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Edexcel Thinks

What's the issue?

The DCSF has recently released the first two of what will be a series of commissioned Reports on the 14-19 Diplomas. One looks at the preparation for the first wave of Diplomas in September 2008 and the other at the design model used to develop Diplomas.

What does Edexcel think?

- Edexcel recognises that while things have moved on since the evidence was first generated for these Reports, they do contain some useful messages for all those involved in 14-19 developments for the future
- Edexcel notes for instance on the positive side that in terms of Diploma design, creating Diploma Development Partnerships (DDPs) has given “a variety of stakeholders, most notably employers and higher education, the opportunity to influence collectively the content of a new qualification early on.” While in terms of preparation, “consortia were keen to deliver this new course and felt that they would be prepared for Diploma delivery by September 2008”
- On the debit side, Edexcel is concerned that some DDPs found it difficult to engage a full complement of partners and that only “about a half of DDPs said they were satisfied or very confident that the Diploma would meet employers’ needs.” On preparation, there were concerns from some consortia about securing employer engagement, about levels of advice and guidance and about some of the mechanics of partnership working
- Edexcel acknowledges that while some of these issues will be resolved as the 14-19 system takes shape, the Reports raise three particular issues that warrant attention. First, that there still appears to be a lack of understanding about what Diplomas are and where they fit into the qualification system. This is hindering engagement at all levels. Second, that there are concerns about the design of some of the Diplomas, in particular the extent to which they are intended to develop a specialist or general level of skills and understanding. Third, that the crucial role of information, advice and guidance has yet to be fully developed
- Edexcel recognises that these and other areas feature in the Department’s current Next Steps Implementation Programme but believes they should be given a high priority in the coming year.



What is Edexcel doing?

Edexcel is committed to offering all Diploma lines of learning whether independently or with partners such as VTCT for Hair and Beauty. It was the first Awarding Body to have all lines of learning in Phase 1 accredited and also offers the greatest number of Additional and Specialist Learning qualifications.

Edexcel is offering Functional Skills pilot qualifications in maths, English and ICT at Levels 1 and 2 and Entry Level. Throughout January and February 09 Edexcel is running a series of half-day training events for centres on its Functional Skills Development Programme. The subject-specific events provide centres with the opportunity to find out more about the assessment and teaching of Functional Skills. The events cover effective teaching models, include the scrutiny of assessed work samples and provide opportunities to review associated examiner feedback. The events also provide a chance for centres to discuss Functional Skills standards. For non-pilot centres, Edexcel offers a range of support including email updates, termly newsletters, access to teaching and learning materials, free briefings and access to subject specific training.

As part of Edexcel's 'Building a total solution for Diploma success', Trident from Edexcel will continue to source appropriate work placements for Diploma students, a service launched in autumn 2008. These placements will be provided either direct by Trident, or in partnership with the NEBPN (National Education Business Partnership Network).

In addition to standard Diploma training events, Edexcel has made some of its training sessions available to centres online, where they can be 'dipped into' at convenient times allowing centres to train in a flexible way.

Background

First teaching of the Diploma began in September 2008, with the first five lines of learning in Construction and the Built Environment, Creative and Media, Society, Health and Development, Engineering and Information Technology. Edexcel offers qualifications in all five lines.

By 2011, there will be 17 different Diploma lines of learning. Each line will be available at 3 levels, Foundation (L1), Higher (L2) and Advanced (L3). There are also smaller Progression Diplomas and from 2011, there will be larger Extended Diplomas.

Functional Skills are designed to provide the necessary levels of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills needed to "function" in today's society and workplace.

In 2006, Trident Trust, the UK's largest national provider of work experience for students aged 14-16 years, became part of Edexcel. Trident's aim is to offer young people a meaningful experience of work while they study for the Diploma, helping to improve their employability and enterprise skills and aiding their development as individuals. Engaging with Trident allows consortia and employers to concentrate on the learner's experience of work as Trident takes responsibility for securing and managing the placement.

Useful links

<http://www.edexcel.com/Policies/Pages/not-60.aspx> Link to Policy watch on the 14-19 Implementation plan

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-RW079&> Link to Diploma Evaluation report

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/learn-diploma.aspx> link to Edexcel Diploma webpage

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/func-skills/Pages/default.aspx> Link to Functional Skills website

<http://www.trident-edexcel.co.uk/> Link to Trident website

<http://www.edexcel.com/policies/Pages/home.aspx> Link to Policy watch website