



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

Once again, MPs questioned Ministers on the series of events surrounding this summer's qualification results. Labour unsuccessfully called for all departmental and ministerial correspondence to be given to the Education Select Committee, with Gavin Williamson saying there was little need as he will be providing evidence to them next week. Ofqual set out its plans for vocational qualification assessment in 2021, announcing the full implementation of its proposed approach and opening a consultation on the extended Extraordinary Regulatory Framework. We also saw a timely discussion on black history in the Commons, led by Theresa Villiers and legislation that allows redundant apprentices to complete their programme. The week ended with a focus on higher education. As guidance was published around the return of students, Gavin Williamson laid out his vision for the sector, calling for universities to end their "obsession" with three-year degree courses and to focus more on apprenticeships and higher technical education (HTE). Coupled with the OfS' reduction in fees, it does appear that real policy momentum is building behind HTE, and will certainly be something to monitor closely in the coming months.

Top stories

Ofqual has [confirmed](#) the approach for vocational and technical qualification assessments in 2021, following a recent [consultation](#).

- As government's expectation is that assessments will take place during 2020/21, awarding organisations are being allowed to adapt assessments to enable them to better cater for any future disruptions.
- Ofqual have asked for centres to receive information about adaptations in a timely and consistent way.
- Ofqual also launched a [consultation on the extended Extraordinary Regulatory Framework \(ERF\)](#).

Gavin Williamson has set out his ambition for the higher education sector in a [speech](#) to Universities UK.

- The Secretary of State said the HE sector plays a key role in the national economy as well as in regional local economies and should act as a vehicle for the Government's "levelling up agenda".
- Williamson also called for universities to "*end their preoccupation with three-year bachelor's degrees and offer for more higher technical qualifications and apprenticeships*", as well as outlining his desire to see more cohesion between the HE and FE sectors.

The Office for Students (OfS) has [outlined plans](#) to significantly reduce the levels of bureaucracy and unnecessary burden on universities and other HE providers.

- Measures include a cut to registration fees paid by HE providers registered with the OfS by 10% in real terms over the next two years. The OfS also expect the Quality Assurance Agency and the Higher Education Statistics Agency to reduce the statutory fees they charge.

Pearson news

Tailored support for 2021 Following Ofqual's announcement on the changes to the summer 2021 exams, we are providing teachers and students with materials specifically tailored to support preparation for A level & GCSE exams, and international qualifications. [Click here](#)

Pearson tweet of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Education Select Committee roundtable on the forthcoming FE White Paper: recording & transcript
- MPs debate black history as part of the history curriculum (led by Theresa Villiers MP)
- Opposition Day debate: "The personal role and involvement of the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education in this summer's exams fiasco"
- Statutory instrument: The Apprenticeships (Alternative English Completion Conditions and Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- Lords debate Science and Technology Committee debate science research funding in universities report

Schools

- Report from Ofsted and the National Governance Association on school governance during the pandemic
- Theresa Villiers' on black history in the curriculum

Further Education

- AoC: Survey shows Colleges best placed to lead business and skills revolution
- A new collaborative approach for the NHS and colleges in England - report

Higher Education

- Michelle Donelan speech to Universities UK
- Higher education: reopening buildings and campuses – Latest guidance published
- New international student immigration routes open – Home Office

Research and analysis

- House of Commons Library: Apprenticeships and skills policy in England
- David Laws: Analysis of Chancellor's "Plan for Jobs"

Consultation watch

New consultations

- Ofqual: Consultation on the arrangements for the assessment and awarding of vocational, technical and other general qualifications in 2020 to 2021. [Closes 20th September](#)
- IFATE: The future of Funding for apprenticeships. [Closes 6th October](#)
- DCMS: UK National Data Strategy. [Closes 2nd December](#)
- Welsh Government: Education Workforce Council: interim suspension orders. [Closes 4th December](#)

What's happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons:

- **Wednesday 16 Sept (10am):** Education Select Committee – Accountability hearing, Gavin Williamson

House of Lords:

- **Monday 14 Sept:** Oral question - A permanent programme of free school meals and activities during future school holidays - Baroness D'Souza
- **Tuesday 15 Sept:** Oral question - Arrangements needed for A Level and GCSE examinations in the 2020/2021 academic year - Lord Storey