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Policy Tracker – Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in November 2018



Main talking points

A packed month. Ofqual has published further data on this year's exams along with more research into marking and grading. Ofsted has been talking more about its proposed new inspection framework and published a report on L2. Schools have heard more about the multiplication tests, colleges about T level funding proposals and the Apprenticeship Provider Register, while HE has seen reports on value for money, student loans, the graduate premium and accelerated degrees

Key headlines from the month

- Replacing the P scale. Government announces development of a new assessment model from 2020
- Multiplication tables check. Standards and Testing Agency publishes assessment specification
- GCSE computer science. Ofqual consults on future assessment arrangements
- Inter-subject comparability. Ofqual reports on grading standards in 6 A' levels
- Exam facts and figures. Ofqual publishes more data on this year's entries and trends
- Data collection. Workload Group recommends ways to simplify and reduce the burden
- School performance. Government announces new approach to underperforming schools
- Teachers. TeachFirst launches new strategy
- Strategic College Improvement Fund. The government invites bids for Round 2
- Adult education budget devolution. Government issues new guidance
- T levels. New ETF led professional development programme announced
- T level funding. Government launches consultation on funding delivery
- RoATP. DfE publishes new stricter Register for Apprenticeship Training Providers
- Level 2. Ofsted reports on an overlooked cohort in need of a more stimulating offer
- College governance. Government updates its guidance and adds some support
- Value for money in HE. Education Committee calls for more skills provision and better grad outcomes
- Graduate earnings. New figures reveal the extent of the graduate premium in early career years
- 2-year degrees. Government confirms plans to move ahead
- Degree classification. QAA undertake consultation on strengthening the system
- TEF review. Government announces Chair of the review due to report back next summer
- 2018 Uni entry. UCAS starts to publish comprehensive data sets on 2018 uni entry

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Reports/Publications of the month (in order of publication)

- **Socio-economic differences in total education spending in England.** The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IfS) highlights a shift in educational funding towards the less well off
- **Value for money in higher education.** The Education Committee reports on its Inquiry into value for money in HE calling for a greater emphasis on skills, graduate outcomes and improved access
- **Educating for the Modern World.** The CBI and Pearson publish their latest annual skills survey showing many businesses keen to train and recruit but anxious about being able to recruit skilled staff
- **Regulating Basic Digital Skills Qualifications.** Ofqual launches consultation on its proposals for regulating the design, delivery and assessment of the new Basic Digital Skills Qualls
- **Making data work.** The Teacher Workload Advisory Group publishes its report listing a number of recommendations for government, Ofsted and schools to help ease the burden on teachers
- **Teachers Working Longer Review.** The DfE publishes the outcomes of its review into the effects of teachers having to work more years finding many positives but calling for further research
- **Future assessment arrangements for GCSE computer science.** Ofqual proposes keeping the current arrangements for up to 2021 with a new exam regime from 2022
- **A sustainable future for international students in the UK.** The All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Students sets out 12 recommendations to help encourage more foreign students
- **Guide to setting up partnerships.** The DfE issues a new guide for schools on how best to set up partnerships and what needs considering for those who really need to know
- **Adult education budget devolution.** The Education and Skills Funding Agency issues a useful guide to what's involved in the devolution of the adult education budget due in some regions from next year
- **Early career CPD.** The DfE reports on research conducted by the NFER on the professional development needs of teachers in the early stages of their careers
- **International Student Behaviours.** Universities UK in collaboration with the HotCourses Group report on the latest trends showing China and to a lesser degree India with considerable growth
- **Careers provision in colleges: what works?** The Careers and Enterprise Co uses case study and other evidence to demonstrate best practice in careers provision in colleges
- **Who knows what about me?** The Children's Commissioner highlights how much data on children is being created and potentially passed round calling for greater protections all round
- **Global Teacher Status Index 2018.** The Varkey Foundation reports on the latest survey of how teachers are regarded in different countries with the UK emerging as 13th out of 35 other countries
- **Mental health and behaviour in schools.** The DfE updates its earlier guidance for schools with clearer responsibilities and sources of help
- **Bullying in school 2013-2018.** The DfE reports on the incidences of bullying in school over recent years, how this has changed and what steps are being taken to challenge it
- **Brexit and colleges.** The Association of Colleges looks at the impact of Brexit for the FE sector highlighting five areas where more work is needed
- **Assessment framework for the multiplication tables check (MTC.)** The Standards and Testing Agency outlines the assessment specification for the MTC which becomes statutory in 2020

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- **Grading vocational and technical assessments.** Ofqual looks at initial evidence from grading practice across a range of qualifications as a basis for listing best practice for the future
- **Grading competence-based assessments.** Ofqual reports on a small-scale study of evidence from Australia as it attempts to draw up a set of principles for further development
- **Evidence-based early years intervention.** The Commons Science and Technology Committee highlights how adverse experiences in childhood can lead to mental concerns later
- **Improving the home learning environment.** The DfE outlines a new behaviour change model to help with home learning built around features such as chat-play-read to help with comms skills
- **Public perceptions about UK universities.** Universities UK reports on its latest survey of perceptions on UK universities with young people most positive but concerned about costs
- **Realising the potential of work experience.** The British Youth Council highlights the importance of work experience but notes some patchy provision especially among disadvantaged young people
- **State of the Nation in Careers.** The Careers and Enterprise Co reports on latest best practice in England finding increasing numbers of schools and colleges meeting good practice benchmarks
- **Accelerated degrees response.** The government publishes the outcomes of its consultation into accelerated degrees showing varying levels of concern about definitions, costings and QA
- **Accelerated degree courses: assessment of impact.** The government publishes an impact assessment outlining the rationale, options, costs and benefits for accelerated degrees
- **Migration, displacement and education.** UNESCO publishes its global education monitoring report highlighting concerns about pressures on the system and lack of opportunities for some learners
- **Post-16 education: outcomes for disadvantaged students.** The DfE publishes research indicating that disadvantaged students tend to be on lower-level routes and progress slowly in terms of earnings
- **College staff survey.** The DfE publishes the 2018 staff survey showing $\frac{3}{4}$ were on permanent contracts, $\frac{1}{2}$ had worked in FE for over 10 years and most had a teaching qualification
- **Learners and Apprentices survey 2018.** The DfE publishes its accompanying learner survey showing many learners coming from deprived areas and leading complex lives but looking to progress
- **Annual report of the FE Commissioner.** The FE Commissioner reports on the work of his team over the year showing the team's wider remit beginning to have a positive impact
- **Scrutiny report on the DfE.** The National Audit Office (NAO) reports on the work of the DfE over the past year providing a mass of useful data on spending, student numbers and teacher volumes
- **Our next chapter.** TeachFirst launches a new chapter in its development aimed at supporting and encouraging more teachers to stay in or to join up especially in disadvantaged areas
- **Level 2 study programme.** Ofsted reports on its research into L2 provision for 16-18 year olds finding a mixed and rather depressing bag with insufficient attention given to learner needs
- **The Rise of the Dual Professional.** GuildHE uses case study evidence from among its members to illustrate how important it can be to have professionals who maintain a role outside as well as in
- **Inter-subject comparability.** Ofqual confirms no need to adjust grading standards in six A' levels covering sciences and modern foreign languages, following extensive research and analysis

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- **Sale of student loans.** The Public Accounts Committee reports on its inquiry into the initial sale of student loans suggesting that the government got a poor deal and needs to be more careful in future
- **Where do student fees really go?** The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) finds just under half goes on teaching costs and most of the rest on supporting activities such as IT and mental health support
- **Children's mental health briefing.** The Children's Commissioner reports on the provision of mental health services for children in England noting long waiting lists and growing case loads
- **Pay as you Go?** The Sutton Trust reports on graduate internships finding many unpaid and not widely advertised and recommending fairer recruitment and pay as result
- **School security.** The DfE consults on new non-statutory guidance for schools and others on school security ensuring that schools have adequate plans in place to manage security related incidents
- **2017 maladministration report.** The Standards and Testing Agency reports an increase in the number of maladministration cases in last year's KS1 and 2 tests
- **The impact of undergraduate degrees on early-career earnings.** The Institute for Fiscal Studies analyses the extent of the graduate premium up to age 29 and finds females with the best returns
- **Provider funding for the delivery of T levels.** The DfE launches consultation on funding arrangements for T levels proposing a 4 band funding rate plus placement and Eng/maths
- **National minimum wage.** The Low Pay Commission issues its latest report showing young apprentices in particular having to cope with low wage growth and underpayment
- **The Independent Higher Education Survey.** The membership body for independent HE providers reports on its latest membership survey outlining the range of provision offered and future priorities
- **Quality of marking.** Ofqual releases a series of research reports on the quality of marking in GCSEs and GCEs finding the system working well but adding areas for possible improvement
- **Degree classification.** University groups examine the recent rise in top degrees and support the launch of a consultation on strengthening the degree classification system
- **Gaining access.** The Reform think tank finds only limited progress being made by high-tariff universities in recruiting disadvantaged students
- **The case for a graduate levy.** The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) publishes a briefing paper arguing for employers, who recruit graduates, to be more responsible for paying tuition fees
- **End of Cycle Report 2018.** UCAS publishes the first batch of its comprehensive 2018 uni entry data including for the first time data on unconditional offers

Speeches of the month

- The Prime Minister's **14 November Statement** on the Withdrawal Agreement explains that she has secured the bones of a deal and that, after tense discussion, the Cabinet has agreed to it
- Amanda Spielman's **14 November National Children and Adult Services Conference speech** recognises the importance of Ofsted and local services working together to protect children
- Carolyn Fairbairn's **19 November CBI Annual Conference speech** calls for government and business to work more closely on issues like skills and immigration policies

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- The Prime Minister's **19 November CBI Annual Conference speech** sets out the case for the Withdrawal Agreement and the important role business can play in developing skills
- Anne Milton's **20 September AoC speech** recognises the strength of the #LoveOurColleges campaign but urges colleges to ensure their houses are in order to be able to persuade the Treasury
- Amanda Spielman's **21 November AoC speech** sets out some of the thinking behind the new inspection framework while recognising much of the good work colleges already do

Quotes of the month

- "We have a straightforward message to school leaders who want to cut out unnecessary work and help their staff to devote their energies to teaching: we will support you" – the DfE responds to the Workload Advisory Group report on better management of data
- "Schools and colleges do not have the luxury of an independent body trusted by the public to make its case for the funding the system so desperately needs" – the Chair of the Education Committee vows to take on the role
- "We will not bail out universities or other course providers in financial difficulty" – Sir Michael Barber, Chair of the Office for Students, spells it out when it comes to bail outs
- "The lecturers have a high-definition monitor in front of them which is calibrated so they can point at people and look them in the eye" – Imperial College reports on its first 'hologram' lecturer
- "The University will pay the registration fee for all European staff and their families should they wish to stay under the settled status scheme" – the VC of Nottingham Uni confirms support for EU staff
- "The risks of being a leader are higher than ever before" – AoC chief executive on the challenges of being a college leader these days
- "Well-meaning principals and governors they may be but in this day and age, robust financial management and leadership is the route to a successful colleges" – the Skills Minister calls the shots at the Colleges' Conference
- "I am confident that this will be the most researched and evidence-based framework in our history" – the Chief Inspector on the work going into developing a new inspection framework
- "A good step that's building credibility into the education system" – OECD Director of Education Andreas Schleicher offers support to T levels
- "The fact remains that we don't actually know how much a good education costs in Britain" – education commentator Laura McInerney highlights a problem in education funding

Word or phrase of the month

- 'Spurious precision.' The pursuit of an elusive precision on pupil performance through the collection of masses of info and/or data as outlined and condemned by the latest workload advisory group

Steve Besley

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