

# PANORAMA

## **Vocational education and training in the United Kingdom**

Short description



# Vocational education and training in the United Kingdom

Short description

Natalia Cuddy  
Tom Leney

Cedefop Panorama series; 111

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2005

---

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2005

ISBN 92-896-0413-1

ISSN 1562-6180

© European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2005  
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

*Printed in Greece*

The **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference Centre for vocational education and training. We provide information on and analyses of vocational education and training systems, policies, research and practice. Cedefop was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) no. 337/75.

Europe 123  
GR-57001 Thessaloniki (Pylea)

Postal Address:  
PO Box 22427  
GR-55102 Thessaloniki

Tel. (30) 23 10 49 01 11  
Fax (30) 23 10 49 00 20  
E-mail: [info@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:info@cedefop.eu.int)  
Homepage: [www.cedefop.eu.int](http://www.cedefop.eu.int)  
Interactive website: [www.trainingvillage.gr](http://www.trainingvillage.gr)

Natalia Cuddy and Tom Leney  
UK ReferNet - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

**Edited by:**

**Cedefop**

J. Michael Adams and Sylvie Bousquet, Project managers

Published under the responsibility of:  
Johan van Rens, Director  
Christian Lettmayr, Deputy Director



*‘We seek a fair society which ensures that every individual, irrespective of background, ethnicity, gender, faith, disability or postcode, is helped to realise their own capability for learning, and raise their quality of life.*

*We also seek a dynamic economy where our national and regional productivity is enhanced through high-skilled, well-rewarded employees working in companies committed to long term investment and leading the world in their business sectors.’*

DfES. *White paper – skills: getting on in business, getting on at work.* March 2005.





# Introduction

This publication on vocational education and training (VET) in the United Kingdom (UK) has been prepared to coincide with the UK presidency of the European Union Council. It is part of Cedefop's series of short descriptions and continuing work on VET systems in all the EU Member States. Descriptions of the national systems can be found within Cedefop's European Training Village on the web (<http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/vetsystems/report.asp>).

*eKnowVet*, Cedefop's database, offers online information on initial and continuing vocational training in the partner countries. It allows for country-specific and multi-country searches and covers 11 thematic areas. This database is regularly updated by Cedefop's European network of reference and expertise (ReferNet).

The information was provided by the UK ReferNet at Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA) in consultation with its partners across the UK: the Department for Education and Skills, TUC, CBI, the Scottish Executive and SQA, the Welsh Assembly, ELWa and ACCAC, and the Department for Employment and Learning of Northern Ireland. This text has been prepared by Ms Natalia Cuddy along with other colleagues and in close cooperation with Ms Sylvie Bousquet of Cedefop. We wish to express our thanks to all colleagues who have been involved in this publication. The UK social partners' representatives on Cedefop's Governing Board were consulted.

In a short document it is not possible to include all elements of a complex system, not least as devolution begins to accentuate some of the differences between the frameworks and outcomes across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Further reform of VET systems in the UK is vital for a comprehensive lifelong policy. Many of the challenges the UK faces and the main objectives set are in line with the aims of the Lisbon strategy. The UK is building on its strengths and putting into practice policies for raising the levels of basic skills for workers, improving educational attainment, and meeting future skills needs. Modernising learning programmes and qualifications are important parts of this strategy.

The evidence is that skills levels are rising in the UK as each of the devolved administrations develops its VET and lifelong learning strategy. While the educational level of entrants to the labour market is improving, much remains to be done for those at work. This is high on the list of priorities in the UK's ambition to develop a knowledge society and a knowledge economy.

Christian Lettmayr  
Deputy Director  
Cedefop

Ken Boston  
Chief Executive  
Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA)

May 2005

# Table of contents

Introduction .....	3
Table of contents .....	4
List of tables and figures .....	7
1. General policy context .....	9
1.1. Political and administrative structure .....	9
1.2. Population.....	10
1.3. Economy, labour market and unemployment.....	11
1.4. Educational attainment of the population.....	13
2. Policy developments .....	15
2.1. General objectives and priorities .....	15
2.2. England, Wales and Northern Ireland .....	15
2.2.1. Objectives and performance targets .....	15
2.2.2. Initiatives .....	16
2.3. Scotland.....	17
2.3.1. Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF) .....	17
2.3.2. Lifelong learning .....	17
3. Institutional framework.....	19
3.1. Administrative framework .....	19
3.2. Legislative framework.....	19
3.3. Role of social partners .....	22
4. Initial vocational education and training.....	23
4.1. Overview .....	23
4.2. IVET at lower secondary level .....	27
4.3. IVET at upper secondary level .....	28
4.4. Apprenticeship.....	31
4.5. Special needs and young people at risk of exclusion .....	33
4.5.1. Entry level .....	33
4.5.2. Entry to employment.....	33
4.5.3. New Deal for young people.....	33
4.6. Vocational education and training at tertiary level.....	34
5. Continuing vocational training for adults .....	36
5.1. General background and priorities .....	36
5.2. Planning and organisation of learning.....	38

5.2.1.	General/legal frameworks and collective agreements.....	38
5.2.2.	Administrative structures .....	39
5.3.	Delivery mechanisms and providers .....	39
5.4.	Access to learning opportunities and programmes.....	40
5.4.1.	Employer Training Pilots (ETPs).....	40
5.4.2.	Individual learning accounts (ILAs) in Wales and Scotland.....	40
5.4.3.	Business/company learning accounts (BLAs).....	40
5.4.4.	University for Industry/learnirect .....	41
5.4.5.	Adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland .....	41
5.4.6.	Training of disabled .....	41
5.4.7.	Time off work .....	41
5.5.	Bridging initial and post-initial education and training.....	41
5.6.	Retraining for labour market needs and mobility.....	42
5.6.1.	New Deal.....	43
6.	Training of teachers and trainers.....	45
6.1.	General background and recent policy developments .....	45
6.2.	Training of teachers and trainers for IVET and CVET in schools and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland .....	46
6.3.	Training of trainers for work-based training .....	47
7.	Skills and competence development.....	48
7.1.	Skills anticipation mechanisms .....	48
7.2.	Bridging pathways and new education partnerships .....	49
7.3.	Renewal of curricula .....	50
8.	Validation of learning: recognition and mobility.....	51
8.1.	Validation of formal learning.....	51
8.1.1.	An overview of competence-based qualifications in the UK.....	51
8.1.2.	National vocational qualifications: a ‘closed’ credit framework .....	52
8.2.	Validating and recognising non-formal and informal learning .....	52
9.	Guidance and counselling.....	54
9.1.	Strategy and provision.....	54
9.2.	Guidance and counselling personnel .....	56
10.	Financing investment in human resources.....	57
10.1.	Background information.....	57
10.2.	Funding for initial vocational education and training .....	58
10.2.1.	Department of Education and Skills (DfES) funding .....	58

10.2.2. Funding in the devolved administrations .....	61
10.3. Funding for continuing education and training, and adult learning .....	61
10.3.1. At institution level.....	61
10.3.2. At adult and community learning (ACL) level .....	62
10.3.3. At employers' level .....	63
10.4. Funding for training unemployed and other vulnerable groups .....	64
11. European and international dimension .....	65
11.1. National strategies related to EU policies and programmes.....	65
11.2. Achievements and challenges.....	66
Annex 1 Acronyms and abbreviations .....	69
Annex 2 Glossary.....	71
Annex 3 Legislative and bibliographical references .....	75
Annex 4 Main organisations .....	79

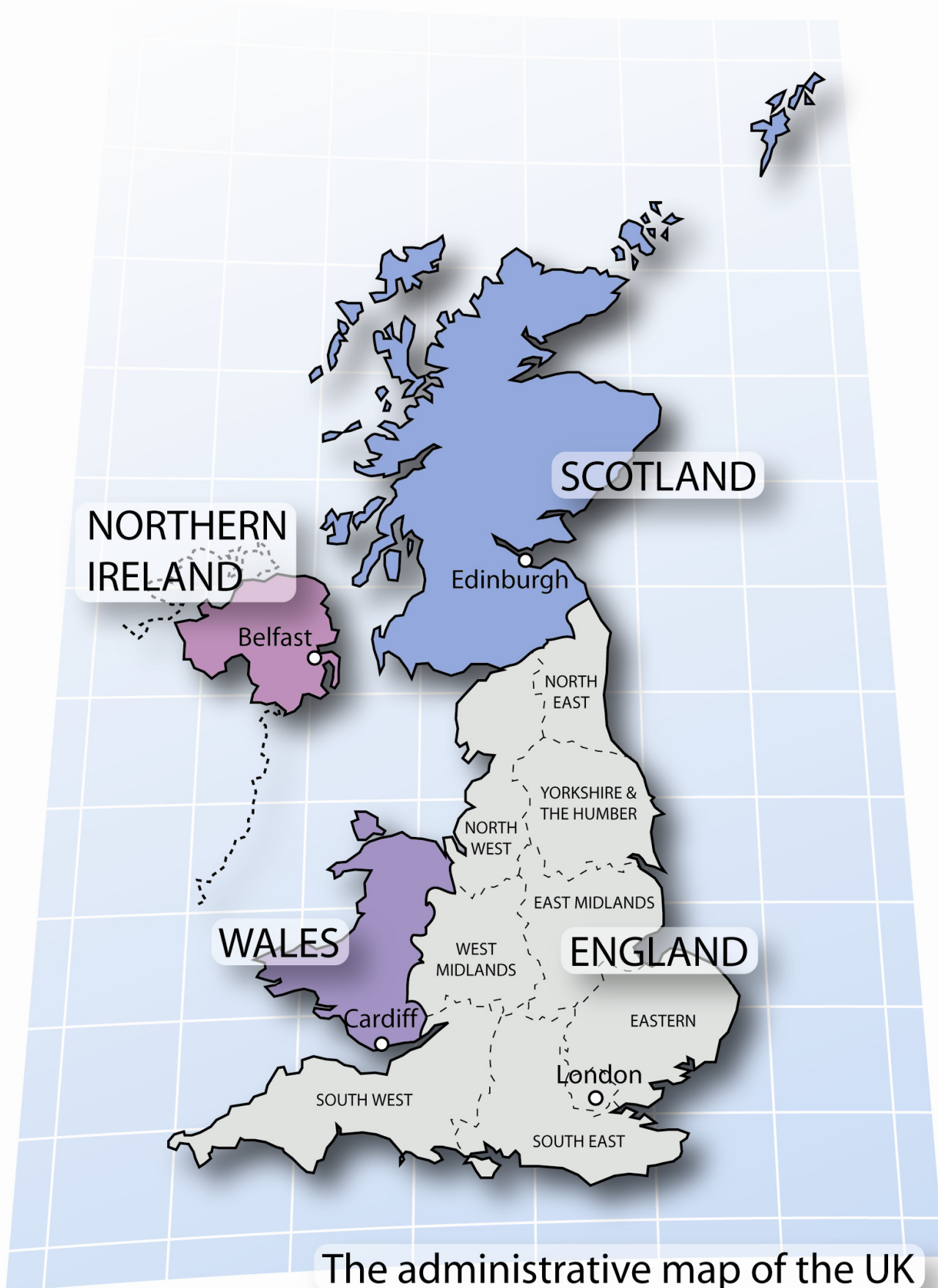
## List of tables and figures

### Tables

Table 1	Structure of the population in 2003 (by country and age group, in %)	10
Table 2	GDP per capita at current market prices, using current PPPs (in USD/EUR): evolution from 2000 to 2003 in various Member States	11
Table 3	Employment to population ratio by selected age groups (1990 to 2003)	11
Table 4	Employment to population ratio by sex and by educational attainment (2002)	12
Table 5	Unemployment rate by selected age groups (1990-2003)	12
Table 6	Unemployment rate of persons aged 25-64 by sex and educational attainment (2002)	12
Table 7	Destination of school leavers in the United Kingdom from 1996 to 2003	14
Table 8	Main areas of responsibility in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland (2005)	20
Table 9	Destinations of 16 year olds by country (2003)	28
Table 10	Starts in the 10 most frequently taken apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in England (2000-04)	32
Table 11	Population aged 25-64 with less than upper-secondary education participating in education and training in the four weeks prior to the survey (2004, %)	38
Table 12	People entering employment through the New Deal in England, Scotland and Wales (by age and type of employment, from 1998 to 2003)	43

### Figures

Figure 1	Highest qualification held by people of working age in the United Kingdom in 2004 (% of people of working age)	13
Figure 2	Qualifications framework – a rough guide to UK qualifications	18
Figure 3	Education and training systems in the United Kingdom	24
Figure 4	Simplified overview of the national qualifications framework in Great Britain	25
Figure 5	Simplified chart of flows of funding in IVET in England, 2005	59



# **1. General policy context**

## **1.1. Political and administrative structure**

The United Kingdom (UK) is a union of Great Britain (England, Scotland, Wales) and Northern Ireland. The UK is a parliamentary democracy and also a constitutional monarchy. There is no single document that forms a constitution for the UK.

The UK government comprises the legislature (Parliament), the executive (the Cabinet, which consists of 20 ministers chosen by the Prime Minister) and the judiciary. UK Parliament consists of the Queen, the appointed House of Lords and the elected House of Commons. The UK Parliament makes primary legislation, although since the late 1990s it has devolved a range of issues and powers to the three devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Parliament is supreme and has authority over government and law-making in the UK as a whole, in consultation with devolved administrations.

The UK has a devolved system of governance for education and training. There are differences and similarities between the education and training systems of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England, which are reflected in this overview. Scotland, in particular, has an education system with a long history of independence from other parts of the UK.

In contrast to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, England has no separate elected national body exclusively responsible for its central administration. Instead, several government departments look after England's day-to-day administrative affairs (e.g. the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for policy on education and training, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for welfare of people, training and employment programmes, etc.). The Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive (the administrative organisation for the Scottish Parliament) have wide powers for social policies, including education and training. The Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly also have extensive powers for education and training. The Assembly in Northern Ireland has been suspended since October 2002 owing to the political situation.

## 1.2. Population

The UK is approximately 242 514 km<sup>2</sup> (England 130 281, Scotland 77 925, Wales 20 732 and Northern Ireland 13 576). England has the highest population density of the Union (383 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>), Scotland has the lowest (65).

The population of the UK has grown and changed significantly over the last 50 years, immigration leading to ethnic diversity in society. The estimate (2003) for the UK population is 59.6 million. Current projections estimate the UK population will reach 65.7 million by 2031 (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Structure of the population in 2003 (by country and age group, in %)*

	England	Wales	Scotland	N. Ireland	UK
Population (thousands)	49 856	2 238	5 057	1 703	59 554
% of population aged					
under 5	5.7	5.4	5.2	6.5	5.7
5-15	14.0	14.2	13.4	16.3	14.0
16 to pension age*	61.9	60.1	62.4	61.3	61.8
above pension age*	18.4	20.3	18.9	15.9	18.5
% population change 1991-2003	6.5	4.4	-0.9	10.3	5.7

\* Pension age is currently 65 for males and 60 for females.

Source: Office for National Statistics; National Assembly for Wales; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

Increased life expectancy and lower fertility rates give the UK an ageing population. The percentage of people aged 65 and over increased from 13 % in 1971 to 16 % in 2003. Over the same period, the percentage of the population under 16 fell from 25 % to 20 %. According to the *Official statistical year book* of the UK, this ageing trend will continue and the number of people aged 65 and over will exceed those aged under 16 by 2013.

During the second half of the 20th century there was a major internal migration of people from the coal, shipbuilding and steel industry areas in the north of England, Wales and Scotland to the south of England and the Midlands. The Scottish Executive has launched some initiatives to reverse the population decline by retaining native Scots and attracting talented people from overseas. In England, there are big variations across the regions: the population in the North East fell by 1.8 % between 1991 and 2003, while the population in London rose by 8.2 % during the same period. These demographic, economic and social trends have direct implications for VET in terms of employee flexibility, occupational pathways, recognition of qualifications, upskilling, etc.

Over the same period, there was immigration mainly from Commonwealth countries, followed more recently by an increase in the number of European nationals and asylum seekers in the UK. The number of people awarded legal settlement in the UK as a percentage of the population represented 0.09 % of the UK population in 1991, 0.18 % in 2001 and 0.24 % in 2003.



### 1.3. Economy, labour market and unemployment

Growth in the UK economy has been steady for the last 12 years. The economy's trend rate of growth between 1997 and 2001 was 3 % a year, compared with 2.5 % over the previous economic cycle (1982-1993). According to the OECD, although annual average growth has lagged behind the US, it was above the EU and G7 average (see Table 2).

*Table 2: GDP per capita at current market prices, using current PPPs (in USD/EUR): evolution from 2000 to 2003 in various Member States*

*(thousands)*

	2000	2001	2002	2003
UK	23.9/17.9	25.4/19.1	27.1/20.4	29.0/21.8
Euro Area	23.6/17.7	25.1/18.8	25.7/19.3	26.1/19.6
of which:				
Germany	24.9/18.7	26.5/19.9	26.6/20.0	26.3/19.7
France	23.2/17.4	25.1/18.8	26.9/20.2	27.8/20.9
Italy	24.5/18.4	26.1/19.6	26.6/20.0	26.1/19.6

NB: Rate of exchange USD 1 = EUR 0.75131 (16.3.2005). GDP: Gross domestic product. PPP = Purchasing power parity.

Source: OECD. *OECD in figures: statistics on the member countries*. Paris: OECD, 2001-2004 [yearly publication].

The *Labour force survey* (LFS) <sup>(1)</sup> shows that the employment rate among people of working age was 74.7 % in 2004. The UK's levels of employment are higher than in most EU Member States (see Tables 3 and 4), and unemployment is lower (see Tables 5 and 6).

*Table 3: Employment to population ratio by selected age groups (1990 to 2003)*

	15-24	25-54	55-64
1990	70.1	79.1	49.2
2001	61.1	80.7	52.2
2002	61.0	80.6	53.3
2003	59.8	80.9	55.5

Source: OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 edition*. Paris: OECD, 2004.

One of the main long-term trends in the labour market is the increased participation of women in employment (see Table 4). In 2004, 70 % of working-age women were in employment compared with 58 % in 1984 because of the increasing levels of educational attainment among women, changing social attitudes to women working and better child care provisions.

<sup>(1)</sup> See: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Source.asp?vlnk=358>.

*Table 4: Employment to population ratio by sex and by educational attainment (2002)*

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>All</b>
Less than upper secondary	47.5	59.1	52.9
Upper secondary	73.3	84.4	79.4
Tertiary	85.6	89.7	87.8

Source: OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 edition*. Paris: OECD, 2004.

There has been a steady downward trend in the number of unemployed people since 1993. Youth unemployment decreased slightly between 2003 and 2004. In 2004, unemployment at 4.8 % was below the averages of 8.1 % for the EU-15 and 9.0 % of EU-25.

*Table 5: Unemployment rate by selected age groups (1990-2003)*

	<b>15-24</b>	<b>25-54</b>	<b>55-64</b>
1990	10.1	5.8	7.2
2001	10.5	3.9	3.3
2002	11.0	4.1	3.5
2003	11.5	3.8	3.3

Source: OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 edition*. Paris: OECD, 2004.

*Table 6: Unemployment rate of persons aged 25-64 by sex and educational attainment (2002)*

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>All</b>
Less than upper secondary	6.4	10.4	8.5
Upper secondary	4.0	4.1	4.1
Tertiary	2.0	2.8	2.4

Source: OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 edition*. Paris: OECD, 2004.

To equip the UK to meet the challenges of the global economy and to secure a well-educated, highly skilled workforce in a knowledge-driven economy, the government set public spending plans in 2004 for the following three years, committing greater investment in learning and skills. As outlined in the *DfES Departmental Report 2004* (see Annex 3), by 2007/08 education spending in the UK will be 5.6 % of GDP up from 5.4 % in 2004/05 and will reach EUR 110.4 billion <sup>(2)</sup>.

---

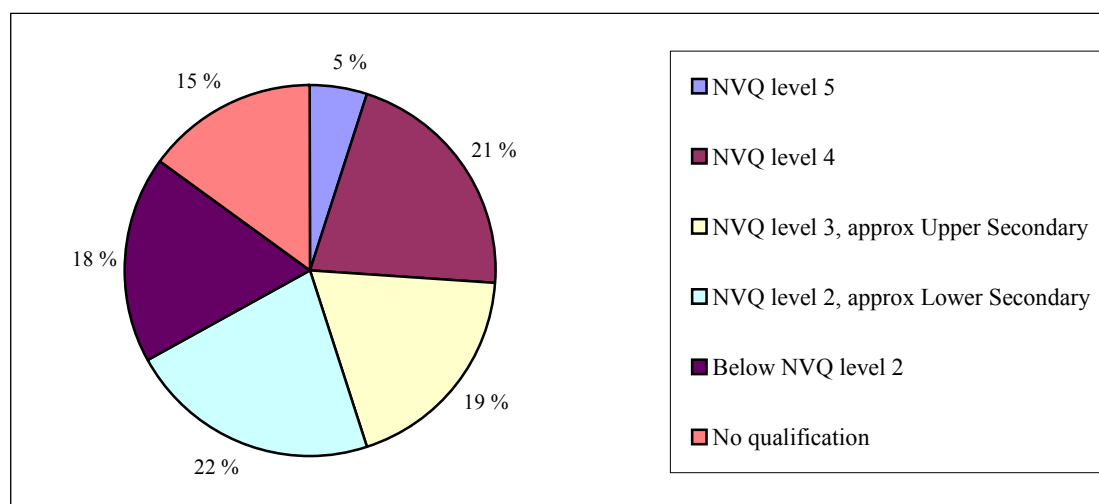
<sup>(2)</sup> Throughout the text, the exchange rate used is as of May 2005: GBP 1 = EUR 1.47.

## 1.4. Educational attainment of the population

Educational attainment has risen significantly over recent years at all levels in the system. The UK compares favourably in terms of percentages participating in, and graduating from, higher education (see Figure 1).

Compared to other industrialised countries, attainment by the age of 16 is good, but staying-on rates after the age of 16-17 (level 2 qualification) are poor. Consequently, the proportion of the population having skills particularly at level 3 is lower than in other industrialised countries. For the UK as a whole, the major concern is that approximately 10 % of leavers at 16 do not enter employment, further education or training; without further intervention they are at risk (for the qualification levels, see Figures 2, 3 and 4).

*Figure 1: Highest qualification held by people of working age in the United Kingdom in 2004 (% of people of working age)*



NB: Working age is defined as males aged 16-64 and females 16-59.  
For qualification levels (NVQ), see Figures 2 and 4.

Source: Department for Education and Skills - DfES. *Statistics of education: education and training statistics for the United Kingdom 2003*. London: DfES, 2004, Table 4.9. Available from Internet:  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000431/edtraining2003final.pdf> [cited 16.5.2005].

Table 7: *Destination of school leavers in the United Kingdom from 1996 to 2003*

	1991		1996		2003	
Destination at end of compulsory schooling	England, Wales & N. IR	Scotland	England, Wales & N. IR	Scotland	England, Wales & N. IR	Scotland
Number of school leavers (thousands)	583.1	55.2	625.9	57.4	672.8	57.3
of which (in %):						
Education	60	32	68	45	72	52
Government supported training (England, Wales, NI)/Training (Scotland)	19	25	13	14	11	5
Employment	8	24	7	23	8	23
Unemployed or not available for work (England, Wales & NI)/Unemployment (Scotland)	7	9	6		5	16
Miscellaneous		11		14		
Unknown or left area	6		6	4	4	4

NB: Figures may not add up to 100 % due to rounding.

The figures for Scotland cannot be directly compared with those for England, Wales and Northern Ireland due to the differences in education systems and data collection.

Source: Department for Education and Skills - DfES. *Statistics of education: education and training statistics for the United Kingdom 2003*. London: DfES, 2004, Table 4.11. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000431/edtraining2003final.pdf> [cited 16.5.2005].

## **2. Policy developments**

### **2.1. General objectives and priorities**

Concerns over low levels of productivity in the UK (linked to inadequate skills in the workforce), standards in education, low levels of participation in training, and high differentials between social groups led the Government in 1997 to develop a strategy focused on both raising standards and increasing inclusion. This agenda cuts across all areas of government action: education and training policy, social policy, and fiscal and monetary strategy. For raising standards, the agenda is focused on education and training. It is supported by inspection, target-setting at institutional and local levels, outcome-oriented funding and performance measures.

### **2.2. England, Wales and Northern Ireland**

#### **2.2.1. Objectives and performance targets**

The main objectives and targets relevant to vocational education and training in England <sup>(3)</sup> are as follows:

- (a) by the age of 19, all young people are ready for skilled employment or higher education.

Targets:

- (i) by 2008, 60 % of those aged 16 achieve the equivalent of five GCSEs at grades A\* to C (see Glossary);
- (ii) increase the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve at least level 2 by five percentage points by 2008, and increase the proportion of young people who achieve level 3 <sup>(4)</sup>;
- (iii) reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by two percentage points by 2010.

- (b) Tackle the adult skills gap: increase the number of adults with the skills required for employability and progression to higher levels of training.

Targets:

- (i) improve the basic skills (see Glossary) levels of 2.25 million adults by 2010;
- (ii) reduce by 40 % the number of adults in the workforce lacking level 2 qualifications by 2010. One million adults in the workforce to achieve level 2 by 2006.

---

<sup>(3)</sup> DfES. *Public spending review 2004: the white paper public service agreement 2005-2008*. London: DfES, 2004. Available from Internet: [http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/59385/2004\\_18\\_PSA\\_Targets\\_2005\\_2008.pdf](http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/59385/2004_18_PSA_Targets_2005_2008.pdf) [cited 13.5.2005].

<sup>(4)</sup> For the qualification levels, see Figures 2 and 4.

- (c) Raise and widen participation in higher education (HE), seen in England by the government as central to lifelong learning. HE will also be expanded in Wales and Northern Ireland.

### 2.2.2. Initiatives

Policies and reforms are developing at a rapid pace. There are significant government initiatives, especially in the terms of improving post-16 sector provisions and raising workforce skills.

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 <sup>(5)</sup> reformed the funding and planning of post-compulsory education and training in England and Wales through setting up the learning and skills councils (LSCs) in 2001, as well as the network of sector skills councils (SSCs) UK-wide, underpinned by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) (see Table 8).

The national qualifications framework (NQF) (see Figures 2 and 4) was introduced in 2000 for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. All VET qualifications are subject to quality control for admission. Under this NQF each qualification is classified in one of nine levels (entry level and levels 1 to 8). Each level denotes a set of outcomes (academic and vocational qualifications). The NQF and vocational qualifications have been reviewed since 2004 in line with the government's skills agenda to create an employer-led qualification system for adults which responds quickly to changing needs.

The UK's VET system is largely outcome-based. This is being extended by the credit transfer system, which will be adopted in England under the framework for achievement (FfA) (see also Section 7.2.) by 2006/07. The FfA will include all formally assessed achievements and will articulate with the Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF), with the credit and qualifications framework for Wales (CQFW), and with higher education credit systems in England and Northern Ireland. Moreover it will facilitate credit transfer arrangements with European credit systems.

More demanding national targets have also been set for apprenticeships (level 2 and 3) to raise the quality and effectiveness of apprenticeship as the primary vocational option for young people. The age restriction has been lifted so that more adults can benefit from these 'earn and learn' opportunities.

Following the introduction of *Curriculum 2000*, which introduced, among others, new vocational A-level qualifications, the government announced its vision for 14-19 education and training in England <sup>(6)</sup>. For VET, the reform envisaged introducing new lines of learning leading to diplomas in 14 broad sectors. The specialised diplomas will replace the current system of around 3 500 separate qualifications and provide a vocational route to higher education and skills employment. The first four diplomas will be developed by 2008.

---

<sup>(5)</sup> *Learning and Skills Act 2000*. London: HMSO, 2000. Available from Internet: <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000021.htm> [cited 13.5.2005].

<sup>(6)</sup> DfES. *White paper: 14-19 education and skills*. February 2005. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/14-19educationandskills/index.shtml> [cited 3.5.2005].

The skills for life strategy aims to tackle the basic skills deficit. A learning infrastructure for adult literacy and numeracy, as well as extensive ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) programmes for migrant workers and refugees, have been developed at entry level and levels 1 and 2 of the NQF (see Figures 2 and 4).

The white paper *21st century skills realising our potential* (2003) and its sequel of 2005 *Skills: getting on in business, getting on at work* (see Annex 3) develop the government's strategy for ensuring that employers have the right skills to support the success of their businesses. They also envisage some measures to help individuals gain the skills they need to be employable and personally fulfilled.

## **2.3. Scotland**

### **2.3.1. Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF)**

Since 2001, mainstream Scottish qualifications have been brought into a single unifying framework known as the Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF). The SCQF differs from the NQF (see Figure 2). It is a lifelong learning framework with 12 levels, which can embrace all forms of learning, including informal learning, provided the learning has clear outcomes and can be assessed by a method that is quality assured. In the SCQF qualifications are described in terms of the level and credit value. The credit value describes the amount of learning achieved in credit points, and the level denotes how demanding it is.

This policy development formally brings vocational and general qualifications into one framework. The SCQF has been developed to help people of all ages and circumstances to access appropriate education and training over their lifetime. Moreover it enables employers, learners and the public in general to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications.

### **2.3.2. Lifelong learning**

Six key performance indicators have been identified in Scotland to monitor the achievement of the lifelong learning policies outlined in *Life through learning, learning through life* <sup>(7)</sup>. These indicators are as follows: a reduction in the proportion of 16-19 year olds not in education, training and employment; an increase in support to 16-19 year olds from low income families to stay on at school and/or further education college; an increase in graduates as a proportion of the workforce; a reduction in the proportion of working age adults whose highest qualification is below SCQF level 5; a reduction in the proportion of 18-29 year olds whose highest qualification is below SCQF level 6; an increase in the proportion of people in employment undertaking training.

---

<sup>(7)</sup> Scottish Executive. *Life through learning, learning through life. The lifelong learning strategy for Scotland*. February 2003, p. 70. Available from Internet: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/lism.pdf> [cited 3.5.2005].

Figure 2: *Qualifications framework – a rough guide to UK qualifications*

Main stages of education/employment	England, Wales & Northern Ireland national qualifications framework <sup>(1)</sup>	The Scottish credit and qualifications framework <sup>(2)</sup>	England, Wales and Northern Ireland framework for higher education qualifications: FHEQ <sup>(3)</sup>
Qualifications can be taken at any age to continue or return to education or training	Entry level	Access level 1	
	Entry Level Certificate (NQF)	Access level 2	
		Access level 3	
Secondary education		Foundation Standard Grade	
Initial entry into employment or further education	Level 1	Level 4	
	NVQ Level 1, Level 1 Certificate, GCSEs at grade D-G	Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, SVQ 1	
Continuation of secondary education	Level 2	Level 5	
	NVQ Level 2, Level 2 Certificate, Level 2 Diploma, GCSEs at grade A*-C <sup>(1)</sup>	Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ 2	
Progression to skilled employment	Level 3	Level 6	
	NVQ Level 3, A-levels, Level 3 Certificate, Level 3 Diploma <sup>(2)</sup>	Higher, SVQ 3 <sup>(4)</sup>	
Completion of secondary education	Level 4	Level 7	
		Advanced Higher, Higher National Certificate, Certificate of Higher Education <sup>(5)</sup>	Level C
Entry to higher education	NVQs, Level 4 Certificate, Level 4 Diploma		Certificates of Higher Education
Qualified / Skilled worker	Level 5	Level 8	Level I
	NVQs, Level 5 Certificate, Level 5 Diploma, Higher National Diploma	Higher National Diploma, Diploma in Higher Education, SVQ 4	Ordinary Bachelor's degree, Foundation degrees, Diplomas of higher education and other higher diplomas
Specialised education and training		Level 9	
Entry to professional graduate employment		Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma/Certificate	
	Level 6	Level 10	Level H
Intermediate/ higher education	NVQs, Level 6 Certificate, Level 6 Diploma	Honours degree, Graduate Diploma/Certificate	Bachelor's degrees with honours, Graduate certificates and diplomas
Advanced skills training	Level 7	Level 11	Level M
	NVQs, Level 7 Diploma, Level 7 Fellowship, Level 7 Advanced Professional Certificate	Masters, SVQ 5	Master's degree, Post-graduate certificates and diplomas
Professional or post-graduate education or employment	Level 8	Level 12	Level D
	Highly specialist Diploma from a professional body	Doctorates	Doctoral degree

NB: This diagram illustrates the different frameworks of the different countries; it should not be used for direct comparisons of levels between countries. The main qualifications listed are described in Chapter 4. For the acronyms, see Annex 1.

<sup>(1)</sup> [www.qca.org.uk/qualifications](http://www.qca.org.uk/qualifications); [www.accac.org.uk](http://www.accac.org.uk); [www.qca.org.uk/openquals](http://www.qca.org.uk/openquals); [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk).

<sup>(2)</sup> [www.sqcf.org.uk](http://www.sqcf.org.uk).

<sup>(3)</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/); [academicinfrastructure/fheq](http://academicinfrastructure/fheq).

<sup>(4)</sup> Approximately lower secondary level.

<sup>(5)</sup> Approximately upper secondary level.

Source: Compiled by QCA.



## **3. Institutional framework**

### **3.1. Administrative framework**

In general, the devolution of governance (see Section 1.1.) in the UK means that the government and institutional frameworks differ between England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales, all of which have extensive autonomy. The institutional framework is complex; Table 8 shows the allocation of responsibilities in broad terms.

The general pattern is as follows:

- (a) overall policy for education, vocational learning and skills is the responsibility of the learning or education department of each national government. Universities are independent institutions with their own charter;
- (b) the funding, provision and management of learning opportunities in each nation is delegated to a funding council, which determines priorities and the allocation of funding and oversees data collection (see also Chapter 10);
- (c) regional and local bodies advise on the provision of learning opportunities to meet local needs, within the overall national policy and funding arrangements, but individual colleges have considerable autonomy;
- (d) inspection of the quality of provision is the responsibility of an independent body in each nation, as is research, evaluation of initiatives and staff development;
- (e) approval of qualifications for use in publicly funded provision is the responsibility of an accrediting body for each nation, although those for England, Wales and Northern Ireland work closely on accreditation issues;
- (f) employment policy and training programmes for the unemployed are the responsibility of the UK Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), working with the governments of the devolved administrations;
- (g) sector skills councils (SSCs), responsible for identifying skills needs in economic sectors and for defining the occupational standards on which occupational qualifications are based, work across the UK, as does their coordinating body, the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA).

### **3.2. Legislative framework**

No single piece of legislation provides the basis for the legal framework for education and training in the UK. Governance and system development is regulated by a series of laws, covering different aspects of education and training. The recent major acts of Parliament are: the Learning and Skills Act of 2000, which reformed the organisations responsible for managing the further education sector; the Education Act of 2002, which included measures to increase schools' flexibility with respect to the curriculum, staffing and governance; the Employment Act of 2002, which included an introduction of a new right to time off work for union learning representatives (for further details on the relevant legislation, see Annex 3).

*Table 8: Main areas of responsibility in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland (2005)*

	<b>England</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
Overall policy for vocational education and skills	Department for Education and Skills (DfES)	Welsh Assembly Government Department for Training and Education	Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI)	Scottish Executive: Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (inc. HE but not schools)
Funding of providers in the learning and skills sector (colleges of further education, adult learning and work-based learning providers); determining national priorities	National Learning and Skills Council (National LSC)	ELWa (Education and Learning Wales) <sup>(1)</sup>	Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI)	Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) <sup>(2)</sup> . Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise through local enterprise companies (LECs) fund work-based learning
Determination of priorities at regional level and rationalisation of provision	Local learning and skills councils (local LSCs) via the strategic area review (StARs) process  Liaison with regional development agencies	ELWa regional offices via regional statements of needs and priorities and in consultation with community consortia for education and training		Scottish Enterprise (SEn) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) working with local enterprise companies (LECs)
Inspection of provision in colleges and work-based training	Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI); for those aged 16-19 this is undertaken jointly with the school inspectors Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education)	Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales)	DENI (Department of Education Northern Ireland) on behalf of DELNI	HMIE (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education) Scotland, as for Scottish schools  Local enterprise companies (LECs) inspect work-based learning
Research and staff development	Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), which also runs the learning and skills research network	Dysg (Welsh arm of LSDA)	LSDA Northern Ireland	Scottish Further Education Unit

Approval of qualifications which may be supported by public funding	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)	ACCAC (Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales), but NVQs are the sole responsibility of QCA	CCEA (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment), but NVQs are the sole responsibility of QCA	SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority, awarding and accreditation body)
Employment policy and the New Deal (flexible programme of advice and training for the unemployed)	Department of Work and Pensions	Department of Work and Pensions in conjunction with Wales Employment Advisory Panel	Northern Ireland Department of Employment and Learning	Department of Work and Pensions in conjunction with Scottish Executive

Overall responsibility for developing occupational standards and the licensing of sector skills bodies	Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) In the occupational standards programme, SSDA works in conjunction with SQA and QCA through the Projects and Standards Approval Group (PSAG)			
Development of occupational standards for specific economic sectors, together with work to identify and reduce sectoral skills gaps and increase opportunities for workforce development	Sector skills councils (25), with special arrangements for some more specialised areas			
Improvements in productivity and skills	Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)			
Regional economic development and regeneration, improvements in competitiveness, business efficiency and investment	Regional development agencies (RDAs) responsible to the DTI. Welsh Development Agency. Invest Northern Ireland (2002) promotes local business and economic development. Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise work through local enterprise companies.			
Setting regional priorities and targets for improving the skills base	Frameworks of regional employment and skills action (FRESAs), regional skills partnerships			

<sup>(1)</sup> ELWa is to be absorbed into the Welsh Assembly Government Department for Training and Education by April 2006.

<sup>(2)</sup> The Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) is to be merged with the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) under legislation to be introduced into the Scottish Parliament in 2004/05.

NB: Local education authorities (LEAs) in England and Wales, and Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in Northern Ireland now play little part in post-compulsory education, although they continue to have a role in school education. In Scotland, there are no sixth-form colleges and the upper secondary stage (S5 and S6 – equivalent to the lower and upper sixth form respectively in England) is not regarded as part of the learning and skills sector. It is funded by education authorities in the same way as the rest of school provisions.

Following the devolution of powers to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1999, the responsibilities of each of the devolved administrations have been defined by legislation. Moreover, other legislation related to VET has covered the following:

- reform of the organisations and structures for planning and funding provision;
- independence of further education colleges from local authority control, allowing them to control their own budgets;
- revision of the arrangements for approval of qualifications;
- provision of training for the unemployed.

### **3.3. Role of social partners**

Traditionally, training in the UK is employer-led on a ‘voluntarist’ model. Nevertheless, stakeholder participation in formulating VET is characterised in different ways. Three models represent social partnership arrangements in the UK: consultation, collective bargaining and participation in formal structures. At national level, consultation is the primary mechanism. Participation occurs more at sectoral level. Collective bargaining within the qualifications system is limited mainly to localised negotiations on access to training and qualifications, including apprenticeship arrangements.

In spite of different approaches and policies on the part of employers and trade unions, particularly over financing of training and degree of control, vocational training tends to be an area in which there is a high degree of cooperation; there is also consensus between social partners on the benefits of training. In the past two decades, the state has become increasingly involved and there are some signs of collaboration between employers’ and employees’ organisations.

Trade unions play an increasing role in the government’s learning and skills agenda. They are represented at a high level social partnership board of Skills Alliance, at RDAs in England and its equivalents in the devolved administrations, as well as at the present 25 sector skills councils’ board and LSCs (one or two seats).

Legislation in 2002 made provision for union learning representatives (see Glossary) at each workplace and gave them statutory recognition. This gives unions the opportunity to enhance the services they provide to individual members and extend the scope of the collective bargaining agenda. Learning representatives encourage the low skilled to engage in training, support those with higher level skills and encourage continuous professional development (see Section 5.2.).

## 4. Initial vocational education and training

### 4.1. Overview

(See Figure 3: The education and training systems in the United Kingdom)

Schooling is compulsory from age 5 to 16 (4 to 16 in Northern Ireland). All publicly funded schools must provide the national curriculum. Depending on the key stage of compulsory education<sup>(8)</sup>, the national curriculum comprises different compulsory subjects, with core subjects like English, mathematics, science, ICT, etc., included throughout the studies. At age 16 most pupils take public examinations, the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) (level 2) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (see Figure 4) and the standard grade in Scotland (see Glossary). GCSEs are normally taken in a range of single subjects, and a certificate is issued listing the grade achieved in each subject. After completion of compulsory education in secondary schools, young people may choose to continue in school, move to a sixth-form college or a further education (FE) college, enter employment with training such as an apprenticeship, or enter employment without apprenticeship.

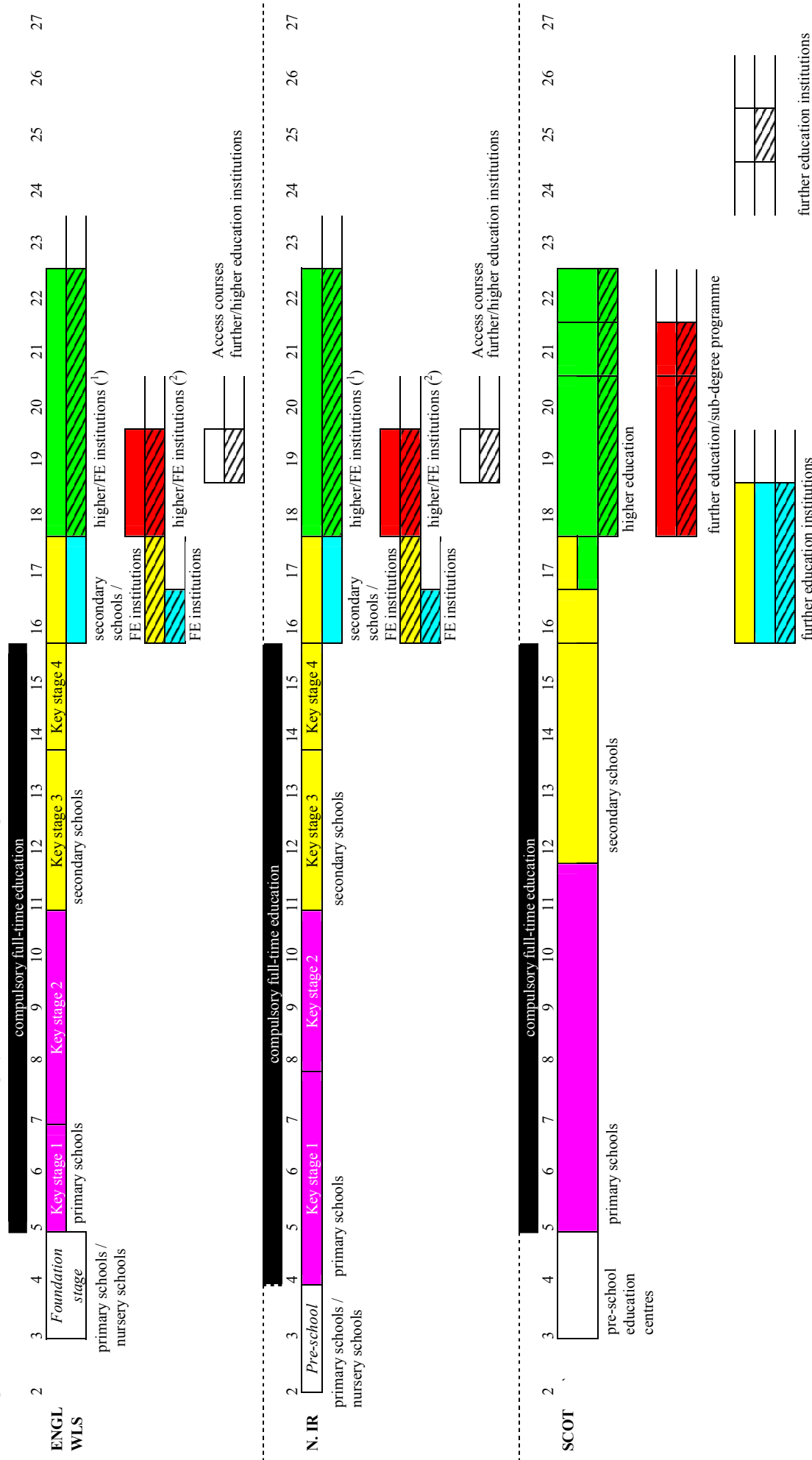
Students remaining in education at a school or a college may choose between general (academic) and vocational subjects or take a mixture of the two. Normally, the upper secondary phase lasts two years, from age 16 to 18 or 19. The dominant qualification is general certificate of education (GCE) A-levels (level 3). A-levels are elective single subject qualifications, which students choose on the basis of GCSE qualifications, interest and intended destination. Students are encouraged to study up to five subjects in the first year of post-secondary education and upon completion, they are awarded the GCE advanced subsidiary (AS) qualification. Those who continue in the second year, study more demanding units in three of these five subjects to obtain the full GCE A-level on successful completion (graded A to E, A being the highest) (see Glossary).

School- and college-based vocational qualifications and pathways are developing. The general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) introduced in the 1990s will be phased out by 2007, and vocational GCSEs and vocational A-levels have been introduced since 2000.

---

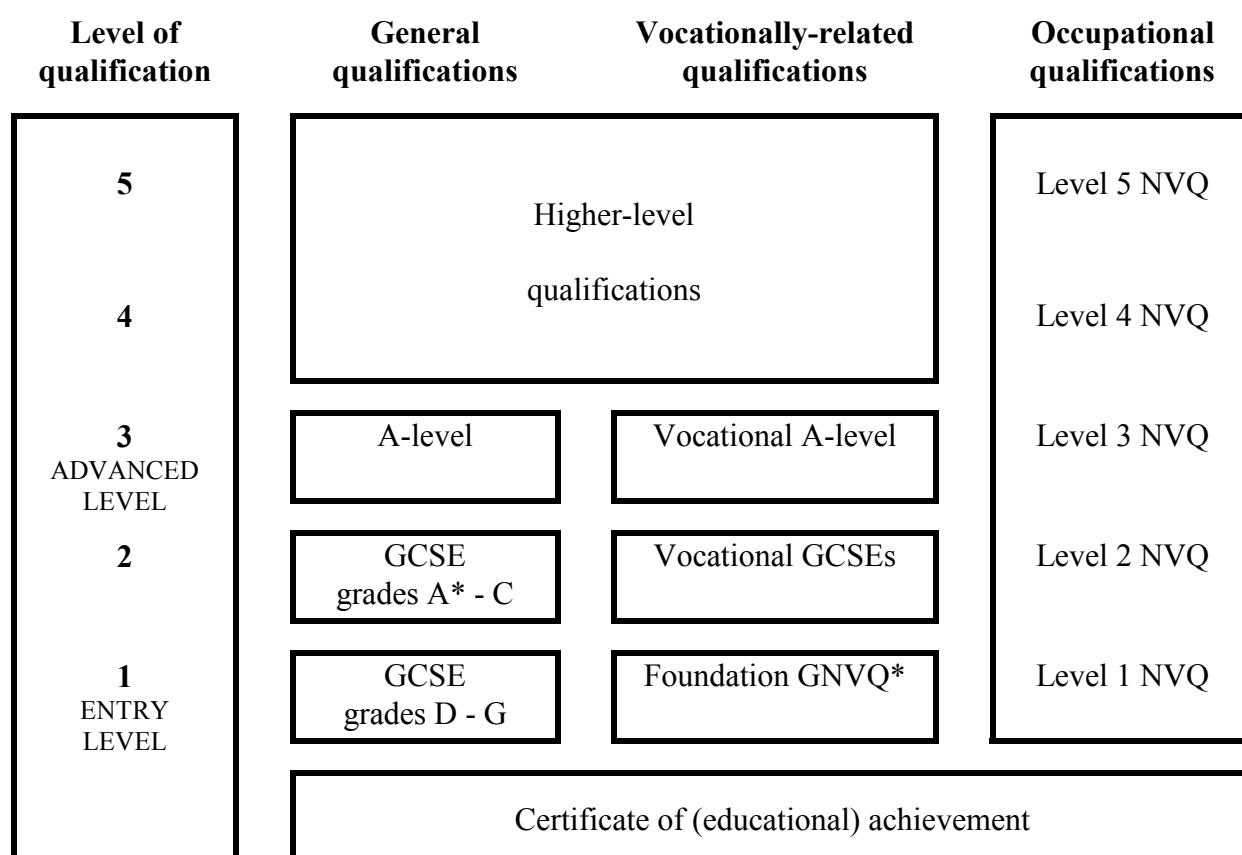
<sup>(8)</sup> Key Stage 1 of compulsory education: ages 5 to 7; key stage 2: 7 to 11; key stage 3: 11 to 14; key stage 4: 14 to 16. See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Education and training systems in the United Kingdom



NB: ENGL = England; WLS = Wales; N. IR = Northern Ireland; SCOT = Scotland. Shaded boxes denote part-time or combined school and workplace courses. (1) largely theoretically based. (2) more practical/technical/occupationally specific. Source: Adapted from Eurydice.

Figure 4: Simplified overview of the national qualifications framework in Great Britain



NB: The diagram shows examples of qualifications, chosen because they are well known. Many other qualifications will become part of the framework as it continues to grow.

\* Foundation GNVQs are being phased out. A first in a series of specialist diplomas will be developed by 2008.

Source: Compiled by QCA, CCEA, ACCAC.

The government's 2005 white paper <sup>(9)</sup> has announced that over the next 10 years a series of 14 specialist diplomas will be introduced, each with three levels (see Section 2.2.2.). The number of young people who drop out of education and training at 16, or before completing an upper secondary qualification, is an issue that government reforms are seeking to address.

A series of reports has highlighted the importance for the UK building on key elements of its VET system. Integral to these are the following four features:

- (a) the notion of competence, the criteria of assessment being the learning outcomes;
- (b) the use of units of assessment – almost all UK qualifications are modular in delivery and assessment – which creates flexibility for learners, trainers and funding partners;
- (c) the diversity of learning provision, and the belief that the delivery of learning needs to be adaptable to local circumstances (economic and social) and particularly to the individual;

<sup>(9)</sup> DfES. *White paper: 14-19 education and skills*. February 2005. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/14-19educationandskills/index.shtml> [cited 3.5.2005].

- (d) the definition of occupational standards systematically using state-of-the-art needs analysis methods and involving stakeholders as much as possible.

Learning programmes for 14-16 year olds are governed by the national curriculum, which is a broad and balanced programme for most students, although greater specialisation towards vocational options was introduced for some students in 2002. The 16-19 year olds' learning programme is governed primarily by the student's main qualification aim. Learners following work-based training such as an apprenticeship or a FE course for entry to an occupation, combine training for specific occupations with work. Training providers can be training or HR departments in firms, further education colleges or private training organisations.

Further education institutions include sixth-form colleges, tertiary colleges and further education colleges (both general and specialist). Colleges of further education provide both IVET and CVET, catering to young people and adults. Most offer academic and general courses (such as A-levels) and vocational ones, and some also offer degree courses; Scotland offers highers and advanced highers (see Figure 2). According to the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) annual datasets (<sup>10</sup>), in 2004, FE institutions in the UK supplied 42 % of students for higher education.

In higher education, universities and other institutions provide initial vocational education. In addition to three- or four-year first degrees (see Section 4.6.), masters and doctorates universities offer a wide range of shorter courses including two-year higher national certificates and diplomas (HNCs and HNDs) and foundation degrees (see Glossary).

The qualifications framework and programmes of study in Scotland differ from the rest of the UK (see Figures 2 and 3). The Scottish credit and qualifications framework (see Section 2.3.1.) provides a range of academic and vocational courses and qualifications covering hundreds of subjects (<sup>11</sup>) for learners of all ages in schools and colleges. In secondary schools students aged 15-16 normally take Standard Grades (see Glossary) but some now take national qualifications at access, intermediate 1 or intermediate 2 levels at secondary schools. Students aged 17-18 follow national qualifications courses at one of five levels from access to advanced higher. Students can start at the level which suits best their abilities and can progress to the next. Each of the units counts as a qualification in its own right, which allows students who do not pass the whole course to get the credit for the units successfully achieved. Pass grades are awarded at A, B and C. Higher and advanced higher can be used for entrance into higher education or a workplace. National qualification courses are also offered at FE colleges. Scottish colleges have a major role in higher education through their extensive programmes of HNCs and HNDs, from which students can progress to the second and third years of degrees at universities.

---

(<sup>10</sup>) UCAS Annual Pivot Tables, <http://wwwucas.com/figures/about/pivot.html>.

(<sup>11</sup>) The framework was reviewed in 2002, with more subjects on offer (i.e., philosophy, politics, care and engineering).



In the UK, a young person with special educational needs (SEN) or disability has the right to receive a broad and balanced education. In England, a SEN code of practice was published in 2002. As of 2004, more children with SEN attend mainstream schools and better provisions are envisaged at special schools for those with most severe and complex needs. Similar legislations have been adopted by the devolved administrations.

## **4.2. IVET at lower secondary level**

From September 2004 there is a statutory requirement for schools in England to make provision for work-related learning for all pupils, including opportunities for:

- learning through work (for example, through short periods of work experience);
- learning about work and careers education;
- learning for work, by developing enterprise and employability skills (for example, through working on key skills and schemes such as the UK charity Young Enterprise) <sup>(12)</sup>.

Through the introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects, the government promotes the parity of esteem between vocational and more traditional academic subjects.

Vocational GCSEs are available in eight subjects: applied science, applied IT, applied business, applied art and design, engineering, manufacturing, health and social care, leisure and tourism, with other subjects under development. Vocational GCSEs give young people the opportunity to explore a particular vocational area as part of a balanced learning programme. They offer a more applied approach to learning. A vocational GCSE is equivalent to two academic (general) GCSEs and enables progression to further education, training or employment.

In Wales, in 2003 a six-year pilot of new Baccalaureate qualification began, which has a common core curriculum on Wales, Europe and world studies (including a language module), work-related education, personal and social education and key skills.

The government's announcement of the development of 14 specialist diplomas, each at three levels, is intended to make available a consistent set of school- and college-based diplomas, and to make vocational provision coherent for young people in their last years of compulsory schooling, at levels 1 and 2.

Young Apprenticeships (introduced in 2004) offer an opportunity for motivated 14-16 year olds to combine practical application of skills and knowledge with studying for vocational

---

<sup>(12)</sup> Young Enterprise is run through direct funding and in-kind support from local and national businesses and organisations. It is aimed at young people aged 4-25 in full or part-time education, teachers/tutors of enterprise education and volunteers who can also develop business skills while delivering learning. Available from Internet: <http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/> [cited 13.5.2005].

qualifications. This allows the learner a flexible programme involving a college, training provider or employer, and is intended to lead to an apprenticeship at the age of 16. Pupils are based in school and follow the core national curriculum subjects, but for two days a week (or equivalent) they also work towards nationally recognised level 2 vocational qualifications. The learning experience includes up to 50 days' experience of work over the two years of the programme.

Similarly, the Increased Flexibility programme for 14-16 year olds was introduced in 2002 to provide enhanced work-related learning through partnerships of local providers and businesses <sup>(13)</sup>. By the end of 2003, 40 000 young people in England had participated and 300 partnerships were established.

*Table 9: Destinations of 16 year olds by country (2003)*

	<b>England</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
Number of school leavers (thousands)	608.8	37.7	26.3	57.3
of which (%)				
Education	72	74	70	52
Government supported training*	7	8	19	5
Employment	11	7	5	23
Unemployed/not available for work	8	6	2	16
Unknown or left area	4	5	4	4

\* See Chapter 5.

NB: Figures for Scotland are not directly comparable due to differences in education systems and data collection.

Source: Department for Education and Skills - DfES. *Statistics of education: education and training statistics for the United Kingdom 2003*. London: DfES, 2004, Table 4.11. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000431/edtraining2003final.pdf> [cited 16.5.2005].

### 4.3. IVET at upper secondary level

Upon completing compulsory secondary education, the next main routes for young people are:

- continue in full-time education in a school or college;
- move on to a work-based training programme, usually an apprenticeship;
- start work by becoming employed full-time or part-time or doing voluntary work.

Full-time post-16 education is available in school sixth forms, sixth-form colleges and further education colleges, including specialist colleges (art, design and agriculture). Increasingly, schools, colleges and other stakeholders are collaborating in learning partnerships to make a wider range of opportunities available to learners in their area. There is no statutory curriculum at post-16 level (see Glossary).

<sup>(13)</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/qualifications/mainSection.cfm?SID=64&ssID=190>.

The UK gives a statutory right to certain 16 or 17 year olds who are in employment (part- or full-time, permanent or temporary) to paid time off work for study or training towards an approved qualification.

The main qualifications taken at level 3 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are A-levels, the general certificate of education (GCE) qualifications at advanced level (see Figure 4). Most young people who wish to go on to university or another higher education institution stay on at school or move on to a sixth-form college study for two years (sometimes three) for their A-levels. Most schools also offer some vocational courses or subjects at this stage.

Young people who decide to move on to a further education college may be seeking a wider or more specialised mix of general and vocational options, or aim to achieve a more specific vocational qualification while remaining in full-time education. Some seek a second chance to improve on their performance and achievements gained in school.

Reforms to ages 14-19 learning aim to motivate all learners to remain in some form of education or training that leads to a nationally recognised qualification. Financial support, where needed, is available through the system of education maintenance allowances (EMA) (see Section 10.2.1.).

Within the full-time school- and college-based pathways, a range of different vocational qualifications is available. The following are the main applied vocationally related and occupational qualifications available through full-time education:

### **Vocational certificate of education**

The Vocational certificate of education (VCE) is an A-level award designed for those wanting to study a broad area of work and the application of a subject. Specifications have been revised to have the same structure as GCEs and will be known as GCEs in 10 applied subjects from September 2005. These are applied art and design, applied business, applied ICT, applied science, engineering, health and social care, media, travel and tourism, leisure, performing arts. Students study several units, some of which are mandatory. The total number of units required varies between levels. About two thirds of the units are externally assessed, one third internally. Progression – which is dependent on attainment in AS- and/or A-level – is to higher education including foundation degrees (see Section 4.6.), or to apprenticeship, or to training and/or professional qualifications.

### **National vocational qualifications (NVQs)**

NVQs are designed for people to gain recognised qualifications for specific occupations. They are offered mainly at levels 1, 2 and 3 (see Figures 2 and 4). They offer progression routes to further education and training or into the labour market. NVQs were designed as qualifications recognising work-based competences, but are often achieved through study in FE colleges.

## **Key skills**

Key skills (KS) qualifications are available to students across all post-16 routes. KS qualifications (levels 1-3) comprise communication, application of number and information technology (IT). Also available at levels 1-3 are the wider key skills units: working with others, improving own learning and performance and problem solving. Assessment comprises a portfolio and (except for wider key skills) external tests. They are available and designed to be taken in tandem with the other qualifications described here.

## **BTEC introductory, first and national qualifications**

Business and technical education councils (BTECs) <sup>(14)</sup> are designed for study in occupational areas such as aeronautical engineering and horticulture. They offer a mixture of theoretical and practical work and can be taken at levels 1, 2 and 3. Progression routes can be into the labour market or onto more advanced vocational courses, including to BTEC higher national diploma/certificate, foundation or other degrees at level 4 or professional qualifications.

## **OCR national awards, certificates and diplomas**

OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts) <sup>(15)</sup> nationals are a new suite of qualifications designed mainly for 16 to 19 year olds. They are available at levels 1, 2 and 3. Progression routes are similar to the BTEC awards.

## **City and Guilds <sup>(16)</sup>, GVQs and IVQs**

City and Guilds offers more than 500 qualifications (through its 8 500 centres worldwide) across sectors at different levels, general vocational qualifications (GVQs) and international vocational qualifications (IVQs), in particular. There are two types of IVQs, craft and technician, and they are available at three levels, certificate, diploma and advanced diploma.

## **Scotland**

A national qualifications (NQs) system was introduced in Scotland in 1999. There are five levels of awards (access, intermediate 1 and 2, higher and advanced higher). Students usually study NQs in fourth, fifth and sixth year of secondary education (15-16, 16-17, 17-18 years of age respectively) though a few schools may offer the qualifications at an earlier stage. Schools do not offer the whole range of NQs at every level but match provision to the needs of students. NQs offer progression routes into further and higher education and employment. All NQs are credit-rated and levelled in the Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF) from 2004 (see Section 2.3.1. and Figure 2).

---

<sup>(14)</sup> Former awarding body.

<sup>(15)</sup> Awarding body.

<sup>(16)</sup> Vocational awarding body, which awards almost 50 % of all national vocational qualifications (NVQs).

In Scotland, several local authorities are using flexibility within the curriculum to deliver work-based vocational learning programmes through the strategy for enterprise in education. Employers, colleges and universities value, use and develop core skills (problem solving, communication, numeracy, ICT and working with others). Core skills are built into national units but could be studied as units in their own right. All learners can gain recognised national qualifications for their core skills and these qualifications may contribute to Scottish group awards (see Glossary).

## **4.4. Apprenticeship**

Apprenticeships provide work-based training in a broad range of sectors to people who are learning new skills and gaining recognised qualifications while they are working. They normally last between one and three years. Since its start in 1994, one million apprentices have joined the programme. Apprentices can enter higher education or employment depending on the successful completion of the corresponding apprenticeship training.

A total of 60 apprenticeships (at level 2) and advanced apprenticeships (equal to two good A-levels or level 3 qualification) are available in over 80 different industries (retailing, engineering, car manufacturing, construction, banking, to name a few), hotel and catering and business administration being the main sectors for starting apprenticeships. Over the next five years, 50 % of British Gas engineer recruits will be apprentices. The relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC) produces a framework for each apprenticeship qualification. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) manages and funds apprenticeships as a national programme through its network of training providers.

An apprenticeship is a mixture of work-based training and education, which includes the following basic elements:

- a national vocational qualification (NVQ), an occupationally specific qualification delivered and assessed mainly in the workplace;
- key skills, e.g. communication, application of number <sup>(17)</sup> and ICT at an appropriate level;
- a technical certificate, providing the underpinning knowledge of the technical or business areas associated with the job and delivered at a FE college (see Glossary).

There is no single set time to complete apprenticeships and they vary widely in content and size. Apprenticeships at level 2 take a minimum of 12 months while advanced apprenticeships take a minimum of 24 months. Apprenticeships were originally intended for young people, but in May 2004 the upper age limit of 25 for apprenticeships was removed in England.

---

<sup>(17)</sup> How to use numbers to solve problems.

Apprentices receive pay (see Section 10.2.1.) and most have the status of employees of the organisation where they work. They typically spend one day per week at college studying the technical certificate and the remainder of their time in training or work with their employer. Apprentices have a contract and also an individual learning plan, which employers develop with the help of local learning providers, who also handle assessment and quality control and help businesses recruit a suitable apprentice. Selection takes account of school qualifications (especially for more technical occupations) and motivation.

*Table 10: Starts in the 10 most frequently taken apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in England (2000-04)*

*(in thousands)*

	<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<b>Advanced apprenticeships</b>
2000/01	104.1	72.4
2001/02	108.3	54.0
2002/03	115.7	47.3
2003/04	136.5	55.9

*Source:* Learning and Skills Council - LSC. *Further education, work-based learning for young people and adult and community learning: learner numbers in England: 2003/2004*. London: LSC, 2005. Available from Internet: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/exp3twbu4rt6u3qjmt53iqgp6zygijs3zf72j6gfkwlwvpvgctt12vgdscnepceacb4gpcyckjcgk/ILRSFR05v8.pdf> [cited 16.5.2005].

In Wales, the age limit on apprenticeships was removed in 2002. The modern skills diploma for adults aims to raise skills levels in business, extending the apprenticeship model to those aged over 25. The diploma programme provides structured training at level 4 for people in or out of employment. Modern apprenticeships were introduced in Northern Ireland in 1996; arrangements are broadly similar to those in England.

Though similar, arrangements in Scotland differ somewhat. They include on- and off-the-job training, study for a SVQ level 3 (SCQF level 6, see Figure 2) or above and core skills in numeracy, communications, IT, problem solving and working with others at a minimum level of intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4). Training providers must achieve the modern apprenticeship standards defined in the Scottish quality management system, the quality assurance mechanism used by the Local Enterprise Companies (LECs). Training providers make a contract with LECs on agreed training provision and related funding. There is no upper age limit for taking part in the apprenticeship programmes.

Skillseekers training (Scotland) includes on- and off-the-job training and study up to level 3 (SCQF level 6), for 16-24 year olds in employment or on a training placement (train for a job through work experience). Funding is provided by government and is paid to training providers as a contribution towards training costs, on the young person's achievement of specific milestones of the training plan. Training usually lasts two years. The enterprise

network<sup>(18)</sup> sets funding levels that reflect the age of the individual and importance of the occupational sector to local economy.

## **4.5. Special needs and young people at risk of exclusion**

### **4.5.1. Entry level**

Entry level qualifications are designed for learners working below GCSE level because they lack skills to operate at higher levels. They provide access to NVQ, GCSE and other level 1 qualifications. They are occupationally specific. There are vocational ‘taster-courses’ that are designed for transition from compulsory schooling to the post-16 phase. Basic qualifications are available in areas such as life or independent living skills, literacy and numeracy.

### **4.5.2. Entry to employment**

Entry to employment (E2E) is an entry to level 1 work-based learning programme for young people (aged 16-18) who are not yet ready to enter an apprenticeship, employment or structured learning at level 2. Each programme is flexible but students must undertake learning in three core strands of the curriculum: basic and/or key skills, vocational skills and development (in formal and informal environments), personal and social development. Although not qualification driven, E2E must provide learners with an entitlement to work towards external qualifications (or units of it) and awards, appropriate to their ability and potential across all three strands. E2E students are not restricted by time limit to complete the programme. Learners are recruited through referral from Connexions, a guidance service (see Section 9.1.), or directly from the provider or support agencies (social services, youth offending teams, etc.). The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) works in partnership with the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), sector skills councils, local providers including voluntary organisations and awarding bodies on this programme in the context of local needs.

### **4.5.3. New Deal for young people**

New Deal is a government programme to help people move into and remain in work. The New Deal for young people is for those aged 18 to 24 and claiming job seeker’s allowance (JSA). It aims to give young people the skills, confidence and motivation to help them find work. Participants enter a gateway of intensive jobsearch and specialist help, and those still claiming JSA at the end of this, have a choice of options: full time education and training;

---

<sup>(18)</sup> Scottish Enterprise is a government-funded network of a government development agency (Scottish Enterprise National) and 12 local enterprise companies (LECs), which was set up in 1991 to provide a more fully integrated economic development agency.

training/work placement in the voluntary sector; or training/work placement through the Environment Task Force.

Participants can access one or a combination of options. In addition, an employment subsidy is available at any stage of the programme, providing an incentive for employers to employ a New Deal participant. An initiative, StepUp, builds on the New Deal for young people and New Deal 25 plus (see Sections 5.6. and 10.4.) by providing transitional jobs for those who have not secured sustained employment through New Deal.

## **4.6. Vocational education and training at tertiary level**

After gaining A-level qualifications (see Glossary) with three good grades, students can go on to universities and other higher education institutions. Universities set out their own admission policy. In the UK there is no separate identification of vocational higher education. Most institutions offer both vocational and general courses, although in differing proportions. There is a wide choice, with some 50 000 degree and non-degree courses available through the common application body (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, UCAS).

The sector includes 91 universities, as well as colleges of higher education (HE), and specialist institutions, e.g. for art and agriculture. Higher education courses are also increasingly offered in further education colleges, particularly in Scotland where higher national certificate/diploma (HNC/D) courses have attracted socio-economic groups under-represented in traditional HE.

Widening participation is a key aspect of UK policy. It is based on social and economic priorities. Universities assess the merit of applicants and take decisions on that basis. A-levels (normally, three with grades A-C) are the traditional route to higher education for young people. However, many alternatives are often accepted, including vocational qualifications at a suitable level. Some HE institutions provide foundation and access courses for students who do not possess the relevant entry qualifications for their chosen degree course. Performance at interview, work experience or other factor may also be taken into account in assessing merit.

In the UK, academic qualifications are not national awards but granted by individual institutions. Qualifications below the level of honours degree include higher education certificates and diplomas (HNCs/HNDs) and foundation degrees (FD).

### **Sub-degree qualifications**

Until the introduction of foundation degrees in 2001 (not Scotland), the most usual sub-degree HE qualifications were the higher national certificates and diplomas (HNCs and HNDs) in a huge number of subjects, which are vocational qualifications in their own right. HNDs are normally offered as full time, two year courses or through a part-time route, with HNCs



normally two years part time. HNC/D students can progress to degree courses. Of part-time students, 45.6 % were studying at sub-degree level in 2003/04 <sup>(19)</sup>. A wide range of HND courses are on offer, particularly in Scotland, with some involving a combination of college and workplace learning. The highest uptake for these qualifications in 2003/04 were in agriculture and related subjects, architecture, building and planning and creative arts and design <sup>(20)</sup>.

### **Foundation degrees (FDs)**

Introduced in 2001 in England and Wales, foundation degrees are a part of the government's strategy for increasing participation in higher education. Nearly 38 000 students are studying for FD in 2004/05. FDs are designed in partnership with employers at associate professional or higher technician level. The range of part-time and full-time courses, distance learning, learning in the workplace and learning through the Internet makes FDs more accessible to people. Many FE colleges are involved in the delivery of these courses. If studied full-time, the average time taken to complete a FD is two years. All FD courses can contribute towards attaining an honours degree, which can be completed in a further 15 months (full-time study or equivalent part-time). The highest uptake for these qualifications in 2003/04 were in education, business and administrative studies, social and computer studies, and engineering and technology <sup>(21)</sup>.

### **Honours and post-graduate degrees**

Bachelor of arts (BA), Bachelor of education (BEd) and Bachelor of science (BSc) are modular with a compulsory common core. Courses usually last three years. Some courses last four years, involving placements in industry or periods abroad. Courses usually include a project or dissertation based on independent research. In Scotland it is normal for students to achieve an Ordinary Degree after three years and a more specialist Honours Degree after four years.

Master's degrees (Master of arts, Master of science, etc.) are post-graduate courses and may take one year full time or two years part time (see Glossary). They are usually self-funded; entry is dependent on results at bachelor level.

Some post-graduate courses (e.g. Post-Graduate Certificate in Education) are below Masters level and are intended to provide preparation for a specific occupation, following completion of a general degree.

Entry to a Doctorate (PhD) is dependent on results at either Masters or Bachelor level. Students must gain funding for PhD. They take at least three years to complete.

---

<sup>(19)</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). *Student record: part-time first years up by 4.2 %*. London: HESA, 2005. (Press Release; 86). Available from Internet: <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/press/pr86/pr86.htm> [cited 13.5.2005].

<sup>(20)</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>(21)</sup> *ibid.*

## 5. Continuing vocational training for adults

Lifelong learning in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is often referred to as learning that takes place after the young person has finished formal education and training. In Scotland, lifelong learning has a broader ‘cradle to grave’ definition. The usual definition of continuing VET in the UK context refers to learners over 19 years of age. It comprises full and part-time education and training, work-related training (including for the unemployed) and training adult education courses, which are designed to meet a range of social and community needs.

### 5.1. General background and priorities

In the UK, the decision on access to further education beyond statutory school age is left to the individual except in cases where a job requires certain entry qualifications (an individualistic approach). Although government places increasing importance on upskilling the workforce, training policies are left to employers (a voluntarist approach). The UK performs comparatively well on short, workplace training courses, but overall levels of qualification compare unfavourably with several other EU countries.

In recent years, vocational education has received greater attention from policy-makers. Governments in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have identified priorities in lifelong learning and adult learning, in particular. For example, the lifelong strategy for Scotland<sup>(22)</sup> emphasises the ‘cradle to grave’ idea of lifelong learning and widening access to learning for all citizens. In Wales, the Assembly’s government’s strategy<sup>(23)</sup> for the promotion of lifelong learning emphasises broadening learning pathways.

The government has set priorities for lifelong learning in the UK. These are as follows:

- developing skills and knowledge for a productive workforce through fostering creativity, innovative thinking and enterprise;
- increasing and widening participation in learning including basic skills (see Glossary);
- raising standards in teaching and learning.

The 2001 Budget report set out the government’s belief that although voluntary approaches have secured increased participation in work place training, they have not been sufficient given the scale of the problem: the UK lacks the broad foundation skills needed for

---

<sup>(22)</sup> Scottish Executive. *Learning through life: life through learning. The lifelong learning strategy for Scotland*. February 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/lism.pdf> [cited 3.5.2005].

<sup>(23)</sup> National Assembly for Wales. *The learning country: a paving document: a comprehensive education and lifelong learning programme to 2010 in Wales*. Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales, 2001. Available from Internet: <http://www.wales.gov.uk/subieducationtraining/content/PDF/learningcountry-e.pdf> [cited 13.5.2005].

sustainable development and the distribution of skills is uneven across the population. Since the Learning and Skills Act of 2000, the government outlined its plans in two consecutive skills white papers. The latest, published in March 2005, <sup>(24)</sup> outlines a series of action plans to raise the skills levels. Emphasis is placed on:

- putting employers' needs first by ensuring easy access to high-value training;
- helping employers use skills to achieve a more ambitious longer term business success;
- motivating and supporting learners;
- enabling colleges and training providers to be more responsive to employers' and learners' needs;
- building up a national skills alliance based on a partnership between government, trade unions and employers.

Underpinning all these reforms will be the new framework for achievement (FfA) <sup>(25)</sup> which is being developed to provide a simple qualification structure for individuals and employers.

In its white paper <sup>(24)</sup>, the government has recognised weakness in leadership and management skills in SMEs, particularly at middle management level. The national employer training programme (NETP) will carry forward a core approach to employer training pilots (ETPs) (see Section 5.4.) on low skills and will also include support for leadership and management development in SMEs, with a focus on coaching and on-the-job development. It will support over 17 000 SME managers by March 2008 <sup>(24)</sup>.

In its white paper *21st century skills* of 2003 <sup>(26)</sup>, the government introduced a new entitlement to free learning to anyone without a good foundation of employability skills. This would enable them to get the training they need to achieve a level 2 qualification <sup>(27)</sup>, and will take effect from 2006/07. There is also increased government support (in terms of funding and access) for higher level skills at technician, higher craft or associated professional level (level 3 qualification) <sup>(28)</sup>, in areas of sectoral or regional priority (Figures 2 and 4).

Flexibility exists at many points in UK education, helping people who lack formal qualifications or training earlier in life to achieve qualifications later on. Nevertheless, barriers to learning are particularly strong for those who are socially excluded or at risk.

---

<sup>(24)</sup> DfES. *White paper: skills: getting on in business, getting on at work*. March 2005.

<sup>(25)</sup> [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk). See also Section 2.2.2 and Glossary.

<sup>(26)</sup> DfES. *21st century skills: realising our potential*. London: DfES, 2003. Available from Internet: [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy/\\_pdfs/whitePaper\\_PDFID4.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy/_pdfs/whitePaper_PDFID4.pdf) [cited 13.5.2005].

<sup>(27)</sup> A full level 2 refers to any qualification equivalent in standard and breadth to 5 GCSEs at A\*-C or national vocational qualification at level 2 (see Figures 2 and 4).

<sup>(28)</sup> A full level 3 refers to a standard equivalent to two A-levels or a national vocational qualification at level 3 (see Figures 2 and 4).

In line with the key principles of the 14-19 reform and Skills Strategy, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was amended and extended in 2002 to prohibit discrimination against disabled people in relation to employment and vocational training.

Considerable research into the individual, social and economic barriers to continuing participation have highlighted the need for a major change. Approximately 9 % of each age cohort still leaves school unqualified and without progressing to further education, training or a job with training. Moreover some seven to eight million adults are identified as lacking in basic skills. As such, finding ways that encourage large numbers of people to be involved in learning remains a key policy issue.

## 5.2. Planning and organisation of learning

### 5.2.1. General/legal frameworks and collective agreements

Continuing training in the UK has traditionally been voluntary on the part of employers, rather than regulated by the state, or negotiated by the social partners; thus there is little legal obligation for employers to train staff, except where licensing of organisations or individuals is a requirement of the regulatory framework. Except in the construction and engineering industries, firms do not pay training levies.

*Table 11: Population aged 25-64 with less than upper-secondary education participating in education and training in the four weeks prior to the survey (2004, %)*

	<b>DK</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>FIN</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>IS</b>	<b>N</b>
Total	18.5	2.0	1.4	3.4	10.5	7.3	17.0	9.3
Females	20.9	1.8	1.7	3.2	13.7	8.1	20.0	8.7
Males	15.7	2.3	1.1	3.7	7.9	6.4	12.3	9.8

*Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey, 2004.*

Government, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the trade unions are encouraging a range of approaches to workplace learning. To raise the profile of workplace learning and to involve the trade unions in a more focused way, legislation now enables the election or appointment of learning representatives (see Section 3.3. and Glossary) by trade union branches. The union learning fund has been set up with government funding through the Trades Union Congress (TUC), to encourage an innovative approach whereby unions extend the training they give, for example tackling basic skills weaknesses among their members. In Scotland, the Scottish Executive funds the Scottish union learning fund (SULF) as part of the strategy to tackle skills issues.

### **5.2.2. Administrative structures**

The main bodies (see Table 8) responsible for developing and implementing national policy for training have undergone major reforms, with the creation in 2001 of the national and local learning and skills councils (LSCs) (in England only) and the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) (UK-wide), which leads and licenses the sector skills councils (SSCs). The main bodies involved include:

- (a) Department for Education and Skills, The Welsh Assembly, The Assembly of Northern Ireland (suspended in 2002), the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive;
- (b) Jobcentre Plus (nationwide, under the Department for Work and Pensions);
- (c) learning and skills councils (LSCs) (England); ELWA (Wales), Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (and local enterprise companies, LECs);
- (d) Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), sector skills councils (nationwide);
- (e) Government Offices for the Regions; Regional Development Agencies (RDAs);
- (f) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- (g) Basic Skills Agency;
- (h) National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE);
- (i) Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) (England); Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) (Scotland); Dysg, the Welsh equivalent of LSDA (Wales);
- (j) Local education authorities (LEAs);
- (k) QCA (England and Northern Ireland), SQA (Scotland), ACCAC (Wales);
- (l) Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

## **5.3. Delivery mechanisms and providers**

Both public and private sector providers offer a wide range of courses for work-based and other lifelong learning, with emphasis being increasingly placed on the learner's needs. Adult education and training is provided by several institutions, including further and higher education institutions; approved training providers, be these professional institutions, training companies or individual employers; adult education centres run by the local education authorities (LEAs) and Workers' Educational Association (WEA) centres. There is also growing availability of web-based provisions.

Adult education can be undertaken in the community, through voluntary organisations, in companies and businesses, further education (FE) colleges and higher education (HE) institutions. Most community and leisure learning provision, while it may be part-funded by a body such as the local authority, carries a financial cost to the individual.

Considerable differences exist between training offered by employers in the same industry or sector. The type and quality of training also varies. About 40 % of employer-funded training leads to qualification or part qualification, and a considerable proportion relates to induction and safety rather than medium-term skills development. The most common form of training is in-company training, followed by training at FE colleges, then by equipment providers. Most on-the-job training is provided by a line manager, supervisor or an experienced colleague, followed by specialist training staff. Increasingly, IT based packages are used for training.

## **5.4. Access to learning opportunities and programmes**

Government strategy relies on encouraging individuals to take up learning and training opportunities, with a strong focus on the learner's needs rather than on the institutional interest of the providers. The following is an illustrative list of the main initiatives and priorities that are intended to improve access to continuing training:

### **5.4.1. Employer Training Pilots (ETPs)**

ETPs encourage employers to train low-skilled employees. They were launched in 2002 and reimburse employers the cost of granting low-skilled employees paid time off work to pursue education and training courses. By 2005, an estimated 18 000 employers and 80 000 employees, who lack basic skills or vocational qualifications at level 2, will be trained.

### **5.4.2. Individual learning accounts (ILAs) in Wales and Scotland**

This initiative intends to widen participation in learning and encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own learning (for a more detailed description in Section 10.3.2.).

Since 2000, a similar scheme of bursaries has been available to teachers in their third and fourth year; they decide how to spend the money on their own personal/professional development.

### **5.4.3. Business/company learning accounts (BLAs)**

The Scottish Executive has piloted 300 BLAs to stimulate learning in small businesses by providing them with the knowledge of how to link training needs with business growth and funding to support the businesses' own investment in learning.

In Wales, company learning accounts were piloted in 2002 as a contribution to the cost of an employee's training. An overarching workforce learning account is to be launched in 2005.

#### **5.4.4. University for Industry/learndirect**

Since 2000, online information services learndirect and learndirect Scotland have stimulated demand for learning by providing easily accessible information and advice to potential learners about all kinds of learning opportunities (see Section 9.1.).

#### **5.4.5. Adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland**

Learning Connexions (the research and development unit) offers consolidated national advice. In 2004, a national awareness raising campaign – *The Big plus* – was launched to encourage people to seek support in improving their reading, writing and number skills.

Generally, learning and skills councils (LSC) have lead responsibility for promoting government-funded VET-related programmes with a high profile national campaign. Advertising which includes TV and media, promotional CDRoms and branding materials, aims to attract more learners and employers.

#### **5.4.6. Training of disabled**

The LSCs are running a residential training programme for unemployed disabled adults, to secure employment or self-employment. Trainees receive an allowance and their residential costs are met by the DfES. The length of courses varies according to individual need (maximum 52 weeks). Over 50 courses of vocational training are available, many leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs).

#### **5.4.7. Time off work**

There is no statutory requirement for employers to give time off to their employees for their professional development (apart from 16-17 year olds working towards an approved qualification). This is at the discretion of the employer.

### **5.5. Bridging initial and post-initial education and training**

Non-traditional entry routes to HE are available. The Access programme aims to prepare adult learners from non-traditional backgrounds and under-represented groups for admission to HE. A typical access programme takes a year full time or one or two years part time. They cover a range of subjects (art and design, humanities, law, nursing, teaching, etc.) and are often discipline-related to progression to particular professions (see Figure 3).

Access programme courses to HE are recognised by the Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA) through their inclusion in a national scheme (not in Scotland). A student who successfully completes an access course is awarded a certificate bearing the QAA Access

logo. It is responsible for assuring the quality of recognised access courses, and the adequacy of standards of student achievement on these courses.

The Scottish Wider Access programme (SWAP) promotes access to higher education initiatives and develops progression pathways for mature students. Students who successfully complete SWAP programmes can enrol at either a FE college or a HE institution. University continuing education departments also provide access courses, particularly in arts and social sciences, and their programmes for the wider community lead to credits towards degrees (see Figure 2).

## **5.6. Retraining for labour market needs and mobility**

In the UK, the labour market tends not to be highly regulated, thus people can move from occupation to occupation in a more fluid way than in other countries.

In England, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) leads on the national, regional and local skills agenda. The regional development agencies (RDAs) (see Table 8) also have an important role in coordinating regional economic development and regeneration. They aim to increase regions' competitiveness by assisting enterprises to create jobs and the local workforce to get better quality sustainable employment, in particular, among the disadvantaged. England has nine RDAs; in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, it is the devolved governments which have the lead on regional development. RDAs are funded by six government departments (DfES and the Department of Trade and Industry among them).

Since April 2001, in England, work-based learning for long term unemployed adults has been delivered through Jobcentre Plus under the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Scotland delivers its adult training through Training for Work. Responsibility for government-funded training in Wales and Scotland is devolved to the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament respectively.

The centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs) programme (introduced in 2000) focuses on meeting employers' skills needs at craft and technical level. CoVEs units are mainly based in FE colleges<sup>(29)</sup>, but the programme has been extended to develop centres with work-based learning providers. This developing network covers key economic sectors (agriculture, engineering, health and social services, etc.). A similar network of excellence functions in Wales.

In Wales, community consortia for education and training (CCETs), which are providers, identify demand for learning and reach consensus on provision.

---

<sup>(29)</sup> In August 2004, 225 out of 240 were based within colleges.



### 5.6.1. New Deal

New Deal is a key part of the government's welfare to work strategy. It is an active labour market policy designed to move people into work quickly, and provide those who need it with extra help to improve their employability.

The New Deal for young people (NDYP) and New Deal 25 plus are mandatory programmes for those who have been continuously unemployed for 6 and 18 months respectively. New Deal for partners, New Deal 50 plus, New Deal for disabled people and New Deal for lone parents are voluntary programmes (see Section 10.4.).

The New Deal for skills (NDfS) (introduced in 2004) is a package of measures to help people develop the skills they need to secure and sustain employment, and progress from lower to higher skilled work. It also supports the development of vocational or sector specific skills. As of April 2005, NDfS will include skills coaching services and will introduce a skills passport (a validated record of the skills achieved) and other relevant measures.

As well as providing personal adviser support, the New Deal provides assistance through:

- training and improving vocational skills;
- job search support/counselling and improved job matching;
- work placements and subsidised employment.

*Table 12: People entering employment through the New Deal in England, Scotland and Wales (by age and type of employment, from 1998 to 2003)*

	<i>(thousands)</i>		
	<b>18-24 <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>25 and over <sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>All aged 18 and over</b>
Sustained employment	367	130	497
Other employment <sup>(2)</sup>	96	35	130
Total entering employment	463	165	628
Those entering sustained employment, as a percentage of all programme leavers	39 %	25 %	36 %

<sup>(1)</sup> Data for those aged 18-24 are for January 1998 to September 2003. Data for those aged 25 and over are for July 1998 to September 2003.

<sup>(2)</sup> Employment lasting less than 13 weeks.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2004,

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7390&Pos=5&ColRank=1&Rank=272>.

Along with the New Deal, employment zones (EZ) and action teams for jobs were introduced in 2000 to help people from deprived areas move into work. EZs are operated by contractors on behalf of DWP. Contractor funding is linked to the number of sustained jobs of participants (as opposed to short-term contracts). The EZ has proven to be a success: at 20 months after being eligible for participation, 55 % of EZ participants have been in work since leaving the programme (<sup>30</sup>).

Action teams for jobs work in 65 areas with high concentrations of jobless people, developing individually tailored innovative ways to help them overcome the barriers to work they face. Jobcentre Plus operates 40 of the teams, contractors the rest.

---

(<sup>30</sup>) Hales et al. *Evaluation of employment zones: report on a cohort survey of long-term unemployed people in the zones and a matched set of comparison areas*. Sheffield: DWP, 2003; and Hasluck C., Elias P. and Green A. *The wider labour market impact of employment zones*. Sheffield: DWP, 2003. (DWP research report, 2003).

## 6. Training of teachers and trainers

### 6.1. General background and recent policy developments

UK VET teachers (also known as lecturers within further education (FE) colleges for employment purposes) are regarded as those working in schools and colleges, whereas trainers are employed mainly in a work-based setting.

Prior to 1999, there were few, if any, requirements in the UK for trainers and VET teachers to have formal training or hold qualifications to teach, unless they worked in the state-funded sector. The aim now is that all those who perform a teaching or training role in the UK should hold, or be working towards, a full teaching qualification. Teachers within the FE sector ‘need two sets of skills – to be expert in their subject and to be trained to teach it’ <sup>(31)</sup>.

Since the late 1990s, training of trainers for further education (including VET) has been a priority within lifelong learning frameworks. In particular, the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO, since 2005, absorbed into LLUK <sup>(32)</sup>) was established to develop, quality assure and promote national standards for the training of trainers and teachers in public FE colleges and private training sectors as of 2004. This extension of remit has to do both with the ‘mobility of teachers who may move between or work across further education, adult and community learning, work-based training ...’, and mobility of learners across the sector who ‘should be entitled to be taught by those who have been prepared and supported as teachers to common criteria’ (FENTO, 2004) <sup>(33)</sup>.

Within the diverse sector of non-government VET provision (private colleges and training providers, in-house training, voluntary organisations, etc.) there is no formal requirement for trainers to hold a recognised teaching qualification. IVET and CVET trainers are appointed on the basis of their craft/academic/professional qualifications and experience. Only if a provider receives public funding, is it expected that trainers will work towards obtaining a full teaching award, following an in-service route.

Within the UK there is no formal system for in-service, continuing professional development of VET teachers/trainers either working at school or college or work-based trainers.

Broadly, arrangements are similar for England, Wales and Northern Ireland; there are some differences in Scotland.

---

<sup>(31)</sup> Department for Education and Skills - DfES. *The future of initial teacher education for the learning and skills sector*. London: DfES, 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/ACF4240.pdf> [cited 13.5.2005].

<sup>(32)</sup> Lifelong Learning United Kingdom.

<sup>(33)</sup> Further Education National Training Organisation - FENTO. *Response to DfES report: the future of initial teacher education for the learning and skills sector*. London: FENTO, 2004.

## **6.2. Training of teachers and trainers for IVET and CVET in schools and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland**

Generally, all new teachers in state secondary schools must be graduates and hold qualified teacher status (QTS). This can be achieved in number of ways: the concurrent model involves three- or four-year studies for a Bachelor of Education degree (BEd); the consecutive model is available to holders of a first (bachelor's) degree, who undergo a one-year professional training leading to a post-graduate certificate of education (PGCE) at a higher education (HE) institution, or a college affiliated to a university, which combine subject and professional study with 24 weeks spent in schools.

There are some employment-based routes leading to QTS. Those who want to change career to become teachers, school support staff, overseas trained teachers who do not hold QTS and those with previous teaching experience can earn a salary while following a teacher training programme in a school through graduate or registered teacher programmes.

Since 2001, all those entering further education (FE) teaching in England must have, or gain within a given time scale, an appropriate teaching qualification, regardless of the subject they teach: academic or vocational. This can be achieved through studying full- or part-time for the certificate in education (CertEd), a nationally recognised qualification. Having achieved the CertEd, one can progress to the diploma in education and training and subsequently the BA (Hons) in education and training. The course usually lasts up to two years and combines two core modules of learning and teaching; and research and further professional practice. Certificate in Education requires a minimum of 120 hours of teaching and six formal assessments of teaching competences. Serving teachers and trainers in FE institutions who were employed before 2001, as well as adult education tutors, are also being encouraged to obtain relevant teaching qualifications through continuing professional development.

The government has introduced several initiatives to attract new recruits to enter the teaching profession (including for vocational subjects). For instance, in the 2005/06 academic year, each full-time student of PGCE and certificate of education training receives a bursary of EUR 8 820 funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

A graduate qualification in a vocational subject is not a mandatory requirement for employment as a teacher (lecturer) in the state-funded FE college sector. A craft, a trade, or professional qualification, coupled with significant work-based experience in the relevant vocational area, are deemed sufficient. Vocational qualifications held may include national awards (in, for example, engineering, hairdressing, beauty therapy, construction), which have been developed and endorsed by the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC) <sup>(34)</sup>.

---

<sup>(34)</sup> Each SSC is responsible for setting the standards which they apply to its particular occupational area.

### 6.2.1. Scotland

The Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) is introducing a new approach to staff development, which focuses on the professional competence of all college staff. FE lecturers on full-time permanent contracts are encouraged to obtain a qualification, and the SFEFC provides funding to cover the cost of training. Arrangements governing the training of FE lecturers are set out in national guidelines<sup>(35)</sup>. These guidelines make provision for all the competences required from a FE lecturer to be included in a national index of initial teacher training and continuing professional development units. These units are intended to cater for the induction, initial teacher training and continuing professional development of all FE lecturers.

## 6.3. Training of trainers for work-based training

Work-based in-company learning has led to the devolution of training responsibilities to a variety of supervisors and work-based trainers/assessors. Many of these are not full-time trainers or even formally designated as trainers as they combine their training functions with other roles.

Those involved in delivering and assessing workplace qualifications must meet requirements for occupational competence and have, or be working towards, nationally-recognised qualifications in assessment and/or quality assurance. In the case of NVQs (or Scottish vocational qualifications), the requirements for occupational expertise are developed by the sector skills councils (SSCs). The qualifications in assessment and quality assurance are awarded by most awarding bodies and are also delivered in the workplace.

College teachers and work-based trainers responsible for assessing trainees within national vocational qualifications must also possess an assessor award<sup>(36)</sup>. Additionally, there is a range of other training qualifications which workplace, industrial trainers and those working in HRD may hold or attain. Such awards are free-standing and may be taken by the individual as part of a trainer's continuing professional development.

---

<sup>(35)</sup> Scottish Office Education and Industry Department, SOEID. *National guidelines on provision leading to the teaching qualification and related professional development*. Edinburgh: SOEID, 1997.

<sup>(36)</sup> Assessor award: formal recognition (level 3) through a portfolio of evidence of having undertaken formal assessment procedures against specified competences. It relates to assessment of individual learner's work, internal moderation, and external verification.

## 7. Skills and competence development

### 7.1. Skills anticipation mechanisms

Within the UK, there is a variety of established mechanisms to analyse, identify and forecast labour market trends and skills needs. However, training provision remains problematic and has undergone some substantial changes in the last five years.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES), in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), is the national government department responsible for the labour market and related issues. It is responsible for collecting and analysing labour market databases on a national and local level on a range of different sources (unemployment statistics, estimates of employment vacancies, pay and other key labour market indicators). These are collated and published in *Labour Market Trends* <sup>(37)</sup>. In addition, the DfES is responsible for commissioning the labour force survey (LFS) and for carrying out evaluations on specific training programmes and policy initiatives <sup>(38)</sup>. Devolved administrations are responsible for their own labour market and skills surveys.

The DfES itself carries out some analysis of labour market data, but it also commissions research by other organisations (academic and commercial consultants, such as the Institute for Employment Research, to run econometric forecasting models of the national economy). This work includes forecast of the future labour market demand. In this process the role of social partners and trade unions is limited, but includes representation on such institutions as learning and skills councils (LSCs), sector skills councils (SSCs), regional development agencies (RDAs), etc.

The DfES has also provided technical support for anticipating skills needs by developing the national online manpower information system (NOMIS), which provides online access to labour market information and includes all major data sets for which DfES is responsible. Increasingly, these data are available via the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>).

In 1990, the DfES developed a standard system of occupational classification (SOC) and a national qualifications framework (NQF, see Figures 2 and 4) and introduced regular national surveys of households and employers (annual business inquiry (ABI) conducted by ONS).

The introduction of the UK-wide Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) in 2002 heralded the intention on the part of government that the anticipation of training and qualifications needs should be driven largely by labour market demand.

---

<sup>(37)</sup> *Labour Market Trends* is an online monthly publication with a comprehensive coverage of labour market statistics (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Product.asp>).

<sup>(38)</sup> The labour force survey (LFS) is organised by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The DfES also commissions its own surveys conducted by commercial survey companies.

The SSDA (with LSC in England and ELWa in Wales) provides financial support to SSCs to carry out skills forecasting. SSCs develop national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish vocational qualifications (SVQs) through a functional analysis. Standards are specified in the form of units, aggregated to meet qualifications needs of specific occupations, which are identified by a parallel process of occupational mapping.

The SSCs and awarding bodies respectively review the labour market needs and uptake of qualifications. The renewal of qualifications admitted to the national qualifications framework is determined by a 'reaccreditation cycle' in which qualifications are subject to review on an agreed cycle, typically three years. On average, new qualifications are developed over an 18 months' cycle. Routine monitoring of qualifications is undertaken by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

Many employers' organisations (for example, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI)) conduct their own surveys of members, particularly of their perception of skills shortages. Careers guidance companies also take an active interest in anticipating future labour market conditions on behalf of their clients.

In Scotland, Futureskills Scotland (managed by Scottish Enterprise in collaboration with Highlands and Islands Enterprise) conducts an annual survey to provide evidence about skill shortages and training, based on information from more than 3 000 Scottish workplaces.

In Wales, a similar scheme, Future Skills Wales, is run every three years, focusing more on generic skills. Wales is also developing a learning and skills observatory, which will offer data to help employers, providers and individuals to anticipate and plan for skills needs.

## **7.2. Bridging pathways and new education partnerships**

The UK VET system is largely outcome-based. Training providers have flexibility to plan learner-centred delivery systems to meet user needs. The same qualifications are offered in both initial and continuing VET. Adult learners are given access to individually targeted learning and assessment<sup>(39)</sup>. The modular or unit structure of vocational qualifications opens up possibilities for modular delivery and credit transfer.

Successive governments in England have sought to bridge the gap between general education and vocational training by achieving parity of esteem between the different qualifications. Achieving this has been a major policy drive for the reform of 14 to 19 curriculum and qualifications and for the review of the national qualifications framework. The framework for achievement (FfA)<sup>(40)</sup> (to be introduced in 2006/07, except Scotland) will create a single

---

<sup>(39)</sup> Personalised learning, a DfES initiative (2004) whereby schools and teachers have tailored curriculum and teaching methods to meet the needs of children and young people <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/personalisedlearning/>.

<sup>(40)</sup> <http://www.qca.org.uk/>.

national system that allows credit transfer and accumulation to lead to tailor-made qualifications and some national qualifications.

### **7.3. Renewal of curricula**

NVQ and SVQ criteria require national occupational standards (NOS) (see Glossary) to reflect the ability to respond to new technologies and innovations in working methods and forms of work organisation. This facilitates flexibility and mobility in employment and ensures that qualifications do not become outdated too quickly. Standards for vocational qualifications are generally reviewed at three- to five-yearly intervals.

Curricula must be based upon the standards, and VET providers ensure that curricula are kept up-to-date in line with industry requirements. In practice, training tends to follow, rather than lead, innovative practices in industry.

In the UK, NVQs and SVQs are largely based on NOSs, or statements of the outcomes to be achieved to meet the requirements for certification. These are mainly developed by the SSCs, which are employer-led bodies and normally include representatives of trade unions and relevant professional bodies and training organisations.

Because curricula are not usually nationally prescribed (the assessment requirements for qualifications normally being independent of delivery), they are mainly developed by education and training providers at a decentralised level. However, for programmes such as apprenticeships, SSCs are increasingly involved in developing and disseminating curriculum models.

Key or core skills units are available at all levels of the NQF and Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF) (see Figure 2 and Glossary). They may be certificated as freestanding key skill qualifications and are intended to bridge different types of qualification provision. They are a compulsory element of all apprenticeship programmes.

England, Scotland and Wales have an e-learning strategy for the post-16 learning sector to embed the use of ICT and to enhance excellence in management, teaching, learning and research. Northern Ireland is building common systems across colleges and institutions to provide integration and shared content.

The National Grid for Learning<sup>(41)</sup> seeks to maximise the use of ICT to raise standards and achievements, create a highly ICT literate workforce and ensure high standards of ICT. There is a growing use of ICT and e-learning in VET in the UK. The UK scores quite highly in most of the European and international comparisons in this regard.

---

<sup>(41)</sup> National Grid for Learning: launched in 1998 to help learners and educators in the UK to benefit from ICT. It is funded by DfES and managed by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta), the government's lead agency for ICT in education.



## **8. Validation of learning: recognition and mobility**

### **8.1. Validation of formal learning**

#### **8.1.1. An overview of competence-based qualifications in the UK**

National vocational qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish vocational qualifications (SVQs) are similar, though the qualifications frameworks in which they are located differ (see Figure 2). The purpose of the development of NVQs and SVQs was to improve the coherence of the national system of qualifications by removing duplicate qualifications and to allow competence to be recognised independently of the location, duration and/or nature of learning, thus allowing assessment of existing competence in the labour force.

A system of vocational qualifications was established that was to be directly relevant to the needs of employment and the individual. These NVQs and SVQs are intended to facilitate entry into, or progression in, employment, further education and training.

More than 750 NVQs are available across the 11 defined areas (such as transportation, providing business services, etc.). They vary by title and level, covering levels 1-5 (see Figures 2 and 4).

Although the development of NVQs and SVQs has not brought the envisaged coherence to the system of vocational qualifications, it has provided a framework of competence-based qualifications. Since May 2003, a review of vocational qualifications in the UK is under way.

The main institutions involved in regulating and administering NVQs are as follows:

- (a) Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA): QCA ensures that NVQ qualifications meet particular criteria and are broadly comparable across different sectors. QCA accredits proposals for NVQ awards developed by sector bodies and awarding bodies, and quality assures and audits the activity of awarding bodies.
- (b) Sector bodies: the sector skills councils (SSCs) overseen by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) identify, define and update employment-based standards of competence for agreed occupations. National occupational standards (NOS) form the basis for NVQs.
- (c) Awarding bodies: these have a dual role. With sector bodies, they are jointly responsible for the assessment methods of NVQs and for implementing individual NVQs. They approve centres that wish to offer assessment for NVQs. Awarding bodies monitor the assessment process and award NVQs and unit certificates. They undertake external verification to ensure that candidates are being assessed fairly and consistently across all centres.

- (d) Assessment centres: these organise the assessment of people seeking to qualify for an NVQ. Many candidates pursuing the NVQ route to qualifications will gain their qualification at work or through a programme provided by a further education college or some other training provider.
- (e) Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA): the SQA accredits all Scottish vocational qualifications (SVQs) and is an awarding body for SVQs, sometimes in partnership with other organisations.
- (f) The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) is the National Assembly for Wales' principal advisory body on all aspects of the school curriculum, assessment and vocational qualifications (NVQs are the sole responsibility of QCA).
- (g) Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland has an advisory role on what should be taught in schools and colleges, monitors standards – ensuring that the qualifications and examinations are of appropriate quality and standard – and awards qualifications (NVQs are a sole responsibility of QCA).

### **8.1.2. National vocational qualifications: a 'closed' credit framework**

National occupational standards (see Glossary) are agreed statements of competence, which describe the work outcomes required from an individual. They are the basis of the NVQs and SVQs and are designed in a unit format consisting of different occupational functions. Some of these functions may underpin a range of occupations and, therefore, are integral to achieving different vocational qualifications. As such, units can be transferred from one qualification to another in a credit system. Units can also be accumulated from different awarding bodies. The precise function is the only piece of information necessary for employment purposes.

## **8.2. Validating and recognising non-formal and informal learning**

Arrangements for recognising non-formal learning are linked to the outcome-orientation of NVQs and SVQs. Any learner who can provide evidence which meet the demands of the evidence requirements for a qualification can be awarded credit. However, the burden of evidence and the practicalities of assessment of non-formal/informal learning are considerable. Examples of good practice do exist, but problems of cost and complexity are widely reported. The importance of non-formal and/or informal learning is, however, clearly acknowledged in employers' increasing use in selection of accounts of experience, rather than formal qualifications, as evidenced in QCA research on trends in the use of qualifications <sup>(42)</sup>.

---

<sup>(42)</sup> Collar, D. *The currency of the qualifications in the UK*. QCA internal paper, 2001.

Accreditation of prior learning (APL) assists students to gain vocational, academic or continuous professional development recognition or credits for prior learning and experience. APL was strongly promoted in the early 1990s, and became established as a non-traditional entry route to further and higher education, though often not to the most prestigious courses.

Typically, a portfolio evidencing the learning is produced, indicating the level and areas of expertise, then the level and content of the learning that will be assessed. APL is most likely to apply to a mature applicant.

Since 2003, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has begun to take a strategic interest in the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. Pilots have been conducted, for example, to develop ways in which the informal learning at youth centres can be recognised, thus setting socially excluded young people on a pathway towards achieving qualifications. Also, LSC is experimenting with a system for recognising the informal learning outcomes of adult part-time courses which do not lead to a qualification.

The Welsh and English credit and qualifications frameworks seek to cover non-formal and informal learning.

A target in Scotland is to develop and agree a set of guidelines on accreditation of prior and experiential learning (APEL) which would then allow credit rating and levelling of learning in terms of core, generic skills rather than subject-specific learning.

In 2004 the Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF) commissioned a project on recognising prior learning<sup>(43)</sup>. Links will be made with the EU-funded Refine project<sup>(44)</sup> to ensure that the guidelines complement other European developments relating to recognition of prior learning. SCQF has also been working with community learning interests to develop ways of recognising learning in informal settings.

---

<sup>(43)</sup> Summary at [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk).

<sup>(44)</sup> The EU-funded Refine project is testing methods of recognising prior learning across various countries – more information at [www.eucen.org/refine.html](http://www.eucen.org/refine.html).

## 9. Guidance and counselling

### 9.1. Strategy and provision

The aim of government policy is to develop careers services available to all and to provide an easily accessible source of information, advice and guidance (IAG) to both young people and adults. ICT is considered to be an effective medium providing that ways can be found to provide equal access to disadvantaged and excluded groups. In the white paper on skills (March 2005), the government acknowledges that ‘Achievement of our skills goals depends on far more adults having access to information and guidance to know what training opportunities are available and how to get them.’<sup>(45)</sup>

There are two nationally available IAG services: Ufi/learndirect, which gives information and advice both by phone and Internet on learning opportunities, and Worktrain, which is a website linking information on job opportunities with relevant training opportunities. In England, there are IAG partnerships, funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in each local area, which brings together the existing IAG providers (career service companies, Connexions (for young people), higher education (Prospects) and further education, voluntary and community organisations, libraries and Jobcentre Plus).

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the government’s approach is concentrated on one set of provision for young people, another for adults. The government funds University for Industry (Ufi) Ltd to develop and maintain the learndirect (<http://www.learndirect.co.uk/>) national information and advice service. Mainly targeted to adults, and advertising widely on TV, etc., learndirect is accessed via a telephone helpline or online.

The Connexions service (<http://www.connexions.gov.uk/>), an amalgamation of local careers services, is geared to providing a more unified approach to meeting the advice and guidance needs of young people in the years of transition between schooling and the labour market (13 to 19). In addition, all secondary schools must provide a careers programme for all their pupils as part of the national curriculum, and further education colleges and universities have advice centres and careers programmes available for their students.

All providers of IAG services (public and private) that are funded through Connexions partnerships are required to be accredited against the national quality standards for learning and work. The Guidance Council (GC) has developed the standards and promotes and advises on the provision of good quality guidance; the Guidance Accreditation Board (GAB) handles the accreditation process. The common inspection framework through inspections by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) (not Scotland and Wales) provides a quality assurance for standards and provision of guidance services.

---

<sup>(45)</sup> DfES. *White paper: skills: getting on in business, getting on at work*. March 2005, Part 1, p. 20.

For employees, advice and guidance may be part of the human resource function. This is particularly the case for the growing number of organisations that have a system of professional or performance appraisal, and is likely to be linked to professional development and in-service training. Investors in People (rolled out nationally in 1991) is a scheme that has government support; it coaches and badges firms and organisations in both the public and private sector, encouraging best practice in staff development and training.

Guidance and counselling can also be provided in the workplace, by trade unions, citizen's advice bureaux, some sector skills councils (SSCs) or through learndirect who act as brokers between learners and learning providers.

Careers Wales was established in 2001 as an all age information, advice and guidance service delivered through a network of career centres and since 2004, interactively through Careers Wales online ([www.careerswales.com](http://www.careerswales.com)) linked to learndirect.

The UK's first all age guidance organisation Careers Scotland (CS) was established in 2002. CS provides a range of important information, advice and guidance on education, training and employment opportunities. The service is available to people of all ages and is delivered through a network of local Careers Centres or through the interactive website at [www.careers-scotland.org.uk](http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk).

In Northern Ireland, Education Guidance for Adults (EGSA, [www.egsa.org.uk](http://www.egsa.org.uk)) provides services for adult learners, learning advisers, providers, employers and for anyone involved in improving access to learning for adults.

The Jobcentre Plus provides jobseekers with access to any vacancy held by Jobcentre Plus, anywhere in Britain (currently around 300 000 at any one time) and to vacancies held by others, including private employment agencies and other European employment services. It also provides personalised advice to jobseekers. This service has made progress in delivering a modern e-business service to jobseekers and employers, IAG providers and Jobcentre Plus staff.

A wide range of employment agencies is to be found on the high street, or through electronic links. Some of these serve a general function as employment agencies, while others operate in particular sectors or labour market niches.

Guidance and counselling for disabled people is provided by Jobcentre plus and national charity and voluntary organisations.

## **9.2. Guidance and counselling personnel**

A wide range of professionals is involved in guidance and counselling, from teachers in schools, most of whom will specialise and undergo in-service training, and trained careers advisers at school, college or higher education, to Jobcentre Plus personnel, and to advisers in small agencies whose training and credentials may vary.

The independent sectoral body with responsibility for standards and qualifications in this field, is the Employment National Training Organisation (ENTO), which in the late 1990s developed professional development packages and competence frameworks. These are now operational. All providers of IAG services funded through Connexions partnerships are required to be accredited against the National quality standard for organisations delivering IAG services for learning and work. The Guidance Council (GC) developed the matrix standard in 2002 on behalf of DfES. Since 2003, ENTO has managed the matrix standard and accreditation.

Qualifications in careers guidance are developed at different starting levels (levels 1 to 3), which allow for progression to higher education. The relevant occupational qualifications in careers guidance are the post-graduate qualification in careers guidance (QCG) or a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 4 in guidance. Some chartered occupational psychologists (C.Occ.Psychol.) also specialise in career development. Most reputable advisers work to a code of practice laid down by their professional bodies; these are Institute of Careers Guidance and the British Psychological Society respectively.

In Scotland, careers advisers must have a post-graduate qualification (part 1) and successfully complete on the job assessment (part 2) to achieve the qualification in careers guidance.

No specific targets have been set, in Scotland, for training other non-teaching educational staff. However, further education colleges are required to submit strategic plans, which include information on the action they intend to take to develop staff, to the funding council each year.

## 10. Financing investment in human resources

### 10.1. Background information

In the UK, funding of VET has undergone substantial changes in the past decade. The government aims to encourage individuals and employers to take more responsibility for training to improve competitiveness and productivity. As a result of the government's investment, education and training spending in the UK as a proportion of gross domestic product rose from 4.7 % in 1996/77 to 5.0 % in 2001/02, and further to 5.3 % in 2003/04.

Government funding for education and training is mostly provided from general tax revenue. The government also relies on other sources, private funding initiatives in particular. Students contribute to the cost of higher education and of general adult education.

The government is modernising local government finance, looking at the distribution of government grants, the control of capital expenditure and taxes, and the use of the three-year strategic spending reviews.

The Department for Education and Skills has an overall responsibility for education and training. It distributes funds to the corresponding statutory and non-statutory bodies in each sector of education and training. In England, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for funding all government-supported VET, except higher education<sup>(46)</sup>, and all post-compulsory education in the public sector. The LSC is also responsible for providing adult and community learning (ACL) (see Glossary). The basic principle of LSC funding is that resources follow the learner. The LSC passes on funding to further education (FE) colleges and local authority adult education centres to provide general and vocational-related courses, which are available for adults (see Figure 5).

In 2004/05, the LSC managed a budget of EUR 12.1 billion, which will increase to EUR 13 billion in 2005/06. LSC receives from the DfES the main priorities and targets to be achieved by the sector. LSC, in its turn, sends a proposal to DfES on the distribution of resources between the major participation areas (school sixth forms, capital, etc.) and related volumes of learners.

While employers are largely responsible for their own CVT, public funding is available through LSC's Union Learning Fund, which has risen from EUR 16.1 million in 2003/04 to EUR 20.6 million in 2005/06, for basic skills (see Glossary) and learning which is generated by trade unions through Union Learning Representatives (see Section 3.3.).

---

<sup>(46)</sup> The Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC) is responsible for higher education funding in England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) in Wales and DELNI in Northern Ireland.

In Scotland, financing of post-school education differs depending on whether it is classed as vocational training, further or higher education, the distinction being that, in training, the funding is used to provide courses, while in the other cases the funding supports the colleges and universities themselves. Training is funded through Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise via their local enterprise companies (LECs). A merger of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) and the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) is planned by August 2005 (subject to Royal Assent). The merger will give greater comparability and transparency in the way that different types of institution and levels of course are funded in tertiary education.

In Wales, Education for Learning for Wales (ELWa) is a funding body with a similar coverage to LSC and includes funding for school sixth forms. The national planning and funding system was developed in 2004 and will be fully implemented in August 2005 to modernise the post-16 learning network into an integrated post-16 funding and planning system (other than higher education).

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Education approves qualifications for schools and provides the funding. Colleges are funded by the Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI). Planning and funding arrangements for further education have been reviewed since 2004.

## **10.2. Funding for initial vocational education and training**

In England and Wales, all children aged 5 to 16 are entitled to free education. Any subsequent education provided in schools or at further education institutions is normally free for students up to 19 (subject to residency).

### **10.2.1. Department of Education and Skills (DfES) funding**

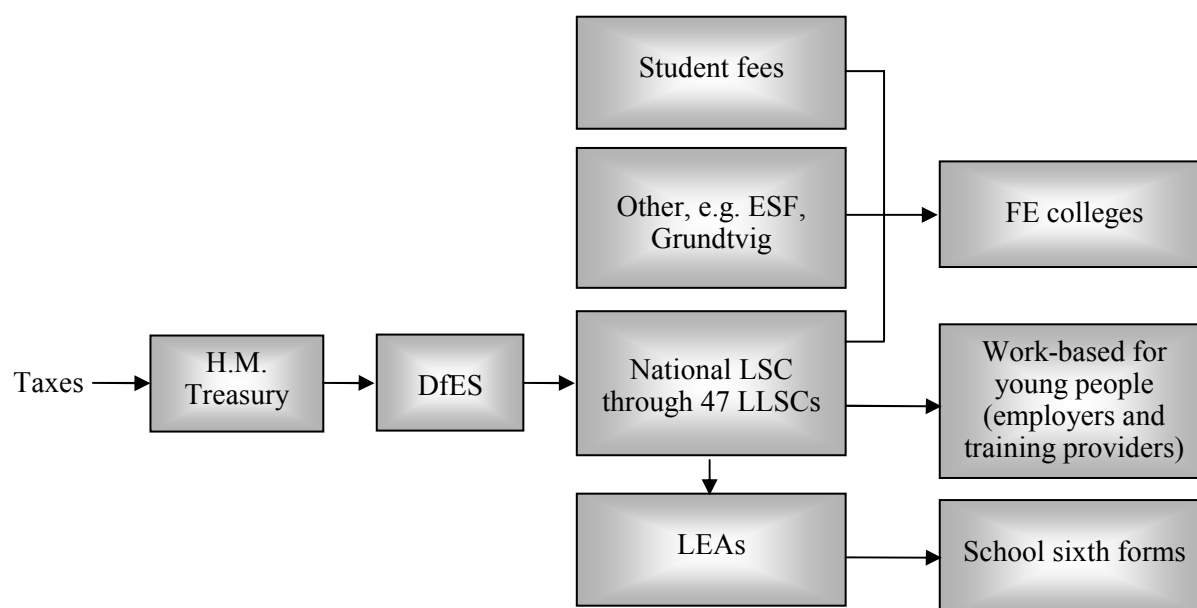
In England, funding flows from the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) to the LSC and then to training providers. The LSC funds post-16 education in secondary schools via the local education authorities (LEAs), and funds directly all other state-funded programmes. The LSCs consult with the range of partners regarding the most appropriate mode of training delivery, taking account of quality, access and strategic planning priorities.

Funding is provided for post-16 training to around six million learners through some 400 colleges and 2 000 training providers.

The LSC uses both formula and bid mechanisms to allocate capital and other funds to institutions.



Figure 5: Simplified chart of flows of funding in IVET in England, 2005



NB: The Treasury is the ministry responsible for government finance.

Source: Compiled by UK ReferNet.

The key elements in the national funding formula are as follows:

- (a) programme core costs, reflecting the length of the learning and the basic cost of delivery;
- (b) achievement;
- (c) programme weighting, reflecting that some learning aims of similar length or leading to an equivalent qualification are more costly to deliver than others;
- (d) disadvantage weighting, reflecting extra cost due to widening participation and the fact that some learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- (e) area costs, a weighting factor reflecting the significantly higher costs of delivering provision in London and related areas.

Whereas formula funding is meant for those with provider status (colleges, etc.), others such as small community and voluntary organisations, etc. can bid for a number of financing streams: this funding is usually short-term (normally up to one year) and some are to support small organisations in their service development. They can also apply for funding from LSC discretionary funding sources (e.g. widening adult participation action fund, neighbourhood learning in deprived communities, etc.).

Further education (FE) is funded by the DfES through the LSC. This funding to colleges is in the form of grants based on the unit of funding per full-time equivalent student in further education. Comparing 1996/97 and 2002/03, the participation funding for each FE student has remained constant in real terms.

To raise retention rates at upper secondary level, the government has introduced some financial incentives for students:

- education maintenance allowance (EMA) is available to students of 16 after their GCSEs (see Glossary) if they stay on in education, for any academic or vocational course. EMA depends on a student's household income, and is up to EUR 44 per week;
- further education learner support funds, managed by LSC (EUR 96.6 million in 2004/05), are available to help students aged 16 to 19 in particular financial difficulties. This funding is meant for course-related costs, including child care, transport, residential and other day-to-day costs, where EMA is insufficient;
- work-based learning, where employers pay the trainee a salary and are entitled to claim some expenses back from their local LSC;

There are two types of funding available through the LSC for work-based learning for young people aged 16-24 in England: formula-based provision and non-formula funded provision. Formula-funded provision is available for:

- (a) apprenticeships at level 2;
- (b) advanced apprenticeships (level 3 of qualification);
- (c) national vocational qualification (NVQ) training.

There are two levels of funding for apprenticeships – 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 age groups. The older age group attracts a lower level of funding on the assumption that they will learn more quickly and complete the programme more quickly than those coming straight from school at the age of 16.

The national formula for all apprenticeships and NVQ training is based on the following:

- (a) core funding, the length of the programme and its cost;
- (b) weighting, calculated on factors such as the necessity of any particular costing equipment;
- (c) core+weighting, which equals the basic national rate;

The new knowledge-focused technical certificates for revised apprenticeships<sup>(47)</sup> attract revised rates.

---

<sup>(47)</sup> Apprenticeships were revised in 2004, where the word 'modern' was dropped.

### **10.2.2. Funding in the devolved administrations**

In Wales, the National Assembly is responsible for funding education and lifelong learning. Although the key objectives are broadly consistent with those for England, there are several significant differences in structures, delivery and funding. Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) is responsible for post-16 education and training (excluding HE). It is implementing a new national planning and funding system, which will strengthen the link between learning needs and learning delivery and will ensure that schools, colleges and training providers are funded on equitable basis. All work-based learning programmes for young people between 16 and 24 years of age come under the Skillseekers brand name and are funded by ELWa.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI) is responsible for funding Jobskills, the training scheme for young people. The programme comprises three strands: access, for young people with essential skills or special skills needs that require additional support, traineeship (the equivalent of apprenticeship level 2 in England) and apprenticeship (the equivalent of advanced apprenticeship in England).

The main recurrent funding for colleges of further education in Northern Ireland is provided through the FE funding formula, which is based on a measurement of student activity and achievement called a student powered unit of resources (SPUR). This ensures that all colleges are funded on the same basis.

The Scottish Executive's strategy for enterprise in education includes provisions for work-based vocational learning linked to a relevant qualification for young people aged over 14. The Scottish Executive provided EUR 61.7 million in 2003-06 to support this and the other strands of the strategy. There are examples of school vocational programmes in several local authority areas that have been developed and are being funded by authorities through their allocation of this funding.

## **10.3. Funding for continuing education and training, and adult learning**

### **10.3.1. At institution level**

Under the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the LSC in England allocates funds for all aspects of CVET. Local education authorities allocate funds for general adult education. Adults undertaking courses at further education institutions may be charged fees.

In Wales, since April 2001, Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) is responsible for funding all post-16 education and training (excluding HE).

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI) is responsible for funding both further and higher education. Apart from direct financing,

funding is provided to colleges and students through several special initiative ‘earmarked’ budgets, which are designed to widen access, increase participation, address skills shortages and enhance the role of the sector in supporting economic development.

In Scotland, financing for training 16 to 24 year olds is the responsibility of the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning. Funding is provided through Scottish Enterprise (SEn) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to local enterprise companies (LECs), which are independent of the education system but buy in training from it; the SFEFC and the SHEFC fund colleges and universities respectively for further and higher education programmes. Since 2001, EUR 78 million of new funding has been invested and 71 000 new learners have been helped.

### **10.3.2. At adult and community learning (ACL) level**

Some provisions are made by government for individuals. These can play a major role in stimulating and focusing demand.

Since the early 1990s the government has given tax relief on payments (such as fees) for training, which can count towards a NVQ or a general national vocational qualification (GNVQ). Since 1996, people aged over 30 or over are entitled to tax relief for training, which does not involve NVQs, if it provides skills or knowledge which are relevant to paid employment or self-employment.

Individuals may also be entitled to financial support through career development loans; these are deferred repayment loans from a bank to help an individual pay for vocational learning or development. The DfES pays the interest on the loan while the individual is training and repayments begin one month after the learning has ended.

Discounts on course fees have also been provided through individual learning accounts (ILAs) (see Section 5.4.). ILAs were launched in 1999, but closed in England in 2004 due to administration concerns. In Wales, they were re-opened to the public in 2003. Individuals could open an ILA and access a range of discounts on the costs of learning, provided they make a contribution of at least EUR 37 themselves. In Scotland, a new scheme started in 2003, targeting low-income learners by providing up to EUR 340 support per year.

The network of 101 learning partnerships comprises non-statutory, voluntary groupings of local learning providers, supported by the DfES through the local initiative development fund run by LSC (EUR 14.6 million in 2002/03).

Scottish Local authorities have adopted different approaches to community education services. In some cases, responsibility for the different services remains in the education department, in others it has been split across several departments.

General responsibility for promotion, development and overseeing community learning resides with Youthlink and Communities Scotland, which provides, jointly with the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU), support to Scottish adult learning.

### **10.3.3. At employers' level**

There is no mechanism regulating enterprise-based CVT in England. Although there is no comprehensive up-to-date information on what UK employers spend on VET, according to *Adult learning in England: a review* (IES, 2000), employers make the biggest financial contribution to learning at work. In England alone, employers spend an estimated EUR 32.2 billion each year on training-related activities <sup>(48)</sup>.

The government is committed to engaging employers across the UK in boosting skills, productivity and employability. A network of sector skill councils (SSCs) receives up to EUR 1.47 million a year each from the DfES. All SSCs need to find additional funding from other sources.

In England, the government has set up a cross-departmental scheme totalling EUR 59 million to promote workforce development (WfD). Currently there are six regional pilots to reward employers for giving their employees time off to improve their qualifications to level 2.

Trade unions encourage several approaches to workplace learning. The union learning fund has been set up with the government funding through TUC (Trades Union Congress). The TUC and its unions have proposed to establish a Union Academy which aims to increase the capacity of unions to help their members to secure high quality learning opportunities, through developing union-branded routes, and to shape the learning and skills agenda at sectoral, regional and local levels. The government supports this partnership with the trade unions by investing EUR 6.6 million over two years (2005-07) in the Union Academy.

In Scotland, training programmes in some occupational sectors are funded by the Scottish Executive as part of the block grant-in-aid provided to the enterprise network. Enterprise network pays a contribution towards the individual candidates' training costs to training providers. In 2001/02, approximately EUR 179 million was spent on these programmes.

---

<sup>(48)</sup> Spilsbury D. *Learning and training at work 2000*. London: DfES, 2001. (DfES research report, 269). Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR269.doc> [cited 16.5.2005].

## 10.4. Funding for training unemployed and other vulnerable groups

Active labour market policy is an integral part of provision for long term unemployed adults. Since 2002, Jobcentre Plus, a national organisation, delivers the New Deal in Britain. It also delivers work-based learning for unemployed adults (WBLA) in England. Responsibility for non-New Deal government funded training in Wales and Scotland is devolved to the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament.

Jobcentre Plus is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Table 13: Funds allocated to New Deal programmes (up to end of March 2003)

(in million EUR)			
New Deal for young people	930	New Deal for disabled people	109
New Deal 25 plus	825	New Deal for partners	43
New Deal for lone parents	291	New Deal 50 plus	43

Source: Compiled by QCA.

As part of the New Deal for young people and New Deal 25 plus, employers are offered a subsidy for up to six months and may receive a grant to contribute towards the cost of training the trainee for the job; the employer is expected to pay the trainee the going rate for the job.

Along with the New Deal, employment zones and action teams for jobs (see Chapter 5) have been introduced to help people from deprived areas move into work. The employment zone budget for 2000-04 was EUR 448 million.

Action teams for jobs help disadvantaged jobless people in the most employment deprived areas of Britain into work. The action team budget for 2001-04 was EUR 250.6 million.

## 11. European and international dimension

The UK government and the administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland actively participate in the full range of European programmes and initiatives relating to education, training and lifelong learning. DfES, in consultation with the devolved administrations, has the key responsibility to ensure the UK's full investment in the Lisbon programmes.

### 11.1. National strategies related to EU policies and programmes

For lifelong learning, a strong degree of coherence exists between the priorities identified in the UK and the priorities being followed up through the open method of coordination, the Copenhagen declaration and the Maastricht communiqué <sup>(49)</sup>.

Building on the strengths of the UK's systems and identifying the key challenges that must be tackled, education and training reforms are now identified under a range of emerging lifelong learning strategies. England <sup>(50)</sup>, Scotland <sup>(51)</sup>, Wales <sup>(52)</sup> and Northern Ireland are each responsible for their own strategy. While the emerging lifelong strategies show differences, for example in the emphasis attached to the social dimensions of policy, a strong degree of interdependence continues for a range of geographical, cultural, linguistic, economic, historical and political reasons. Although all administrations strive for a knowledge economy and a knowledge society, some policy differences can be seen, for example in the upper-secondary phase and in the approach to credit and qualifications frameworks.

Key challenges for VET across the UK are highly consistent with the Lisbon aims <sup>(53)</sup>. Successive UK reform programmes aim to develop an effective skills agenda so as to:

- (a) achieve cross-government action to tackle skills gaps and shortages;
- (b) act on the demand side to encourage employers to use skills to develop more ambitious and innovative business strategies;
- (c) motivate learners to continue in and return to learning, and tackle low skills;
- (d) make VET responsive to employers' needs;

---

<sup>(49)</sup> See UK response to the DGVT questionnaire conducted as part of the Maastricht study.

<sup>(50)</sup> See: DfES. *White paper: 14-19 education and skills. February, 2005*; and Department for Education and Skills - DfES. *Skills strategy white papers 2001 and 2005*. London: DfES, 2005. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy/> [cited 13.5.2005].

<sup>(51)</sup> Scottish Executive. *Learning through life: life through learning. The lifelong learning strategy for Scotland*. February 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/lism-00.asp> [cited 3.5.2005].

<sup>(52)</sup> National Assembly for Wales. *The learning country: a paving document: a comprehensive education and lifelong learning programme to 2010 in Wales*. Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales, 2001. Available from Internet: <http://www.wales.gov.uk/subieducationtraining/content/PDF/learningcountry-e.pdf> [cited 13.5.2005].

<sup>(53)</sup> The following is adapted from the UK's response to the DGVT questionnaire for the Maastricht study.

- (e) raise the status and quality of initial VET to achieve: a coherent 14-19 phase of learning; a broader range of courses and programmes; high quality vocational options; higher levels of participation and lower levels of early school drop-out; higher levels of qualification, etc.

Taking the UK as a whole, the longer term strategy is to develop qualifications and learning programmes that engage a wide range of learners, based on the principles of equality and diversity and supported by transparent systems of credit and qualifications frameworks. Scotland has already implemented such a framework, the Scottish credit and qualifications framework; England, Wales and Northern Ireland are in the process of developing a credit-based framework for achievement (see Chapter 2).

## 11.2. Achievements and challenges

As part of the preparations for the UK presidency of the EU – and of the G8 – the DfES recently commissioned a report from the Work Foundation <sup>(54)</sup> on the progress of the UK skills strategy in the light of the Lisbon goals <sup>(55)</sup>. The overall conclusion reached is that:

‘Britain suffers from a legacy of low levels of basic skills for many workers, moderate educational achievement and an incoherent and insufficiently valued skills training and recognition system. Over the same period, it has sustained a high proportion of Europe’s top universities ...

There is good evidence that the UK is moving innovatively within its own cultural and institutional context to remedy these deficiencies while capitalising on its strengths. Significant progress has been made in creating an emergent comprehensive lifelong learning system ... The evidence suggests that skills levels are rising. Nevertheless, while the quality of labour entering the labour market has improved, much remains to be done for those at work.’

In terms of some key identified priorities of the current European programmes, the ‘scorecard’ for the UK can be summarised <sup>(56)</sup> as follows:

- (a) the UK performs, on average, comparatively well in international surveys of the basic skills of 15 year olds;
- (b) large numbers of adults are identified as lacking basic skills; innovative policies are in place for achieving socially inclusive outcomes, but this remains a major challenge;

---

<sup>(54)</sup> Work Foundation is a not-for-dividend public interest company, which provides consultancy and undertakes research in companies’ performance through improving the quality of working life.

<sup>(55)</sup> The following is adapted from Hutton, W. *Where are the gaps? An analysis of UK skills and education strategy in the light of the Kok Group and European Commission Midterm review of the Lisbon goals*. London: Work Foundation, 2005, p. 4. Available from Internet: <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/pdf/gaps.pdf> [cited 13.5.2005].

<sup>(56)</sup> Based on Hutton, W. (see footnote 55) and *Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of VET: final report to the EC: the Lisbon-to-Copenhagen-to Maastricht Consortium*, November 2004. Available from Internet: [http://www.efvet.org/documents/Lisbon\\_goals/Final\\_10\\_9\\_04PM.pdf](http://www.efvet.org/documents/Lisbon_goals/Final_10_9_04PM.pdf) [cited 13.5.2005].



- (c) the UK has a higher level of early school dropout than the EU target, and lower levels of qualification at upper secondary level. While progress has been made, much will depend on the effectiveness of reform programmes;
- (d) the UK compares well with the performance of most EU Member States in terms of participation in maths, science and technology graduates in higher education;
- (e) the UK scores highly on all of the available indicators of participation in lifelong learning and CVT, already reaching the EU target;
- (f) government spending on education and training was in line with the EU average in 1999, fell subsequently, and is now rising to a position well above the EU average;
- (g) employment levels are well above the European average and largely in line with the Lisbon objectives. Low skills and an ageing workforce create continuing pressures for reform;
- (h) aspects of the Copenhagen process, particularly the development of qualifications frameworks and frameworks for credit, are high on the UK reform agenda.

In terms of mobility of learners, the UK is the most popular destination for VET learners, while UK students participate less in EU cross-national learning and work experience placements than do learners in many other countries<sup>(57)</sup>. Equally, international continuing professional development opportunities for UK VET teachers, such as those within the Leonardo or Erasmus programmes, are not widely taken up.

It remains true that the Lisbon and Copenhagen frameworks are increasingly, but not yet widely, known in the UK policy and research communities for VET. The publication of the DfES international policy<sup>(58)</sup> highlights the importance of equipping young people for work in a global economy and stresses the need for learning experience to encompass an international context. In this vein, the UK traditional links beyond Europe will also remain a vital part of international networks and mutual learning communities.

As this short report has shown, the UK's and the European priorities and objectives for VET are very similar. The UK's policy and research communities are active throughout the EU's policy development and peer learning processes, and synergy certainly exists.

---

<sup>(57)</sup> Cedefop. *Learning by leaving: placements abroad as a didactic tool in the context of VET in Europe*. Luxembourg: Office of Official Publications of the European Communities, 2005. (Cedefop Reference series).

<sup>(58)</sup> DfES. *Putting the world into the world-class education: an international strategy for education, skills and children's services*. London: DfES, 2004. Available from Internet: <http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/PDF/International%20Strategy.pdf> [cited 13.5.2005].



## Annex 1 Acronyms and abbreviations

ACCAC	<i>Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru</i> Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
ACL	Adult and community learning
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
APL	Accreditation of prior learning
BLA	Business learning account
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
CS	Careers Scotland
CVET	Continuing (vocational education and) training
DELNI	Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
Dysg	LSDA organisation for Wales
E2E	Entry to employment
ELWa	Education and Learning Wales
EMA	Education maintenance allowance
ENTO	Employment National Training Organisation
ETP	Employer training pilots
FE	Further education
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation
FfA	Framework for achievement
GC	Guidance Council
GCE	General certificate of education
GCSE	General certificate of secondary education
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNVQ	General national vocational qualification
HE	Higher education
HNC	Higher national certificate
HND	Higher national diploma
ICT	Information and communication technology
ILA	Individual learning account

ISCED	International standard classification of education
IT	Information technology
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
LEA	Local Education Authority
LEC	Local enterprise companies
LLUK	Lifelong Learning United Kingdom
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
NQ	National qualification
NQF	National qualifications framework
NTO	National Training Organisation
NVQ	National vocational qualification
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PGCE	Post-graduate certificate in education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QTS	Qualified teacher status
RDA	Regional Development Agency
SCQF	Scottish credit and qualifications framework
SEn	Scottish Enterprise
SFEFC	Scottish Further Education Funding Council
SHEFC	Scottish Higher Education Funding Councils
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SSC	Sector Skills Council
SSDA	Sector Skills Development Agency
SVQ	Scottish vocational qualification
SWAP	Scottish wider access programme
Ufi	University for Industry
VET	Vocational education and training

## Annex 2 Glossary

**Adult and community learning (ACL):** a term used since the Learning and Skills Act (2000). ACL takes place in a wide range of settings; local authorities are major players; a strand of social action or regeneration is often present; much of the learning is non-vocational and non-accredited, though by no means unconcerned with the skills and employability of individuals; and this mode of learning is particularly suitable for outreach to disadvantaged people.

**A-level** (advanced level): this is a General certificate of education (GCE) usually taken two years after GCSE examinations (see GCSE) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Scottish equivalent is the advanced higher grade. In the first year students study up to five subjects and are awarded GCE AS qualification (see AS-level). In the second year, students study more demanding units in three of five subjects to obtain the full GCE A-level. A\* is the highest grade, with A-C accepted as progression to higher education and D-E representing the lower grades.

**AS-level** (advanced subsidiary): this is usually taken in the first year after post-compulsory upper secondary education (aged 16 to 17). It consists of three modules which can be cashed in to give an AS qualification or count as 50 % of an A-level. Module tests can be repeated to improve grades. The grades follow the same structure as A-levels.

**Apprenticeship:** this provides work-based learning to enable participants to learn on the job while building up skills and knowledge, gaining qualifications and earning money at the same time. There are different levels of apprenticeship available (young apprenticeships for 14 to 16 year olds, a pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship at level 2 and advanced apprenticeship at level 3). The latter two lead to national vocational qualifications (NVQs), key skills qualifications and, in most cases, a technical certificate (see Technical certificate).

**Bachelor's degree:** an academic degree conferred on a person who has successfully completed their undergraduate studies.

**Basic skills:** the ability to read, write and speak in English, and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general.

**Basic skills award:** Basic Skills Agency 'quality-mark' award aimed at primary and secondary schools that reach a minimum standard in teaching literacy and numeracy and meet the stringent quality standards of the agency. The quality mark is also awarded to post-16 training providers in Wales, working with adults improving their basic skills.

**Continuing (vocational education and) training (CVT/CVET):** lifelong training that encompasses all organised and institutionalised processes following initial vocational training, and which is designed to enable individuals to adapt to technological and technical changes, and to encourage their social development.

**Credit framework:** a set of specifications for valuing, measuring, describing and comparing learning achievement. It provides a standardised means of representing learning achieved, enabling comparison of learning required in different programmes and qualifications, and facilitating the building up of credit by learners and/or the transfer of achieved learning between programmes and/or between institutions.

**Devolved administration/governance:** devolution establishes the regional Parliaments with responsibility for devolved matters, such as education and training.

**Foundation degree (FD):** a vocational degree, which requires two years full-time or three years if taken as a sandwich course. A foundation degree can lead straight on to a first degree, which could be completed in 12 months. Entry requirements are at least one A-level (or equivalent) or a vocational qualification at level 3, e.g. NVQ. Foundation degrees were first offered in 2001/02.

**Framework for achievement (FfA):** framework, which is being set up (to be implemented in 2006/07 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) to represent learners' achievements through a standard unit format. These achievements will be recognised through the award of credit for completion of individual units. Qualifications will then be built up through combining units, and learners will achieve a qualification by accumulating credits towards the required targets set by the qualification.

**Further education (FE):** full-time and part-time education (other than higher) for persons over compulsory school age (currently 16 in England), which does not take place in a secondary school. It may be in a sixth-form college, a further education college or a higher education institution. Further education courses are generally up to the standard of GCE A-level or NVQ level 3. FE often provides an entry to university or/and full employment.

**GCSE (+ grades):** general certificate of secondary education. It is the most common examination taken at the end of compulsory secondary education. Grades are A\* to G, A\* being the highest; A\*-C grades are regarded as good GCSE passes. Although success in GCSE examinations is not officially required for access to post-compulsory education, most institutions expect students to achieve five good GCSE passes before admitting them to a GSE A-level course (see above).

**General standard grade/Credit standard grade:** Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) national qualification. Standard grades are generally taken over two years of study in third (aged 13 to 15) and fourth (aged 14 to 16) year at secondary school. Students often take seven or eight subjects including maths and English. The courses are made up of different parts called 'elements', with an exam at the end. There are three levels of study: Credit, General and Foundation. Students usually take exams at two levels: credit and general, or general and foundation. This makes sure that students have the best chance of achieving as high a grade as possible. Students who do not achieve a grade 1-6, but do complete the course, are awarded a grade 7.

**Initial vocational education and training (IVET):** the aim of initial vocational education and training is to prepare individuals for specific occupations and jobs or, more broadly, for the labour market. It usually includes both formal education and training and work experience. It is broader than training for a job (which may be part of it, or may follow it) and in-company training and usually carries certification or qualification.

**Key skills/core skills (Scotland):** these are specific skills needed for study and work, and have national standards. The key skills are: application of number; communication; information technology; working with others; improving own learning; and problem-solving.

**Lecturer:** name given to university/FE college teachers who do not hold a professorship.

**Master's degree:** graduate degree following the bachelor's degree. This may be completed in only one or two years, in cases in which the master's stands alone, or it may be a degree attained while working toward a doctorate (up to three years). Academic master's degrees usually involve preparing a thesis as well as completing courses, while professional master's degrees (e.g. education, management, communications, etc.) may require directed practical training together with course work.

**National occupational standards (NOS):** National occupational standards are agreed statements of competence, which describe the work outcomes required from an individual. NOS are developed by relevant sector skills councils and are used as benchmarks of good practice.

**National qualifications framework (NQF)/Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF):** the NQF and SCQF are designed to bring all national qualifications (other than academic at first degree or higher) within a clear framework, which is better understood and more accessible to employers and general public. The framework has two dimensions: categories of qualifications identifying the nature of the provision, i.e. academic related or occupational; and levels of attainment, which is a broad measure of difficulty in terms of knowledge and understanding required for the qualification.

**National vocational qualifications (NVQs)/Scottish vocational qualifications (SVQs):** work-based qualifications, which are based on national standards of competence drawn up by representatives from each industry sector, against which they are assessed. They are made up of units – normally between 6 and 10 – which break down a job into separate functions reflecting the different kinds of activities. N/SVQs are available in five levels and are accredited by the QCA in England and Northern Ireland (ACCAC in Wales and SQA in Scotland) and incorporated into the NQF.

**Post-16 learning sector:** refers to all post-compulsory IVET and CVET providers (including community, sixth-form, specialist and further education colleges) and other key organisations (including the Department for Education and Skills, Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus, Adult Learning Inspectorate and the Office for Standards in Education). Trade unions, employers' organisations and community at large have all stake in the sector.

**Scottish group award (SGA):** a Scottish group award consists of several courses and units, which fit together to make a coherent programme of study. Group awards are available at all five levels of study from access to advanced higher. A group award can be gained in one year of full-time study or built up over a longer period of time.

**Sixth-form college/school sixth form:** post-compulsory educational establishment where students prepare for their GCE A-level examinations during the final two years of secondary schooling (when students are about 16 to 18 years of age) (see A-level).

**Technical certificate:** knowledge-based, vocationally-related qualification, delivered as part of an apprenticeship. Introduced in 2001, they enable apprentices to gain a broader knowledge and understanding of their area of work (see Apprenticeship).

**Union learning representative (ULR):** a trade union representative who provides advice and guidance to union members on their training, educational and developmental needs. The role of ULR is to encourage members to think about the benefits of learning, and to help them understand the various learning options available to them.

**Voluntarist approach:** individual decision-making is unaffected by context and consequences of the system in which it takes place. In the UK context, relates to the employers taking decision on training and learning matters of employees.



## **Annex 3 Legislative and bibliographical references**

### **A. Relevant legislation since 1944**

1944

The Education Act established the post-war settlement for education in England and Wales; not, however, for VET. New legislation was a rarity until the 1980s. This act does not apply to Scotland.

1964

The government gave 30 technical colleges the title of polytechnic and created a body called the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), with the power to award degrees to polytechnic students which are of the same status and standard as university degrees.

1969

Open University established by Royal Charter.

1987

Establishment in England of National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) to approve the new national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs), set up as competence based qualifications. NCVQ and its activities did not apply to Scotland.

1988

Education Reform Act, the most fundamental legislation since 1944, which:

- introduced a national curriculum and a compulsory system of summative assessment of young people's attainment at each key stage of compulsory education (not in Scotland);
- established local management of schools (LMS), (not in Scotland);
- removed polytechnics from local authority control.

1990

Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act

Established Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

1992

Further and Higher Education Act and the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act

- removed the 'binary' divide, unifying polytechnics and universities into a single system of independent, incorporated universities;
- gave further education (FE) colleges independence, giving them incorporated status.

1996

Education (Scotland) Act

Established the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) which replaced the Scottish Exam Board (SEB) and the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC).

1997

Regulations (UK)

Established the New Deal, for unemployed people claiming benefit to actively train and seek work.

Schools Standards and Framework Act (England and Wales)

- encouraged schools to become ‘specialist’;
- gave more regulatory powers to the Secretary of State;
- set up education development plans (EDPs) and targets geared to school improvement;
- merged the previous SCAA and NCVQ to establish the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and, for Wales, established ACCAC;
- set up Education action zones (EAZs) to encourage multi-agency approaches in deprived areas.

1998

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order

- set out the arrangements for assessment of pupils’ performance, performance and management of schools, financing of schools;
- established the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.

Scotland Act; Government of Wales Act; Northern Ireland Act

Enacted the elected Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive giving Scotland legislative powers, the elected Assemblies for Wales and Northern Ireland, giving extensive responsibilities for education and training to the devolved administrations.

Teaching and Higher Education Act (England and Wales)

- required students to contribute to university fees, on a means-tested basis;
- entitled employed 16/17 year olds to time off for training.

2000

The Race Relations Act (Amendment)

Placed a general duty on specific public authorities to promote race equality.

Learning and Skills Act (England and Wales)

- established the Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs);
- established the Connexions programme, a new advice and guidance service for young people in transition;
- reformed funding and inspection arrangements, and changed the basis for the approval of qualifications (pre-19 and post-19).

2002

Education Act (England and Wales)

- secondary schools are given incentives to become ‘specialist’ schools;
- ministers create powers for curriculum innovation;
- schools are enabled to form companies and federations;
- provision is made for private companies to bid to set up new schools.

## B. Selected bibliography

Cedefop. *European perspectives on learning at work: the acquisition of work process knowledge*. Luxembourg: European Office for Official Publications, 2005. (Cedefop Reference series).

Cedefop. *Guidance policies in the knowledge society: trends, challenges and responses across Europe: a Cedefop synthesis report*. Luxembourg: European Office for Official Publications, 2004. (Cedefop Panorama series). Available from Internet: [http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/5152\\_en.pdf](http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/5152_en.pdf) [cited 2.5.2005].

Cedefop. *Towards a history of vocational education and training (VET) in Europe in a comparative perspective: proceedings of the first international conference. October 2002, Florence*. Luxembourg: European Office for Official Publications, 2004. (Cedefop Panorama series, 103). Available from Internet: [http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/pan/2004\\_5153\\_T1\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/pan/2004_5153_T1_en.pdf); [http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/pan/2004\\_5153\\_T2\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/pan/2004_5153_T2_en.pdf) [cited 2.5.2005].

DfES. *Departmental Report 2004*. April 2004. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/deptreport2004/> [cited 3.5.2005].

DfES. *21st century skills: realising our potential*. London: DfES, 2003. Available from Internet: [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy/\\_pdfs/whitePaper\\_PDFID4.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy/_pdfs/whitePaper_PDFID4.pdf) [cited 13.5.2005].

DfES. *White paper: 14–19 education and skills*. February 2005. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/14-19educationandskills/index.shtml> [cited 3.5.2005].

DfES. *White paper: the future of higher education*. January 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/> [cited 3.5.2005].

DfES. *White paper – skills: getting on in business, getting on at work*. March 2005. Available from Internet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/skillsgettingon/> [cited 3.5.2005].

Edexcel. *Investing in skills: taking forward the skills strategy. An LSC consultation paper on fees, funding and learner support in further education*. Besley, Steve. Sokoloff, Paul (eds). August 2004. Available from Internet: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/SubjectListing/ConsultationsandResponses/Currentconsultations/feesconsultation.htm> [cited 3.5.2005].

European Commission. *Commission staff working paper: progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training: 2005 report*. Luxembourg: European Office for Official Publications, 2005. Available from Internet: [http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2005\\_0047\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2005_0047_en.pdf) [cited 2.5.2005].

European Commission. *Maastricht Communiqué on the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET): review of the Copenhagen declaration of 30 November 2002*. Brussels: European Commission, 2004. Available from Internet: [http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2004\\_0018\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2004_0018_en.pdf) [cited 16.5.2005].

European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. *European Social Fund in action 2000-06: success stories: active labour market, social inclusion, lifelong learning, adaptability, women's participation*. Brussels: European Commission, 2005.

Learning and Skills Council. *Consultation on the National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007*. LSC, 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/eaij4dnyomm6ihqyh4mamxw6tuichek5uhohfqojv6hy5av57icfboij4l6emldbosz4dr5u2rstrc/ConsultationDiversityStrategy0407.pdf> [cited 3.5.2005].

Learning and Skills Council. *The Learning and Skills Council's Annual report and Accounts for 2003/2004*. LSC, 2004. Available from Internet: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/> [cited 3.5.2005].

Leney, Tom. *Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of VET*. Brussels: European Commission, 2004. Available from Internet: [http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2005\\_0041\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2005_0041_en.pdf) [cited 2.5.2005].

National Assembly for Wales. *Skills and Employment Action Plan for Wales 2005*. January 2005. Available from Internet: <http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk/pdfs/c5104-seap-report-e.pdf> [cited 3.5.2005].

OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 edition*. Paris: OECD, 2004.

OECD. *OECD in figures: statistics on the member countries*. Paris: OECD, 2001-2004 [yearly publication].

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. *An introduction to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework*. Second edition. October 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.scqf.org.uk/downloads.asp> [cited 3.5.2005].

Scottish Executive. *Learning through life: life through learning. The lifelong learning strategy for Scotland*. February 2003. Available from Internet: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/lism.pdf> [cited 3.5.2005].

Tessaring, M.; Wannan, J. *Vocational education and training: key to the future: Lisbon-Copenhagen-Maastricht: mobilising for 2010. Cedefop synthesis of the Maastricht Study*. Luxembourg: European Office for Official Publications, 2004.

UNICE. *Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications: third follow-up/ETUC, CEEP and UNICE-UEAPME*. European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest - CEEP. European Trade Union Confederation - ETUC. Union européenne de l'artisanat et des petites et moyennes entreprises – UEAPME. Brussels: UNICE, 2005. Available from Internet: [http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/euorg/etuc/2005\\_0001.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/euorg/etuc/2005_0001.pdf) [cited 2.5.2005].

## Annex 4 Main organisations

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT  
(44-870) 000 22 88  
[info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk>

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)  
The Adelphi  
1-11 John Adam Street  
London  
WC2N 6HT  
(44-207) 962 80 00  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk>

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)  
Response Centre  
1 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0ET  
(44-207) 215 50 00  
[dti.enquiries@dti.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dti.enquiries@dti.gsi.gov.uk)  
<http://www.dti.gov.uk>

Welsh Assembly Government Department for  
Training and Education (DfTE)  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA  
(44-292) 082 51 11  
<http://www.wales.gov.uk/linkseducation/index.htm>

Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning  
Department Secretariat  
The Scottish Executive  
6th Floor  
Meridian Court  
Cadogan Street  
GLASGOW  
G2 6AT  
(44-141) 248 47 74  
[ceu@scotland.gov.uk](mailto:ceu@scotland.gov.uk)  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Departments/ETLLD>

Department for Employment and Learning  
Northern Ireland (DELNI)  
Adelaide House  
39/49 Adelaide Street  
Belfast BT2 8FD  
(44-289) 025 77 77  
<http://www.delni.gov.uk>

Learning and Skills Council (LSC)  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry  
CV1 2WT  
(44-845) 019 41 70  
[info@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:info@lsc.gov.uk)  
<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/>

Education and Learning Wales (ELWa)  
Ty'r Afon  
Bedwas Road  
Bedwas  
Caerphilly  
CF83 8WT  
(44-144) 366 36 63  
<http://www.elwa.ac.uk>

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)  
83 Piccadilly  
London  
SW1 8QA  
(44-207) 509 55 56  
[info@qca.org.uk](mailto:info@qca.org.uk)  
<http://www.qca.org.uk>

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)  
24 Douglas Street  
Glasgow  
G2 7NQ  
(44-845) 279 10 00  
[customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk)  
<http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru  
Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC)  
ACCAC  
Castle Buildings  
Womanby Street  
CARDIFF  
CF10 1SX  
(44-292) 037 54 00  
[vocational@accac.org.uk](mailto:vocational@accac.org.uk)  
<http://www.accac.org.uk/>

Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)  
3 Callflex Business Park,  
Golden Smithies Lane,  
Wath-upon-Dearne,  
South Yorkshire, S63 7ER  
(44-170) 976 54 44  
[info@ssda.org.uk](mailto:info@ssda.org.uk)  
<http://www.ssda.org.uk>

Trades Union Congress (TUC)  
Congress House  
Great Russell Street  
London  
WC1B 3LS  
(44-207) 636 40 30  
[info@tuc.org.uk](mailto:info@tuc.org.uk)  
<http://www.tuc.org.uk>

Confederation of British Industry (CBI)  
Centre Point  
103 New Oxford Street  
London  
WC1A 1DU  
(44-207) 379 74 00  
<http://www.cbi.org.uk>

Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)

**Vocational education and training in the United Kingdom: Short description**

*Natalia Cuddy*

*Tom Leney*

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2005 – VI, 80 pp. – 21 x 29.7 cm

(Cedefop Panorama series; 111 – ISSN 1562-6180)

ISBN 92-896-0413-1

Cat. No: TI-68-05-309-EN-C

Free of charge – 5159 EN –

The effective governance of education and training in the UK is the responsibility of the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and is a major priority of the UK government. Many aspects of initial and continuing training are subject to continuous reform as the UK builds on its strengths and addresses challenges in the emerging systems of lifelong learning. Priorities in the UK are closely in line with the objectives of the Lisbon strategy.

Vocational education and training (VET) systems in the UK tend to be complex as well as fast changing. This short review gives an overview of the main structures, trends, and challenges. Key elements include the notion of competence to define the content and assessment of VET learning and an increasingly flexible and diverse approach to learning provision.

## Vocational education and training in the United Kingdom

Short description

PANORAMA



European Centre for the  
Development of Vocational Training

Europe 123, GR-57001 Thessaloniki (Pylea)  
Postal Address: PO Box 22427, GR-55102 Thessaloniki  
Tel. (30) 23 10 49 01 11, Fax (30) 23 10 49 00 20  
E-mail: [info@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:info@cedefop.eu.int)  
Homepage: [www.cedefop.eu.int](http://www.cedefop.eu.int)  
Interactive website: [www.trainingvillage.gr](http://www.trainingvillage.gr)

Free of charge – On request from Cedefop

5159 EN



Publications Office  
[Publications.eu.int](http://Publications.eu.int)

ISBN 92-896-0413-1



9 789289 604130