

9 June 2009/2

## Edexcel Thinks

### What's the issue?

Consultation has recently closed on the proposed Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE). The Specification sets out the requirements that each recognised Apprenticeship Framework in England must follow. The following is a summary of Edexcel's consultation response.

### What does Edexcel think?

- Edexcel has welcomed the consultation as an important step towards securing consistent quality standards across Apprenticeship Frameworks. It particularly values recommendations to define the minimum number of credits for different components of Apprenticeship Frameworks as well as proposals to clarify the position on entry requirements and progression routes
- Edexcel is pleased to see that the consultation recognises that Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and Standards Setting Bodies (SSBs) have "a key role" to play in developing Apprenticeship Frameworks. It is important that in the drive to ensure uniform quality, sector based expertise and local flexibility is retained
- Edexcel does not support the proposal for 250 hours of off-workstation training. It believes that this is an area where particular requirements should be left to the SSCs/SSBs to determine as part of the Framework development. A centrally set minimum may not fit every sector and further, may act as a disincentive to some sectors
- Edexcel believes that required Functional Skills levels, including ICT should also be determined on a sector basis and not as a national minimum requirement. Such a position is sensible while Functional Skills remain under development
- Edexcel supports the positioning of Employee Rights and Responsibilities (ERR) and Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) as learning areas within programmes rather than as formally assessed components unless particularly required by a sector
- Edexcel believes that in terms of facilitating progression between Apprenticeships and Diplomas, a simple position while both of these are evolving, should be that SSCs/SSBs indicate within their own Sector Qualification Strategies which Diploma at which level provides suitable potential for progression. This would avoid the need for complex mapping charts. Edexcel is however surprised that while the consultation lists Diplomas, GCSEs and A levels as providing potential progression routes, no mention is made of qualifications such as BTECs which already feature within some Apprenticeships and provide established progression routes into others.



## What is Edexcel doing?

Edexcel has a dedicated team providing support and services to Apprenticeship providers throughout the UK. It offers all the components of an Apprenticeship as a single package thereby making it simpler for providers to manage. Edexcel does not charge approval fees for its Apprenticeships.

Edexcel is also undertaking considerable Apprenticeship support work with leading employers such as Whitbread, The Punch Group, Four Seasons Healthcare, CEVA logistics, Harvery Nicholls, Liberty and Superdrug.

One case study is that of BT for whom Edexcel is providing tailored support to develop appropriate Apprenticeships across the company. In time, there will be 10,000 BT apprentices taking an Edexcel Apprenticeship. This model of bespoke qualifications is one that Edexcel is keen to develop elsewhere.

## Background

The consultation sets out minimum national requirements for Apprenticeship Frameworks, including vocational and transferable skills, off-workstation learning time and minimum entry requirements. It was first announced as part of the Prime Minister's launch in January 2008 of the National Apprenticeship Strategy for England. The completed Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England will be published at the end of August 2009 with a view to compliance by 2011.

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS,) a new body to provide end-to-end service and support to the Apprenticeship system in England which was announced at the same time, began operating on 1 April 2009. Further aspects of the service are currently being enshrined in legislation as part of the Apprenticeships, Children, Learning and Skills Bill 2009.

## Useful links

<http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/sase.aspx> Link to DIUS consultation page

[http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/-/media/publications/W/world\\_class\\_apprenticeships](http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/-/media/publications/W/world_class_apprenticeships) Link to World Class Apprenticeships strategy paper

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

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/apprenticeships/Pages/default.aspx> Link to Edexcel Apprenticeships page

<http://www.edexcel.com/Policies/Pages/not-09-12.aspx> Link to Policy watch on Apprenticeship week