



Pearson

Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



The week in a nutshell

The week ended with the publication of latest instalment of the government's long running **review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below**. In completing its response to the first stage of the review and launching the second phase consultation, ministers have confirmed they will be removing funding for qualification that overlap with A levels and T Levels – stating they should become the qualifications of choice at Level 3. The events of the summer were revisited as newly published **Ofqual Board minutes** showed that Gavin Williamson's 'triple lock' was announced before Ofqual had been able to sign it off and that Centre Assessed Grades had been considered by the Secretary of State ahead of A level results day. Schools Minister **Nick Gibb** was in front of the Education Select Committee covering the impact of COVID-19 on learning and plans for 2021 exams. He also 'misspoke' when describing all schools to be in 'tier one' of the contain framework – clarification later came from DfE that this relates only to those schools in 'high' and 'very high' risk areas. And finally, in the face of the 'circuit-breaker' lockdown in Wales, blended learning in universities will continue. In the latest of our **Policy Blog Series**, Dr. Gary Gates discusses how universities can build confidence in online delivery.

Top stories

The government has published its [response to the first phase](#) of its review into Post-16 qualifications at Level 3 and below and a [consultation on phase two](#).

- The consultation proposes the removing funding for qualifications that overlap with A levels and T Levels. Funding will remain for “high quality alternatives to A levels, that support students to progress onto specialist Higher Education courses”, such as performing arts and sports. In supporting of the recently announced Lifetime Skills Guarantee, adults will be able to access more courses, including new T Levels.
- Qualifications will link to standards designed by employers, in the same way as apprenticeships, T Levels and the new Higher Technical Qualifications. The consultation closes on 15 January 2021.
- **Cindy Rampersaud, Senior Vice President BTEC and Apprenticeships at Pearson, said:** *“We remain clear that BTECs support a careered focussed pathway, which is different to the occupational route of many T Levels. We are very clear that there is a place for T Levels, BTECs and A levels going forward. It is about providing choice and accessibility to support a diverse range of learners - helping them to progress, realise ambition and also respond to wider economic needs.”*

A new [Inquiry has been launched](#) by the Public Accounts Committee on the financial sustainability across the Further Education sector and sixth-form colleges.

- Ofsted inspection ratings suggest that colleges are generally maintaining educational quality, but other evidence shows that financial pressures are affecting wider aspects of provision such as the breadth of the curriculum and levels of student support. The deadline for evidence in Wednesday 18th November.

Policy Watch will be taking a holiday next week and will return on Friday 6th November

Pearson events

On Wednesday 4th November 2020 the Education Policy Institute and Pearson are hosting a webinar on the future of blended learning and the digital divide: ***'Narrowing the gap, tackling the digital divide: How can technology address the disadvantage gap during Covid and beyond?'***. virtual panel discussion chaired by Bethan Staton (Financial Times). We will be hearing from Professor Becky Francis (Education Endowment Foundation); Sir Jon Coles (United Learning); Priya Lakhani (CENTURY Tech); Sharon Hague (Pearson); David Laws (EPI); and Christian Wakeford MP (Education Select Committee).



To find out more and to sign up [click here](#)

Pearson Policy Blogs

We recently launched [a new policy blog page](#), providing our views on the key issues of the day. For more [click here](#)

In the latest blog, Gary Gates looks at 'developing confidence in online delivery within Higher Education Institutions'.

Pearson tweet of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Spending Review to take place in late November
- Written Ministerial Statement: Qualification Reform (Gavin Williamson)
- Education Select Committee: Accountability Hearing – Rt. Hon. Nick Gibb MP
- Public Accounts Cttee inquiry into the financial sustainability in Further Education and sixth-form colleges
- House of Commons: Colleges in a skills-led recovery from the covid-19 outbreak – 20 October
- House of Commons: Remote education Self Isolating Students – 20 October
- House of Commons: Black History Month debate – 20 October
- House of Commons: Schools in Kent: Covid-19 – 21 October
- House of Commons: Free School Meals debate – 21 October

Regulators & inspectorates

- Ofqual Board minutes 2020 - including triple lock announcement

Schools

- DfE: EdTech demonstrator schools and colleges: successful applicants

Further Education

- DfE: Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below in England: government response
- Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers announced

Higher Education

- UUK: Recovery, skills, knowledge and opportunity: A vision for universities
- OfS: Unlocking research talent and potential (funding competition)

Wales

- Universities Wales welcome continuation of blended learning announcement

Research, reports & blogs

- Centre for Progressive Policy –Employer Skills Survey. What you need to know
- CBI: Learning for Life: Funding a world-class adult education system

Consultation watch

New consultations

- DfE: Review of Post-16 Qualifications at level 3: Second stage. [Closes: 15th January](#)
- QAA: Quality Evaluation and Enhancement of UK transnational education. [Closes: 12th November](#)
- DfE: Regulating independent educational institutions. [Closes: 27th November](#)

Closing consultations

- Ofqual: Conditions and requirements for the assessment of MFL GCSEs in 2021. [Closes: 26th October](#)
- Education Select Committee – call for evidence on “Home Education”. [Closes: 6th November](#)

What’s happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons

- The House of Commons will be in recess. The House will next sit on Monday 2 November 2020

House of Lords

- **Monday 26 October:** Impact of the COVID-19 catch-up premium on disadvantaged pupils - Lord Carrington
- **Monday 26 October:** Supporting cultural and creative industries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic - Lord Colgrain.

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