

15 October 2008/17

Edexcel Thinks

What's the issue?

Over the last few months, the two Government Departments of DCSF and DIUS have been leading a consultation on a draft Apprenticeship Bill due to be presented to Parliament later this year. The Bill set out a number of important proposals intended to strengthen the apprenticeship framework and make it more widely available. What does Edexcel think?

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- Edexcel welcomes the publication of the Bill as it clarifies the position and aims of apprenticeships for the future. It particularly welcomes the aim to create a National Apprenticeship Service as a co-ordinating body
- Edexcel is also pleased that DIUS is shortly to set up an online vacancy-matching and application processing service to monitor demand based on the UCAS-matching system
- Edexcel welcomes the efforts being made by the public sector which is working to offer more apprenticeship places than it does at present. Historically the public sector has been underrepresented in its offer but the 'Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All' paper show the government's aim to offer more apprenticeship places in every government department and related agencies
- Edexcel is concerned that the Bill does not offer sufficient incentives for SMEs to offer the number of apprenticeship places required. Edexcel notes that a 2005 survey by the LSC found there were 7 applicants to every 1 apprenticeship place and believes financial support by means of tax credits may encourage more employers to take part in the scheme
- Edexcel does, however, support the creation of Group Training Associations which enable a number of smaller employers to work with an individual apprentice across the group. This system has the potential to work well as it will offer apprentices a wider experience. However, Edexcel would like clarification of who would be accountable for the apprentice at any given point if they are working for a range of employers.
- Edexcel notes that the Bill focuses on 16-19 year olds and would like reassurance that funding for apprenticeships for people over 25 is to be maintained



What is Edexcel doing?

Edexcel fully supports the Apprenticeship programme and offers provision in 10 sectors. In 8 sectors including, Business and Administration, Customer Services and Retail Edexcel Apprenticeships are available at levels 2 and 3. Further apprenticeships in other sectors are offered only at level 2 (Team Leading) and only at level 3 (Management).

Edexcel provides an Apprenticeship Package which enables Centres to register the learner only once for the Apprenticeship as oppose to registering them for each individual qualification. This ties in with the current aims and developments in reducing the bureaucracy in the Apprenticeship system.

Edexcel also provides centres with Apprenticeship External Verifiers who will be responsible for the verification of all the components of the Apprenticeship Framework - all verification is done on site in the Centre.

Edexcel has completed the initial phase of its Apprenticeship Development Programme and now has Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships in Retail, Customer Service and Business Administration available with Technical Certificates assessed either through centre-devised assignment briefs or Edexcel designed multiple choice tests that are sat onscreen. Phase 2 is currently being launched and covers Team Leading, Management, Health and Social Care and Children's Care, Learning and Development. First tests will be available from 18 November 2008.

Background

Since 2001, the number of people undertaking apprenticeships has risen from 40,000 to 100,000. Leitch's 2006 report Prosperity for all in the global economy - worldclass skills stated that England should aspire to have 400,000 apprenticeships by 2020.

In response to the Leitch report, the Government highlighted the central role it sees for Apprenticeships in achieving its economic and skills ambitions through its report 'World class apprenticeships, unlocking talent, building skills for all' published in January 08.

At the launch of this report, Gordon Brown made a speech detailing his support for the expansion of apprenticeships and outlining ways in which employers will be supported to offer apprenticeship places.

The government will set up a National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) which will help to deliver these ambitions and grow the number of Apprenticeships to the targets set by the Leitch report. The Government is taking steps towards meeting this target and the latest figures show that apprentice starts are up 16 per cent on the same period last year. This includes a strong increase in the number of over-25s starting on Apprenticeships.

In August 2008 John Denham announced that he would cut the red tape around apprenticeships to make it easier for employers to take new apprentices on. He announced that unnecessary bureaucracy such as demands to store paperwork for up to six years, multiple inspection visits and monthly reporting requirements could be removed at the earliest possible opportunity.

Useful links

[http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/7798-DIUS-Apprenticeship%20Bill%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/7798-DIUS-Apprenticeship%20Bill%20(2).pdf) Draft apprenticeships Bill

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page14414> link to Gordon Brown's speech on the expansion of Apprenticeships

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/> link to apprenticeships website

www.edexcel.org.uk/apprenticeships. Link to Edexcel's Apprenticeships website

<http://www.edexcel.org.uk/about/policies/epw/pw-notices/not-43.htm> link to Policy Watch on apprenticeships