



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

As well as dealing with the here and now, this week has seen plenty of focus on the future and how education and training can support a post-COVID UK. Both the **Education and Work & Pensions Select Committees** took evidence on the importance skills training, improving careers guidance and preparing people to prosper as the world of work changes. As part of this drive to develop the skills of tomorrow **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education** released guidance on its new quality mark for Higher Technical Qualifications and published six recommendations for improving the apprenticeship experience. Also with an eye to the future, **Sir Keir Starmer**, in his Leader's address to the (virtual) Labour Party conference, made closing the education attainment gap one of his Party's key priorities. And finally, back to the present, the **Prime Minister** made clear his government's commitment to keeping schools, colleges and universities open during the winter. This is already facing a test as cases rise in and around universities.

Top stories

Record levels of students from disadvantaged backgrounds will begin degrees this autumn.

- [New analysis](#) published by UCAS showed a record 28,030 18 year olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds across the UK have been accepted into university – up 8% on the equivalent point last year.
- As a percentage, 22.5% of all young people from disadvantaged background will start an undergraduate degree this year. The trend can be seen in all four nation of the UK.
- The recent analysis by UCAS also shows that deferral rates have not risen as expected. The proportion of students with a confirmed deferred place is similar to last year 5.7% in 2020, 5.4% in 2019.

Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education [survey](#) shows vote of confidence in apprenticeships but acknowledges there is more work to do.

- IFATE has released findings from a recent survey showing 87% of participants would recommend their apprenticeship to others. The report set out the learning experiences of over 1,000 apprentices.
- As part of this an influential panel of apprentices, overseen by IFATE, calls for changes around end point assessment (EPA) and off the job training
- 82% felt satisfied their apprenticeship had laid the foundation for a successful career. However, it was noted that more than a third (38%) of respondents reported not receiving at least 20% off-the-job training and 45% had not seen or read their assessment plan.
- Following the results IFATE has formulated six recommendations to further improve the provision of apprenticeships – including improving preparation for EPA and ensuring 20% off the job training.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has published [new guidance](#) around higher technical qualifications and its new quality mark.

- As part of the government's changes to higher technical education at Level 4 and 5 in England, aiming to increase take-up, [IFATE is introducing a new quality mark](#). The goal is to make it easier for employers and learners to understand which qualifications offer better training for highly skilled jobs.
- The first qualifications available from September 2022. In its first year, the focus will be exclusively on digital qualifications such as network engineering and cyber-security.

Pearson news

World's first international Esports qualification The world's first qualification for a career in esports, created through a partnership between Pearson & British Esports Association is going global. The new BTEC International qualifications in Esports are skills-focused and are a major step forward in supporting the creation of long-term careers in the growing esports industry both in the UK and internationally. [Click here](#)

Pearson tweet of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- [Sir Keir Starmer's Leader's speech to virtual Labour conference](#)
- [Education Select Committee: Second Special Report - Getting the grades they've earned: COVID-19: the cancellation of exams and 'calculated' grades: Response to the Committee's First Report \(Govt & Ofqual\)](#)
- [Education Select Committee - Adult skills and lifelong learning inquiry. Evidence from CBI, TUC, IoD, Hoxex, Open University & Workers' Education Association](#)
- [Fleur Anderson MP replaces Dawn Butler MP on the Education Select Committee](#)
- [Work & Pensions Select Committee - DWP's preparations for changes in the world of work](#)

- House of Lords: Lord Watson of Invergowrie oral question on school spending per pupil. (Short debate)
- House of Lords: Baroness Garden of Frogmal oral question on external expert advice prior to the use of the algorithm to determine A-level results for the 2019/20 academic year. (Short debate)

COVID-19

- Prime Minister's statement on pandemic situation & restrictions
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) catch-up premium: provisional allocations
- 16 to 19 tuition fund – ESFA guidance for providers
- UNISON, GMB and Unite call for Government to “do more to keep schools open and safe” in joint letter
- Office for National Statistics – Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 18 September 2020

Regulators & Inspectorates

- Ofqual – Joint statement on streamlining communications around vocational qualifications
- Ofsted – Guidance: Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools

Schools

- DfE launch online video collection to support young people's mental and physical health
- Carers Trust - Back to school: Charities create tips for teachers to help young carers
- FFT Education Lab – three blogs on the impact of the pandemic on teachers

Further Education

- IFATE – apprenticeship survey and six improvements for provision
- IFATE – Higher Technical qualifications: a new quality mark

Higher Education

- OfS announces two-stage review of National Student Survey
- HEPI Annual Review 2019/20
- HEPI Survey shows students becoming more politicised

Scotland

- Universities Scotland: Keeping our higher education community safe

Wales

- Senedd debate on Higher Education (led by Welsh Conservatives)

Northern Ireland

- Education Minister launches £11.2m Engage programme to address impact of COVID-19

Consultation watch

New consultations

- CCEA: Proposed Changes to CCEA Entry Level, Vocationally Related and Occupational Studies Qualifications for January and Summer 2021. Closes 5pm 7 October

Closing consultations

- IFATE: The future of Funding for apprenticeships. [Closes 6th October](#)

What's happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons:

- Tuesday 29 Sept: Education Select Committee session