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Edexcel Thinks

What's the issue?

The Conservatives have recently published a skills policy for England. It comes at a time when both skills policies and Opposition policies are being seriously considered. What does Edexcel think?

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- Edexcel welcomes this Green Paper and believes it provides a useful summary of Conservative thinking on a key area of national policy
- It welcomes in particular the renewed interest in adult and community learning and the intention to create a new Community Learning Fund although the £100m proposed for this would fall somewhat short of the current allocation for Personal, Community and Development Learning
- Edexcel also believes the specific targeting of funding to support the NEETs group is important but considers that what is needed along with this funding is a clearer set of policies as to how to tackle this issue
- Edexcel is pleased to see the importance being attached in the Paper to apprenticeships with the emphasis on 'real workplace' places although this might become more difficult to deliver if economic conditions worsen. Edexcel is however less convinced about the need to build parity of esteem between apprenticeship and academic routes believing that it is the quality of the programme that matters rather than its relationship with other forms of learning
- Edexcel is supportive of moves to free up the FE system and of the intention to revert to a single funding body for the sector. How the funding system will operate is obviously crucial particularly if an open market is to operate. Edexcel supports the principle of core + incentive funding where core funding supports essential and priority provision and incentive funding is institutionally targeted to drive up responsiveness and quality
- In summary, Edexcel believes that while there are considerable gaps in this Paper, there are for instance no references to many other aspects of the Leitch agenda and some of the details included are sketchy, there is much in this Paper that deserves discussion

What is Edexcel doing?

- Edexcel is working hard to support the skills agenda and has contributed and consulted widely on the Leitch agenda



- Edexcel apprenticeships have been recently relaunched to offer a package covering: approval registration for NVQs, technical certificates and Key Skills; external verification of NVQ and technical certificate; on-screen testing of technical certificate and Key Skills portfolio moderation of Key Skills certification. Edexcel has adopted a flexible approach to verification with pre-verification plans discussed and agreed with centres to ensure minimum disruption and maximum quality
- Edexcel works closely with the qualification regulator, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills and individual SSCs/SSBs in the development of vocational qualifications
- Edexcel has created a designated employer solutions team to look at the training needs of a business and design, plan, manage and deliver the required training. With hundreds of standard courses to choose from or bespoke qualifications created precisely their needs, Edexcel can support employers in developing their own workforce
- Edexcel is one of the UK's largest awarding bodies and offers international recognised qualifications including BTEC, NVQ, Apprenticeships and Key Skills to businesses across the world. BTECs are only available from Edexcel
- Edexcel is working to produce a guide to BTEC for centres containing information about the BTEC qualifications and their availability by sector, the relation between BTEC and Diplomas and other information. This will be available during the autumn term
- Edexcel was one of the partners at the inaugural VQ day on 23rd July 2008 which celebrated the achievements of those who have gained vocational qualifications

Background

The Green Paper is one in a series of Papers that the Conservative Party has been releasing under its 'Opportunity' agenda. A Paper on Schools which proposes opening out schools to parent and community groups and is being led by Michael Gove has already been released.

The Conservative Party intend to consult on this Paper 'over the next few months.'

Useful links

- Skills Green Paper_No7_2-995314157.eSS:Layout 1 (The Green Paper)
- <http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/> (Train to Gain website)
- <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/> (LSC website)
- <http://www.edexcel.com/apprenticeships/Pages/Overview.aspx> (Edexcel Apprenticeships website)
- http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/95085/_46__Conservative_Skills_policy1.pdf (Policy watch on the Conservatives skills paper)