



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

The Second Reading of the **Skills and Post-16 Education Bill** took place in the House of Lords. Although the Bill was largely well-received from all sides, opposition parties made it clear there was a lot of work to be done to make sure it's fit for purpose. The question of choice at age 16 was raised, as were the new powers for the Secretary of State and IFATE.

Pearson published initial findings from its review into the future of qualifications and assessment. A consultation of over 6000 people, including students, parents and teachers found no "evidence of a strong desire" to remove GCSEs or replace our current assessment system with an entirely new one. However, people still want education to be more inclusive, more empowering and more relevant to people's lives. [Read more here](#)

The **University Alliance** joined ten other education bodies representing staff and students in schools, colleges and universities to urge the Government to rethink plans to remove funding for applied general qualifications such as BTECs.

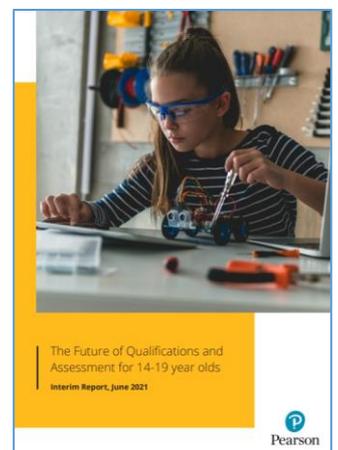
Ofqual has decided lift mandatory requirements for fieldwork in subjects such as GCSE and A level geography for the 2022 summer exams. This means the regulator will implement all of the proposals set out in the consultation that ran in May.

As well as including all previous editions of Policy Watch, our [Policy Hub](#) includes our latest [policy blogs](#).

Top stories

Pearson, has published its [interim Future of Qualifications & Assessment report](#) following the launch of a national consultation in February 2021.

- **Rod Bristow**, President of Global Online Learning & UK at Pearson, said "what we discovered was in some ways surprising, but also encouraging. Most people see our education system as an improving platform to be modified and built upon, not as something to be dismantled and rebuilt. But they do want education to be more inclusive, more empowering and more relevant to people's lives. They want clarity and choice of the right learning pathway but in a flexible system of bridges and ladders, not rigid tracks. That will require some degree of change.
- Key findings from the consultation include:
 - People believe there is too much weight on exams.
 - Employers think students need broader, deeper knowledge and skills:



- Academic qualifications alone aren't preparing students for jobs of the future
- Perceived lack of choice in curriculum when it comes to the range of subjects available to study or the qualifications available
- Qualifications are valuable
- Career path is the biggest factor behind qualification choices
- More innovation with technology is needed
- The findings from the consultation will inform the second phase of this work which will include independently-commissioned research.

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- Education bodies welcomed the introduction of T Levels but raised concerns that a removal of BTEC funding 'will leave many students without a viable pathway at 16 and hamper progress'.
- Commenting on the statement, CEO of University Alliance Vanessa Wilson urged the Government 'to protect student choice' and enable access to 'vocational and technical degrees'.
- The Chief Executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association Bill Watkin said that the defunding would restrict access to higher education and necessary employable skills.
- Professor Graeme Atherton, Director of the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) added that the defunding could 'set back social mobility a decade or more'.

Former chair of the exams regulator, Roger Taylor has broken his silence for the first time since resigning after the exam series last summer writing a paper for the Centre for Progressive Policy.

- Taylor stated that in 2020, when the summer exam series was cancelled by the Government, Ofqual wanted to issue non-qualification leaving certificates instead of awarding A-Level grades but ministers rejected this idea and embarked on creating an algorithm to calculate grades.
- He stated that in his view, the best solution when exams were cancelled would have been to increase the number of university places which would "limit the number who were wrongly excluded." To his knowledge, he said that this option was "never seriously considered."

A new EPI report on the pandemic and teacher attrition. The report was based on a survey of 2,000 teachers across the UK in January 2021 and concluded that teachers are now almost twice as likely to leave the profession as they were before the pandemic.

- The Education Policy Institute outlined two recommendations to Government to stop the mass exodus of teachers. First, reinstate policies related to teacher retention such as additional top-up payment. Second, review its "outdated" pay policy that "fails to account for regional differences in labour market conditions."

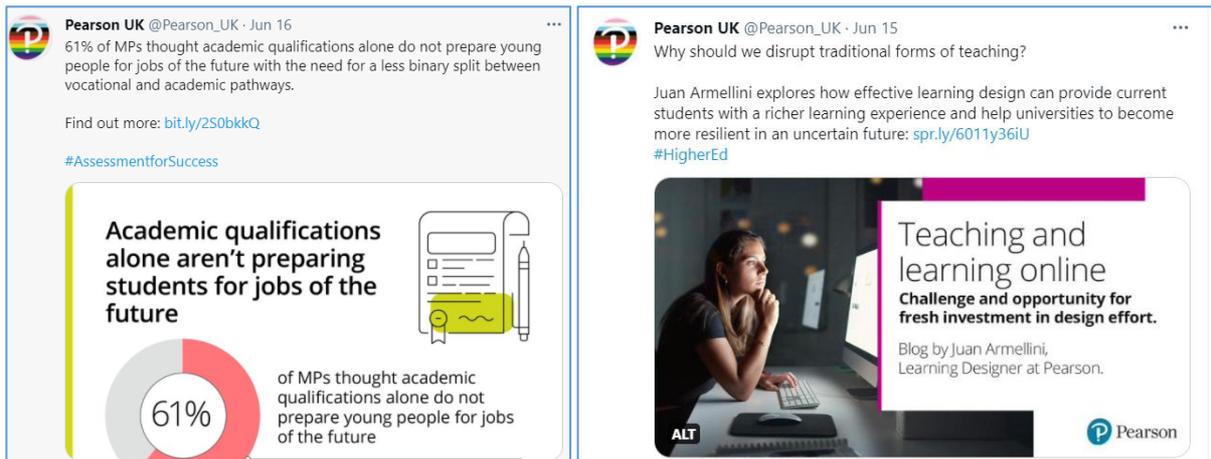
Ofqual has decided to carry forward some of the changes to non-exam assessment and fieldwork agreed for 2021 for students entering qualifications in summer 2022.

- The changes will mean that Ofqual will allow adjustments to the assessment and evidence requirements for a non-exam assessment in a range of subjects. Essentially giving the exam boards the opportunity to allow teachers to decide how to support and assess their students.

Pearson news

Pearson HE Innovate Awards 2021 There are two weeks until the submission deadline for the inaugural Pearson HE Innovate Awards. We are looking for nominations of projects that show originality, deliver positive outcomes for students and have transferability to other institutions. The awards are supported by HEPI, Jisc, LinkedIn Learning, NEON, Prospects and Stonewall and winners will receive £300 Amazon vouchers or a donation of the same amount to a charity of their choice, an award certificate and trophy. Find out more and submit a nomination [here](#)

Pearson tweets of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Prime Ministers Questions (9 June)
- House of Commons - Levelling-up Agenda (Bob Sealy MP)
- House of Commons - Catch-up Premium (Bridget Phillipson MP)
- House of Commons - Children and Young People's Mental Health (Munira Wilson MP)
- House of Lords - Lords debates Skills and Post-16 Education Bill
- House of Lords - Young People: Post-pandemic Employment
- Public Accounts Committee - Initial lessons from the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (10 June 2021)
- APPG for Skills, Careers & Employment - The role of university research in tackling regional economic inequality: Higher Education Commission Inquiry

Regulators

Ofsted

- Ofsted - Putting children and young people with SEND at the heart of our recovery plans
- Ofsted - SEND: old issues, new issues, next steps
- Ofsted - Research review series: geography

Policy Watch

Week ending Friday 18 June 2021

Ofqual

- [Ofqual - Dr Michelle Meadows speech at City of London Schools Conference 2021](#)
- [Ofqual - Simon Lebus speech at GSA Summer Briefing 2021](#)
- [Ofqual - Consultation Outcome: Arrangements for non-exam assessment for quals in 2022](#)
- [Ofqual - Perceptions of VTQ in England- wave 4](#)

Schools

- [Department for Education - Education Secretary set improving pupil outcomes as top priority](#)
- [Department for Education - £3.4 million to expand The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in schools](#)
- [Department for Education - Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak – 23 March 2020 to 10 June 2021](#)
- [Department for Education - School workforce in England: November 2020](#)
- [Department for Education - Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2021](#)
- [Department for Education - Post-16 education and labour market activities and outcomes of looked-after children \(LEO\)](#)
- [Labour Party - School leaders say extending day should not be priority in helping children catch up – Kate Green responds](#)
- [Plan UK - G7: UK must boost education funding or commitments will be more empty promises](#)
- [Education Policy Institute \(EPI\) - The pandemic and teacher attrition: an exodus waiting to happen?](#)

Further Education & Skills

- [Universities Alliance - UA joins education bodies calling for protection of applied qualifications](#)
- [AOC - Nominations open for Student of the Year Awards](#)
- [AOC - Vocational training and education changed forever due to the pandemic](#)
- [UNISON - Serious about levelling up? Let's see the evidence](#)

Higher Education

- [Department for Education - Universities Minister at Going Global Conference](#)
- [Universities UK - USS employers back changes to the pension scheme](#)
- [UCAS - 450% increase in student mental health declarations over last decade but progress still needed to address declarations stigma](#)
- [NEON - New report shows investment in widening access to higher education to fall if Uni-Connect programme not renewed](#)

What's happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons

Monday 21st June

- Education Questions

House of Lords

Monday 21st June

- Oral questions - Narrowing attainment gaps and addressing racial inequalities, as part of the education recovery package and catch-up programme - Lord Woolley of Woodford

Tuesday 22nd June

- Professional Qualifications Bill – committee stage (day 3) - Lord Grimstone of Boscobel