCSE in the early years pathway, and Ofqual's reform of the regulation of vocational qualifications.

### HM Government

- Regional Growth Fund Annual Monitoring Report 2014-15

### Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

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- Financial support for full-time students of higher education in 2016 to 2017
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## HM Government

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### Regional Growth Fund Annual Monitoring Report 2014-15

The [Regional Growth Fund \(RGF\): annual monitoring report 2015](#) was published on the 11 September. It is the third RGF annual monitoring report. The RGF was launched in June 2010 to support businesses across all sectors and regions in England. It is a competitive fund intended to stimulate enterprise by leveraging private sector investment to support projects and programmes with significant potential for economic growth; and support areas and communities dependent on the public sector to make the transition to private sector-led growth.

## Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

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### Moratorium lifted on applications for various higher education gateways

The moratorium on making applications to be part of the HE system has been lifted, and administration of the processes has now passed to Hefce. BIS originally imposed a moratorium on new applications submitted after 2 April. Updated [guidance](#) is now available on applications for the transfer of further education corporations to the higher education sector, designation as an institution eligible for Hefce funding, university and university college title, and degree awarding powers. New guidance for foundation degree awarding powers will also be published shortly. Hefce has also published [information on how to apply](#). They are referred to collectively as the 'gateway processes', as they are the ways in which providers can enter, or change status within, the higher education sector.

### Financial support for full-time students of higher education in 2016 to 2017

BIS have published [information](#) about tuition fees and loans available to students going to university or college in 2016 to 2017. It includes details of the extra support available for certain groups of students and explains where to go for more information.

### National minimum wage rates

A quick reminder that from Thursday, 1 October, the [apprenticeship minimum wage](#) will rise to £3.30 an hour.

### Progression statistics

BIS have produced findings of [research](#) into the progression to higher education of students from further education colleges and sixth form colleges in England, and of [research](#) into the progression to higher education of advanced level apprenticeships in England. The headline progression statistics show that between 2008 and 2012, 795,470 FE college and sixth form college students progressed to higher education. The progression rate for those proceeding to study HE immediately following their college course averaged 34% increasing to 48% when tracked over a number of years. Between 2006-07 and 2012-13, 35,940 advanced level apprentices progressed to HE. The progression rate for the 2006-07 cohort who were tracked into HE over 7 years was 19.3%. 44% of advanced level apprentices progress later, between 4 and 7 years after completing their apprenticeship. 68% of the 2006-07 cohort progressed to part-time HE but this dropped to 50% for the 2010-11 cohort.

### Enterprise Bill factsheets and impact assessment

BIS have produced a [factsheet](#) outlining the measures that will be included in the Enterprise Bill. Factsheets are also available on specific areas of the Bill: on the measures that will give the secretary of state the power to take action when the term '[apprenticeships](#)' is misused to promote low-quality courses, and on the [public sector apprenticeship targets](#). A BIS [impact](#)

[assessment](#) summarising the cumulative effects of the policies in the Enterprise Bill is also available.

## **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and the Skills Funding Agency**

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### **New statistics – apprenticeship grant for employers (age 16 to 24)**

[New statistics](#) have been added to the information available on the number of apprenticeship starts and achievements. The data provides information on apprenticeships through a number of reports and the new statistics captures data on the apprenticeship grant for employers (age 16 to 24).

## **Skills Funding Agency**

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### **Early years educator pathway: IGCSE**

The Agency will now [fund apprentices](#) on the Early Years Educator pathway of the Children and Young People's Workforce framework for the 2015 to 2016 funding year for accredited IGCSEs in English and maths. This also applies to apprentices who started this pathway between 6 April 2015 and 31 July 2015 who do not already have a GCSE in English and maths. For these apprentices this meets the requirements for the Apprenticeships framework, the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England and the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Learning Aims Reference Service data will be updated to include this change.

## **Education Funding Agency**

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### **Consultation on schools and early years finance (England) regulations 2015**

The EFA is seeking views on the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2015. The regulations will put in place arrangements for local authorities to set school budgets for the financial year 2016 to 2017. EFA published the [schools block units of funding for 2016 to 2017 on 16 July 2015](#). An outline of proposed changes is available in the draft [School and Early Years Finance \(England\) Regulations 2015 and consultation document](#). The consultation period runs until 13 November 2015 and the intention is for the regulations to come into force in January 2016.

## **Higher Education Funding Council for England**

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### **Strategic overview of higher and degree apprenticeships**

Hefce, in conjunction with University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) and in consultation with the Skills Funding Agency, has designed a [high-level visual document](#) for higher education institutions and further education colleges that would like more information about the apprenticeship policy and are interested in offering training for a higher or degree apprenticeship. The strategic overview introduces the main strategic themes that providers need to consider if they wish to offer training for a higher or degree apprenticeship, and signposts providers to up-to-date and detailed information about next steps, and policy advice and funding information.

## Commons Select Committee

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### Inquiry into assessing the quality of higher education

The BIS Select Committee has launched an [inquiry](#) into quality assessment in higher education which will look at proposed changes to quality assessment in universities and the potential impact of introducing a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The Committee is keen to hear views on a range of issues including whether the proposed changes to the quality assurance process in universities, as outlined by Hefce in its consultation will improve quality in higher education, what the objectives of a Teaching Excellence Framework ('TEF') should be, and how the proposed connection between fee level and teaching quality should be managed.

## Association of Colleges

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### Spending Review representation 2015

This [blog](#) was published by the AoC on the 4 September (apologies we missed it last week). It's a useful overview of the AoC's submission to the Spending Review and includes a link to the full document. The Treasury is looking to find further £20bn of savings over the next 4 years, partly through efficiencies and sale of assets but partly through public spending cuts. Government departments were required to model two scenarios and submit plans by 4 September. Discussions will take place over September and October and plans will be signed off in mid-November in time for the Spending Review to be announced on the 25 November. Department plans will follow in December.

## Ofqual

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### Reforming regulation of vocational qualifications

Jeremy Benson, Executive Director of Vocational Qualifications at Ofqual, [spoke](#) at the Skills and Employability Summit in London this week. He confirmed that the QCF rules will be withdrawn at the end of this month but that the next era 'will not see a radical overhaul of all qualifications, as happened when the QCF was introduced'. Awarding organisations will have to comply with Ofqual's General Conditions, and these have been updated those to reflect the demise of the QCF. The Conditions are outcome-focused (i.e. focus on what the awarding organisations and their qualifications should achieve, not how they should achieve that) and a renewed regulatory tool to be known as the [Regulated Qualifications Framework \(RQF\)](#) will be introduced and will help people to understand all of the qualifications Ofqual regulate.

## Pearson

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### Steve Besley's Policy Watches

The latest from Steve Besley includes [Policy Eye - week ending September 11 2015](#), [Pocket Watch – Up for review: latest on post-16 review process](#), [Pocket Watch – Where would you cut?](#) These and more can be found on the [Pearson UK](#) website or [sign up](#) for email updates direct to your inbox.

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