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# DfE review of funding of post-16 qualifications – update for Kent CP Heads conference 2022

Peter Fidczuk

# Initial proposal 2019

The DfE launched a consultation into their proposals on the funding of post-16 qualifications on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019, with a deadline of 10<sup>th</sup> June.

The proposals were:

1. The A Levels and GCSEs had been reformed and were not subject to further change.
2. The T levels were about to be introduced and again were not subject to change.
3. The majority of funded qualifications should be A Levels and T levels.
4. The A Level route should lead to HE, the T level route to employment. There was no provision for a mixed qualification pathway.
5. There were too many alternative funded qualifications in the VTQ sector, many of which were deemed to be 'low quality'. A reduction was necessary and the consultation would look at how this would be carried out. Academic qualifications such as IB and Pre-U were not excluded from the potential defunding.
6. The culling would initially be carried out by removal of old specification VTQs and no/low enrolment qualifications.

# Initial measures

Whilst the consultation responses were interpreted the DfE started on the cull of VTQs.

1. Old style VTQs, developed under the QCF framework, had funding withdrawn from August 2020 for new starts. These were the 100% in school BTECs and other similar qualifications which had been superseded by the RQF framework.
2. Qualifications with no enrolments, or enrolments of less than 100 students in total combined from Years 12 & 13 in English state schools in 2017 & 2018 were identified and it was proposed to withdraw funding from August 2020 and August 2021 respectively. It was possible for Awarding Bodies to appeal against the defunding but not for schools.

# Low enrolments campaign

- IBO maintained that the Diploma courses were part of an integrated whole and should be exempt from the low/no enrolment measure.
- IBO & IBSCA collected data from state school on the number of students studying the at risk courses.
- This identified that many courses did have >100 enrolments but these were not visible as the QAN for the courses had not been entered in the ESFA returns as schools used the whole Diploma QAN and did not report the separate subject QANs. 15 key Diploma courses were identified **not having low enrolments** in this exercise.
- IBO made representations to the ESFA and DfE on this issue.
- In the event the whole process was stalled because of the COVID crisis and postponed for a year. Funding is to be removed from qualifications with no enrolments for new starts from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021 and for low enrolments on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

# First consultation report and the second consultation

DfE reported on the outcome of the first consultation on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 and opened a second consultation due to end 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021, but extended to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

Key findings:

- 1. The IB Diploma should retain funding as an alternative programme to A Levels.**
2. New 'academic' qualifications should be developed to replace the VTQs, from September 2024. These new 'academic' qualifications should be available in a very small number of subject areas which did not overlap with A Levels or T levels. All existing VTQs, eg BTECs would lose funding from that point
3. No details were given of the proposed academic qualifications other that they would be either:
  - Small – equivalent to an A Level to be taken alongside A Levels
  - Large – equivalent to 2 or 3 A Levels to be taken as an alternative to A Levels
4. The split between academic and vocational remains.

## Level 3 qualifications

Level 3 is the main exit point for most 18 year olds from school or college into the workplace or further study

### Technical

Qualifications that provide the knowledge, skills and behaviours students need to progress to skilled employment or higher technical study

#### T Levels

#### Apprenticeships

#### Other technical qualifications

*Aligned to or building upon employer-led standards and designed to deliver occupational competence*

#### Non-T Level technical qualifications

*Qualifications providing occupational competence against employer-led standards which are not covered by T Levels*

#### Additional Specialist qualifications

*Qualifications covering recognisably specialist areas of skill and knowledge which go beyond those available in a T Level or other non-T Level qualification*

### Academic

Qualifications that support students to progress onto and achieve high quality FE and HE academic courses

#### A levels

#### AS levels

#### Alternatives to A levels

*One of these qualifications would typically be a student's full programme of study*

#### Alongside A levels

*On their own, not typically enough to enable students to progress to education at the next level*

#### Preparation for specialist HE

*Qualifications with a practical component, supporting access to high quality specialist HE*

#### Other qualifications taken as alternatives to A levels

*International Baccalaureate Diploma*

#### Practical or occupational component

*Qualifications supporting progression to an aligned HE subject, designed to complement A level study e.g. health and social care*

#### Other qualifications taken alongside A levels

*Qualifications that offer additional and complementary skills to support progression to HE e.g. performing arts graded exams, Core Maths and EPQ*



# ESFA announcement 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020

- The ESFA further clarified the situation about low/no enrolments in the announcement of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020.
- The agency published the list of qualifications with no/low enrolments which would have funding removed for new starts from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.
- It was announced that IB qualifications were removed from the scope of the low/no enrolment measure.
- Consequently it was thought that IB qualifications were to be removed from the scope of the defunding consultation.

# January 2021

- IBO, IBSCA and schools responded to the second consultation.
- **The proposal to maintain funding for IB qualifications was warmly endorsed.**
- The retention of choice for students following a CP pathway was championed. We proposed that the widest range of subjects should be offered through the new academic qualifications.
- It was suggested that small vocational qualifications should be made available to allow students to mix academic and vocational courses. Interestingly Ofqual also took this position.
- We argued that the whole process should be delayed because of the COVID crisis. Again this position was supported by Ofqual.



# Second Stage Consultation report July 2021 #1

**We will continue to approve the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma** for funding. It will continue to be subject to regulation by Ofqual. Overall, 29% of respondents did not agree with our proposal, with some arguing the IB Diploma should be treated in the same way as AGQs. We do not agree, as these are very different types of qualification. The IB offers a breadth of subject areas (which is broader than that typically covered by an A level or mixed programme) that prepares students well for undergraduate study. As such we believe the IB should be treated as an alternative study programme to an A level or mixed programme. We have explained our approach on AGQs as qualifications that can be studied alongside A levels in the questions considered above.

# Second Stage Consultation report July 2021 #2

As highlighted by some of the 71% of consultation respondents who agreed with our proposal, the IB Diploma is academically robust and leads to a broad range of courses at high-quality universities. We remain convinced of the need for this well-established, internationally recognised programme which has a track record of providing access to high tariff HE destinations for state school students. Whilst we will continue to approve the IB Diploma for funding, this does not include the IB Career Programme.

# Two questions arising if the 'CP' is not funded

1. Will the separate Diploma Courses continue to be funded?
2. If so will they be funded in combination with the replacements for the AGQs?

Letter sent to DfE shortly after publication of the report. No response until November after the SoS's announcement in the Commons that the reforms would be put back a year. Arranged meeting in early January: PF, Adrian Kearney, Simon Beamish (CEO LAT).

Meeting in November between Kate Greig (CAT), Simon Beamish (LAT), PF, Shellina Prendegast (KCC elected member for Education), Christine McInnes (KCC Director of Education) resulted in a letter to the SoS.

Lobbying by MPs following letters sent to political representatives by schools resulted in an apparent change of direction so by Christmas the DfE was saying that funding for the CP had not been decided.

# 2022

- Meeting with DfE in January inconclusive. Request from DfE for case studies of the CP and Diploma Courses.
- Follow up meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

Most recently it has been announced that the ESFA will lose all post 16 policy from 1<sup>st</sup> April which will revert back to the DfE.

And.....

# Ofqual consultation #1

- Ofqual have just launched a consultation on the regulation of the replacements for AGQs and technical qualifications. The link is:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulating-academic-and-technical-qualifications-at-level-3/regulating-academic-and-technical-qualifications-at-level-3>

Deadline 23:45 on 20<sup>th</sup> April.

# Ofqual consultation #2

It refers to the replacements for the AGQs as 'alternative academic qualifications' and reformed technical quals as 'alternative technical qualifications'. These latter are very limited in scope.

“There are additional academic qualifications which form part of the Department’s review, but **which are not currently in scope of these proposals, such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma** and Extended Project Qualifications. These are described further in the Background section of this consultation”



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# University Report

## Kent CP Heads Conference March 2022

### Peter Fidczuk

# Agenda

1. Engagement with Higher Education 2021-2022
2. IB Global Recognition Department
3. Formalising a UK HE strategy for 2022-2024.
4. Recruitment of IBCP students to UK universities in the UCAS 2021 cycle.
5. Government HE reform proposals



# 1. Engagement with HE 2021-22

COVID has disrupted normal channels – ie no UCAS conferences (until last month), IBSCA HE conference cancelled, no face to face meetings with HE providers.

However, some key relationships carried on virtually:

- UCAS
- UUK
- Russell Group Admissions Directors Forum
- Russell Group Qualification Network

Principal aim was to maintain HE's understanding of the adapted assessment procedures.

.....As well as the individual issues sent to me.

# Engagement 2021-2

## Russell Group Qualification Network

- November meeting: M22 assessments, MYP e-Assessment to GCSE equivalence.
- March meeting: update on M22 assessments, feedback on MYP equivalence, update on CP and DP Courses, Digital Societies.

## UCAS Admissions Officers Conference April 5-6, Harrogate

- IB stand
- Delegate hand out – maths and MYP equivalence
- Breakout session

# BETT 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> March, Excel Conference Centre

IB will have a stand for the three days. I will be there and so will the Head of Development, AEM, Jean-Christophe Goris.

If you attend please drop by and we can have a face to face conversation.

## 2 Changes at the IB – Global Recognition

IB appointed a Head of Global recognition just before COVID with the intention of growing a global recognition team. This is to pull together issues that affect recognition globally, eg maths courses, and to ensure that coherent messages go to universities globally.

The head of global recognition is Paul Teulon (formerly head of admissions at KCL) and he is gradually bringing together a team to take the overview, eg we have an universities officer in the Hague who is from the University of Leiden.

This is in addition to the existing staff who have specific responsibility for a particular country, or group of countries, like me.

# 3. Formalising a UK HE strategy 2022-2024

Coming out of COVID with a transition to pre COVID standards it is an opportune moment to review the key issues that IB applicants, both UK and out of UK, have with UK HEI.

What are the issues?????

# Key global universities

As part of the global strategy IB have identified 850 key universities. 50 of these are in the UK. These are the universities with the highest number of IB applicants:  
Russell Group (23/24)

Aberdeen

Bath

Brighton

Brunel

City

Coventry

Dundee

Essex

Goldsmiths

Heriot-Watt

Kent

Kingston

Lancaster

Leicester

Loughborough

Nott. Trent

Oxford Brookes

Reading

RHUL

St Andrews

SOAS

Strathclyde

Surrey

Sussex

UAL

Westminster



# Areas to investigate at each institution

- Overall IB policy
- CP policy
- DPC policy
- Comparison to A Level in 10 key UG subjects:  
Ma, Phy, En, CS, Med, Biochem, Psy, Law, Hi, Ec
- MYP equivalence to GCSE
- Maths AA/AI
- English Language proficiency requirements
- EPQ3 as an alternative offer

With the intention of identifying the key areas to engage universities on.

# 4 Universities attended by IBCP applicants in the 2021 admissions cycle

68 different universities recorded by schools in November survey, including 10 Russell Group. The 12 universities with highest numbers of CP entrants are:

- Kent
- Canterbury Christchurch
- University of West of England
- Brighton
- Greenwich
- Bournemouth
- Queen Mary University
- London
- Anglia Ruskin
- Portsmouth
- Plymouth
- Sussex
- Portsmouth



# 7. Government Developments

- PQA seems to be dead.
- However, the DfE launched another consultation on HE reform on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/higher-education-reform/higher-education-he-reform/>

- Student number controls
- Minimum eligibility requirements
- Foundation years
- Eligibility for a state scholarship
- Growing high-quality level 4 and 5

# DfE HE reforms consultation

- **Deadline 11:59 pm Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May**
- Key proposals:
  - Student finance changes from AY 2023-4
  - Incentivising high-quality provision, by considering the possible case for proportionate student number controls (SNCs) as a lever to tilt growth towards provision with the best outcomes for students, society, and the economy.

*"However, for a small but significant minority of degree students doing certain courses at certain institutions, the university experience leads to disappointment. We make recommendations intended to encourage universities to bear down on low value degrees and to incentivise them to increase the provision of courses better aligned with the economy's needs."*

*"We want to ensure our finance and funding system consistently supports provision that is most relevant to the workplace and thereby improve outcomes for graduates while providing the skills our country needs."*

# DfE HE reforms consultation

Some of the factors influencing Govt thinking on SNC:

- Earnings, which supports the fiscal sustainability of the system given its link to student loan repayments.
  - Progression to high skilled graduate employment.
  - Completion or continuation rates
- 
- Seeking to ensure that students are equipped with the minimum skills required to undertake HE - by exploring the case for low level 'minimum eligibility requirements' (MERs) to access HE student finance.
    - Suggested that a minimum of grades 4 in English and mathematics (UK devolved equivalents stated – others to follow) or CCC at A Level (including equivalents).
    - Or two A Level grade Es including all equivalents such as the IB Diploma and T levels.

# Qualification 'Commissions'

- DfE post 16 qualification review
- House of Commons Education Committee inquiry into the future of post 16 qualifications
- NEU Independent Assessment Commission
- Pearson Commission into the future of Qualifications and Assessment
- Times Education Commission

An opportunity??