

to further education and skills

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FE Week A YEAR ON AND TIME FOR REFLECTION



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tudy programmes have had more than a year to bed down now and so it's a fair time to reflect on what effect they're having on the FE and skills sector.

While a work experience element is included in the study programme 'package,' the most notable component is that of the requirement for learners to achieve English and maths qualifications.

A huge leap in the amount of teaching was always going to be required with providers' funding dependent on this provision where a learner has not achieved his or her GCSE grade C in the subjects.

And so efforts to meet this demand are

covered in our first news item on the page opposite, where there is an update from the Education Funding Agency on its review of planned hours, announced nearly five

On page 4 there is a more in-depth explanation of study programmes, before the architect of the system herself, Professor Alison Wolf, outlines her view of their progress.

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and South Leicestershire College principal Marion Plant and National Hairdressers' Federation chief executive Hilary Hall discuss the impact of study programmes on page 5, before the Ofsted review of last month is covered on the following page.

An exclusive Q&A session with Skills Minister Nick Boles just months into his ministerial tenure features on page 7.

The learner view of study programmes from National Union of Students president Toni Pearce is on page 10, along with an explanation of how the maths element is being handled by providers from Steve McCormack, communications manager at the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM).

With such a monumental change in education policy, where funding shifted from per-qualification to per-learner, there were bound to be knock-on effects — or unintended consequences. These are the focus of page 11.

An exclusive FE Week survey shows how the sector is coping 'on the ground' with study programmes, and the results feature on pages 12, 13 and 14, before the work experience element of the system is discussed on page 15 by Fairtrain chief executive Beth Gardner and UK Commission for Employment and Skills senior manager David Massev.



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An innovative approach to study programmes

he introduction of study programmes represents a radical change to the way education and training is provided for young people - a significant part of this government's commitment to raising educational attainment and achievement

The idea behind it is to increase the quality of education for young people so that they are well prepared for further education, higher education and work. The government feels that through the study programme, all young people should have the tools and opportunities to fulfil their potential and develop relevant skills, regardless of their circumstances.

At NCFE, this is something we whole heartedly support every individual should have the

opportunity to be nurtured and to shine in whichever way they can. We know that when it comes to

the study programme, a structured programme of learning must be in place for 16 to 19 learners, which should consist of a substantial qualification, English, maths and work experience. However, we understand that this step change comes with its challenges for the

Ofsted has recently released a survey which evaluates how effectively the FE sector has implemented the study programme. The survey details how integral the study programme will be to inspections going forward. They want to see evidence of the sector embracing the flexibilities of the study programme, tailored to

learners' career and development needs. What's more, meaningful work experience will be crucial to

At NCFE, we're committed to

providing the right progression routes for young people to move through from Level one, two and onto their level three while also looking at UCAS points for many of our level three substantial qualifications. From our range of substantial qualifications in a variety of sector areas, to our bite-sized maths and English units and work experience elements, we are able to offer a complete package.

Our qualifications are able to support work experience placements (enterprise, developing skills for the workplace and more), and we've also partnered with Working

Knowledge to offer a range of work experience solutions (large scale business challenge events, live briefs and workplace visits, hidden jobs workshops and mock interviews).

These are all designed to engage employers and offer evidence to support programmes of study, built around your cohort of learners.

We believe we have something for everyone, enabling you to make the study programme a unique experience for your learners.

However, we know that there's a lot to think about when planning your curriculum, so our business development team are on hand to help.

If you'd like to talk to someone about our offer, simply call our team on 0191 239 8003 or email switching@ncfe.org uk







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Thousands seek help for English and Maths teaching

ore than 2,500 lecturers have benefited from subsidised courses launched to help the FE and skills sector cope with a massive growth in demand for English and maths GCSE teaching.

The government made it compulsory from this academic year for students on post-16 courses who had not achieved at least a grade C in either English or maths to continue working towards the qualifications.

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and Association of Centres for Excellence in College Education in Teacher Training (Acett) launched subsidised courses to prepare FE lecturers who had not previously specialised in maths and English GCSE to teach the subjects, as reported on feweek.co.uk in October last year.

More than 2,200 people have so far completed the maths course since it was launched in November. A further 300 have enrolled on the English programme, introduced last month.

An ETF spokesperson said: "The ETF is supporting practitioners to teach up to and including level three English and maths.

"Demand for the maths enhancement programme was slightly higher than the 2.000 expected and we were able to fund a further 233 places so as to provide a subsidised place for all eligible applicants.

"The current English enhancement programme, launched in September, has already generated 300 enrolments.

"The take-up of our offer to have English enhancement courses delivered on provider premises to groups of staff has been particularly well received at this early stage. We are offering 1.400 subsidised places [overall].

The figures for the take-up on the curses come iust over a month after a survey of

the FE workforce found that around one-infive maths teachers were only qualified up to level two in the subject.

Reports based on the results, published by the ETF, showed the highest maths



She added: "Acett provided evaluative learning from the maths programme to

inform the English one.' A spokesperson for the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM), which helped ETF and Acett develop the maths course, said: "We expected and got high demand as we were aware that many of the teachers involved would have limited experience of teaching mathematics at this level and that there was little alternative support available.'

The maths and English courses are subsidised by ETF, through "grant funding" from the government, limiting their cost to £100 per person.

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "Our reforms to raise standards in English and maths are vital because these subjects are most valued by employers and will help young people secure a good job.

"That's why all sixth forms and colleges must continue teaching these subjects to any of their students who did not get a grade C at GCSE.

"To help them deliver it, the ETF, with grant funding from the government, is providing a range of support programmes to raise the teaching skills of FE staff."

Visit www.etfoundation.co.uk for more details on the courses

See page 10 for an expert piece by the NCETM

EFA extends planned hours review

n Education Funding Agency review of the study programmes' planned hours system of funding prompted by fears of misuse has been extended.

The review, understood to have been triggered after greater proportions of learners were registered as being in full-time study than were previously seen under the old funding system, was predicted to have taken place over the

However, an agency spokesperson told FE Week it had still not finished, and it was not known whether the results would be published.

The agency now pays per learner, rather than by qualification, as recommended in Professor Alison Wolf's 2011 review of vocational education.

And for learners to qualify as full-time under the new system providers must record them with at least 540 planned hours, but it is understood that learners who would previously have been funded as part-time were now being funded as full-time.

The agency, FE Week understands, is concerned that providers were either not delivering the full 540 hours or, where delivered they were condensed into periods



of as little as four months.

However, it announced in June that it would be conducting a review over the summer to ensure all data and funding claims were valid.

But an agency spokesperson said: "The review is not finished yet — it's ongoing. "We are continuing to look at planned

hours and the appropriate use of nonqualification hours.

She could not say if or when the results of the review would be made public.

In order for planned hours to qualify for funding, the activity done in that time must contribute towards a coherent study programme for the student, be timetabled. organised or supervised by the provider and be within the provider's normal working pattern.

An agency spokesperson, at the rime the review was launched, said: "All institutions should ensure that planned hours recorded for the 2013 to 2014 academic year meet these criteria. EFA will continue to monitor the returns it receives to decide if further audit work is necessary."

The chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers. Stewart Segal (pictured), said: "We were expecting a review on the impact of study programmes at some stage and we would welcome input into it. AELP supports the flexibility of study programmes and hope that the review will reinforce that flexibility rather than create too rigid a definition of the learning activities."

In her 2011 report, Dr Alison Wolf laid out her arguments for funding by student, rather than qualification. She said the move would "focus... management and staff attention on student programmes rather than the minutiae of individual qualifications' fees" and "make it much easier for institutions to collaborate in offering different components of a programme".

Study programmes as the answer to poor adult literacy and numeracy

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he brainchild of vocational education tsar Professor Alison Wolf, study programmes were embraced whole heartedly by the government and hailed as the solution to poor adult literacy and numeracy and a general lack of workreadiness among school leavers.

Professor Wolf's recommendation in her 2011 report on 14 to 19 education was that study programmes for 16 to 19-yearolds in vocational programmes should be "governed by a set of general principles relating primarily to content, general structure, assessment arrangements and contact time".

Brought in from September last year, study programmes have a work experience element, but are best known for the

a certain level in English and maths. This is mostly due to the concerns raised by the FE sector about extra pressure on institutions such as FE colleges, which must deliver the required extra levels of English and maths teaching as a funding requirement.

As well as having to demonstrate progression to higher levels of attainment in other areas of study, those learners who begin 16 to 19 education without a grade C in GCSE English and maths must work towards achieving that level of qualification during their post-16 studies.

Initially the government placed an emphasis on GCSEs, with many in the sector fearing for the future of Functional skills, a combination of English, maths and ICT taught in a more applied way for those who struggle with the nature of GCSE

ALISON WOLF

But under new Skills Minister Nick Boles, Functional Skills appear to have won a reprieve and will, as far as he is concerned, play a key role in the success of the study programmes. The introduction of the programmes

coincided with the first of two rises in the participation age for education in England. Since last September, it has been compulsory for learners to remain in fulltime education until the end of the year in which they turn 17 unless they are in an apprenticeship or full-time work combined with part-time study

From September next year, the participation age will rise again to 18, and there are concerns this rise, coupled with the existence of study programmes, will increase pressure on FE institutions even

In fact, the Sixth Form Colleges

Association has already reported a 14 per cent increase in enrolments of learners without a maths GCSE grade C or above at its member colleges and the 157 Group said some of its membership had reported learners being turned away from their school sixth forms for not reaching the C grade benchmark.

Other problems have been reported, not least by Ofsted, which found in a recent survey conducted in the first six months of the programme that many providers had not done enough to change their curriculums to fit in with government

This damning report led to an ultimatum from the watchdog's head of FE and skills Lorna Fitziohn that providers must make the changes necessary or see their ratings fall as Ofsted places study programmes "at the heart" of its inspections.

of it. Anything difficult tended to be dropped from funding qualification by qualification, to funding per student — as was already the case for all other age groups — but also to insist that each student must have a

> Pre-16, it makes sense for most pupils to follow much the same core curriculum. with a certain number of options. Post-16, far more variety and individualisation is needed. Study programmes should be just that: a coherent, overall programme, fitted to the individual student. They do also need to recognise and incorporate the common elements which all young people. on whatever pathway, require. That means ensuring that all students achieve good levels of English and maths, and obtain the work experience which helps them to understand what employment actually involves and demands

> The change to study programmes is a huge one. It also allows educators to regain their professional autonomy, and freedom to judge what is best for their students.

What some colleges have already Along with the sector skills body Habia,

MARION

College and South Leicestershire College and chief executive of the Midland Academies Trust

Increasing engagement after qualifications-based approach

Shifting focus from qualifications to the needs of the learner has placed new pressures on providers, explains Marion Plant

tudy programmes could offer the biggest opportunity we have had for years to get study.

But while they challenge both students and staff to change the way they think about learning, they equally force colleges to consider about how we deliver teaching.

Study programmes have broken the previously rigid link between qualifications and funding. By focusing on the student, we have been able to ensure that our students have a line of sight to work in everything

Here at our colleges in the Midlands, we make the most of the time. We are able to build learning programmes that meet

the needs and predispositions of different

We use skills competitions to drive and inspire student aspirations and achievement. Our level of student success in regional and national competitions is exceptional.

Similarly, alongside English and maths, young people into employment or further core life and work survival skills, our students become skilled in team building, communication, problem-solving and in being resilient — possibly the most critical skill needed in a fast-moving volatile world.

> Of course, English and maths teaching has to be resourced. Our approach is to ensure that it's everyone's responsibility.

> Our teaching culture prizes clarity of expression and numeracy. Such skills, along with employability, must be fully integrated into the way we work.

> Through project-based learning, students tackle and solve real time problems. And through volunteering in the community.

students and staff gain a deeper understanding of others' needs, cultures

Work experience offers a rich contribution to the learning programme. Students are able to embed themselves in businesses and industries, seeing the world through the eyes of business people and contributing to success of other enterprises over a number of weeks. We ensure that the work experience is planned, well-executed and contributes to the development of the young people.

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College is one of the first in the country to be awarded the Fair Train Gold Award in recognition of the quality of our work experience.

Study programmes require a far higher level of engagement than previous qualification-based approaches.

Making students work-ready is not easy Enriched work experience for thousands of students across two colleges requires considerable planning and relationship building. High standards matter.

Add into the mix, Health and Safety requirements including. DBS and the fact that in many parts of the country most work experience will take place in relatively small, small and medium-sized enterprises, and you can get some sense of the practical challenge.

The acid test is whether young people are more likely to succeed as a result of our study programmes than they would otherwise have been. Like so many things in life, it's about the value-added dimension.

Young people have traditionally looked to teachers and lecturers for knowledge

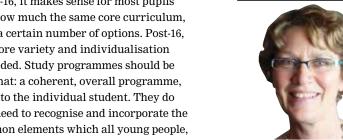
and understanding. In a Study Programme driven world, teaching staff must also offer insight, context, understanding (when things get tough), support, coaching and mentoring. It's a bigger and more complex brief and requires a variety of approaches, sometimes

English and maths teaching has to be resourced. Our approach is to ensure that it's everyone's responsibility

It's vital that teaching staff understand and are attuned to the same real world challenges faced by both students and businesses. If students are to have a line of sight to work, so too must teaching staff. It's far less about imparting knowledge than it is interrogating experience, reflecting on it, plundering the learning within it and using that to increase a learner's employability

Where our own practice is excellent, it is all too often in spite of the contradictory pressures around us rather than the result of the cosy and supportive environment within which we work.

Study programmes in reflecting the real world better help students prepare for it.



Overcoming the maths and **English struggle in the workplace**

of the highest levels of dyslexia, explains and beauty. Hilary Hall, and so study programmes' insistence on maths and English can be particularly troublesome.

he NHF is the UK's biggest trade association for more than 5,000 hairdressing, barbering and beauty salon owners. the industry's employers.

The sector is dominated by microbusinesses, 93 per cent employing fewer than

An apprenticeship is the most common route of entry into the profession and hairdressing is consistently among the top 10 'starts', with more than 16,000 entrants each

the NHF is co-ordinating the employer-led Trailblazer group which is developing the

Hairdressing is a sector that suffers one new-style apprenticeship standards for hair

National Hairdressers' Federation (NHF)

Of course, employers recognise that English and maths are useful skills. But in some industries other skills are at least as important. For hairdressing, creativity, strong social skills and customer service are key. Employers have to turn away young people who have the potential to become great hairdressers but who really struggle with maths or English and who can't therefore complete their apprenticeships with the required study programmes. And it doesn't help that hairdressing is an occupation which has one of the highest levels of dyslexia, according to Habia.

The government policy on Functional Skills has also made life difficult for the new Trailblazer standards. The employers wanted to set a 'salon-ready' standard which would have been closer to level three than level

two in order to cover the full range of skills a stylist or barber needs in the workplace. But if the standard was set at level three,

apprentices would then have to achieve Functional Skills at level two, making a level three apprenticeship unachievable for many.

So the Trailblazer group has had to compromise by setting the new standard at level two simply because of government policy on maths and English.

As it is, learners on a level two apprenticeship in hair or beauty will have to requires — and the key to teaching that is study for and take the Functional Skills tests at level two, whether or not they are able to pass them. And how motivating is that for the learners who are likely to fail?

Employers are also reporting a real shortage of young people leaving school at 16 colours, or percentages when calculating because they're staying on at school or going to college rather than going straight into an apprenticeship

Young people who don't have the necessary grade C GCSEs in maths and English may not be aware that apprenticeships also include maths and English — so they don't need to stay on at school or college to achieve them

It's difficult for schools to provide young people with good careers advice and information on apprenticeships. After all, teachers have all had first-hand experience of the academic route to get into education in the first place so they have little understanding of the vocational options.

including apprenticeships, which they tend to regard as a 'second-best' route for those who can't get into university.

But for some industries — and hairdressing is one of them — the best route is to start an apprenticeship at 16 because young people will get practical, real-life experience of working in a salon.

On properly taught study programmes, they can also use the chance to gain the maths and English skills the government

Maths is so much more accessible when it's contextualised in the way that key skills were - learners can more readily understand ratios when it comes to mixing commissions, for example, A good understanding of the industry helps to bring maths and English to life.

Our members tell us that with good resources and delivered in a context where learners can see the relevance, it's fantastic to hear people saying that they've understood a concept for the very first time — and getting learners over those barriers is something we should all aim for.

Apprenticeships have to be properly promoted as the best preparation for a career in hairdressing or barbering — and learners can also master maths and English at the same time if these skills are delivered in a relevant and meaningful context

Management at King's College London Bringing coherence to

16 to 19 education

to the 16 to 19 education system. Professor Alison Wolf explains how.

ou can have an education system that actually educates. Or you can have one that mostly just qualifies and labels

You can manage an education system in ways that encourage staff to focus on their

Or you can create one where the main incentive is to placate government officials. one which encourages people to get gold stars on performance management metrics and league tables in any way possible.

Gradually and inexorably, for many years, 16 to 19 education in England tipped further and further towards qualifying at the expense of educating.

Providers staved solvent by amassing more and more qualifications. Nothing else mattered. Worse, these qualifications all had to be passed: low pass rates pretty much into play in spite of the system, not because

The system rewarded you if students were entered only for things they could pass easily. It rewarded you if absolutely everything they did had a formal certificate attached, with all the associated costs, even though many of these had no labour marke value. Anything else was an expensive

Many people, including me, criticised this system. By 2010, when I was invited to report to the government on vocational education, England had, in my view. destroyed any incentives for teachers or managers to think about 16 to 19-year-olds studies in a broad holistic way. Indeed, the funding and accountability system pushed schools and colleges in the opposite

Government regulations in effect demanded the piling up of separate. and separately funded certificates: any cohesion, any over-arching principles came in favour of a secure income and plenty of league table 'points'. One of the worst and most glaring

results was the wholesale abandonment of maths and English GCSE for this age group. Good grades in these subjects are valued enormously by the labour market, a prerequisite for large numbers of good jobs and top apprenticeships. They are demanded for entry into high-value higher education degrees

Longitudinal studies of young people confirm the growing importance of these skills in modern life. And vet successive governments created a system in which hardly any of the young people without a GCSE at A* to C at age 16 were ever offered the chance to retake and acquire them.

The bizarre way in which we were running 16 to 19 education was unique to this country

The bizarre way in which we were running 16 to 19 education was unique to this country. When I reported to the government, in 2011, I strongly recommended a fundamental change. I was delighted when they agreed not just to move the better.

coherent overall programme of study.

Obviously, change is likely to be uneven, and certain to take time. But it seems clear that already more students are on full post-16 programmes, getting more organised study and work experience over longer periods of time. More are studying maths and English and acquiring the skills that higher education and employers all

achieved in terms of providing work experience is hugely impressive. I remain convinced that this change was the right one, and convinced that what is happening, across the FE sector, is a major change for

Ofsted takes dim early view on new 16 to 19 performance

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Providers have struggled to meet the new requirements of study programmes. according to Ofsted director for FE and skills Lorna Fitzjohn (pictured).

She made the comments launching a report (picture inset) based on a survey during the first six months of the programmes, at Spotlight youth centre in Poplar, East London, last month.

She said: "The 16 to 19 study programmes, introduced on August 1 last year, were developed to provide a step change in provision for all young people.

"All learners aged 16 to 19 should now be on individualised programmes that support their progression to their next planned step, be it further or higher education. training or employment.

"Study programmes were primarily set up in response to Professor Alison Wolf's report on vocational training

"Her main concern was the high number of learners achieving low-level vocational qualifications that did little to support their

But, she added: "Inspectors found little evidence of the transformational step change intended in the schools, academies, and FE and skills providers sampled.

"Too many of these providers had not changed what they offered sufficiently; they were not yet offering programmes that met the pre-requirements of the study programmes I've just outlined.

"In particular, we were concerned that too many learners were not progressing to a higher level of study to meet their educational potential or career aspiration, particularly on those at level one and two programmes.

"Most of the providers didn't use work experience effectively, the inspectors also found that the introduction of these programmes had disappointingly led to little change to level three programmes."

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "The report shows positive early signs that schools and colleges are entering young people for more rigorous qualifications. In fact, the latest figures show that the numbers of those

Selected auotes from Ofsted chief inspector's

requiring all young people to stay on in

age of 18 is undoubtedly a good one. No-

— and it is a big nevertheless — the

gap between the good intentions of

one would argue with that. Nevertheless

full-time education and training until the

address at Spotlight youth centre in Poplar,

The principle behind legislation

over the age of 17 taking GCSEs in English

student."

government policy in relation to this group and the reality of what is happening on the ground, is worryingly

at the moment is that too many of our young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who want to follow vocational pathways, are not yet being well-served by these [16] to 19 study] programmes.

As chief inspector, I am very concerned. Concerned that too many young people drop out of their post-16 education and training course at too

But there were, according to Ms Fitzjohn, pockets of success on study programmes. "I hasten to add that some of the schools

and providers proved it was possible to transform their provision successfully."

"We plan to use our evidence, and perhaps further visits, to develop good practice case studies of the work, and in particular the study programmes of these providers were generally characterised by a thorough review of the curriculum.

"The most effective programmes integrated English and maths well, and

Too few young people have the opportunity to do extended, meaningful

Too few students make sufficient progress at improving their skills in English and maths because the teaching they receive is simply not good enough.

cent of youngsters who don't get their GCSE at grade C in English and maths at 16 fail to achieve these grades at 19.

that education and training is not

account of this report's findings. "It also urges all FE and skills providers,

offered external work experience for all

for Education works with other

learners at some stage of their programme.

government departments and agencies to

ensure that all providers implement the

study programme quickly and take full

"The report recommends the Department

as well as schools and academies with post-16 provision, to identify a senior leader who is accountable for the full implementation of the requirements of the programmes."

work. Many employers complain that far too many young people looking for work have not been taught the skills, attitudes and behaviours they need to be successful in the world of work — and what does this actually mean on the ground? It means they have a sloppy

is far too high and it is in everyone's receive the very best education and training to improve the situation. And the consequences, if we don't get this right, are too serious to ignore.

Minister poses the English and maths question

Skills Minister Nick Boles (picture) may be just four months into the role. but study programmes have already introduced themselves to his workload.

In an exclusive interview with FE Week reporter Freddie Whittaker, Mr Boles revealed his firm belief that English and maths would become even more essential for young people looking to enter the jobs market of the future.

What are your priorities?

The bit that I'm particularly focused on is English and maths. We haven't got very much time left in government. You know as well as I do that the last year before an election everyone becomes increasingly distracted by the campaign, so I have said to officials here I want to focus on apprenticeships, traineeships, English and maths.

Why focus on English and maths?

English and maths is critical, hence what I have said about Functional Skills. If you can't speak, read and write English and you can't do maths to at least a basic GCSE level, every door in life is closed to you. If that's true now, it's going to be four times as true in 10 years' time. Everything is going to require a level of literacy because of the nature of technology.

Is an English and maths requirement realistic?

Introducing a requirement for English and maths to be at the core of every student's study programme if they haven't already got their C in GCSE is absolutely the right thing to do. But it's not enough just to say, 'you've got to get English and maths?' We have to ask why it didn't work last time and what might make it more likely to work

While I think the people who just missed out on their C, it's reasonable to think they should have another crack, but for those people who really just properly failed it. I think we do have a responsibility to say 'are we likely to get a different result if we just put them through the same merry-goround again?'

Can Functional Skills play a part?

I think Functional Skills have shown that sometimes there are different ways of engaging the mind, but there does seem to be a lack of consistency within them, which is not that surprising given that it was a relatively new qualification. There is a lack of consistency but I also think there isn't a great brand.

I'm afraid to some extent this is almost more demanding to FE colleges than if we were just saying 'we want you get ready to teach people to retake GCSEs'. But on the other hand I hope that it's more in-

tune with their own knowledge of their students, which is that they need different approaches.

I think other questions on the study programmes are reasonable, but that's the one I'm laser-focused on.

Is it realistic to expect providers to cope with the increased maths and English teaching load?

One of the first questions is working out, is it bursaries? Is it golden hellos? Is it that awful phrase CPD? The question is which

one of those things is it? One of the things I'm particularly keen to in a sense ask the question about is whether it's actually about outsourcing this to online providers, specialist providers. A lot of big companies have schemes. McDonald's has a scheme which is quite well thought-of.

Actually, rather than every FE college trying to get all of its teachers who are already teaching quite a lot of things to also teach English and maths to a GCSE standard. Maybe it would be easier for them to outsource it. I don't think we

should be prescribing a solution but we should be exploring lots of different

What are your thoughts on the Ofsted criticism surrounding study programmes?

I accept in a sense the Ofsted criticism. It is a relatively new requirement, I would be slightly astonished if everybody had just been able to do it, but we clearly need to do a lot more work on getting everybody in a position to fulfil it.



and maths are rising, giving thousands more the vital knowledge and skills demanded by employers. "Following Professor Alison Wolf's ground-breaking review of vocational education we have scrapped thousands

of low-quality qualifications so that only the gold-standard, employer-valued courses remain. And providers are now incentivised to ensure young people study valuable courses after we changed post-16 funding from per-qualification to per-

The simple truth of what's happening

and relevant work experience.

Again, it's quite shocking that 84 per

Above all, I'm particularly concerned preparing young people well enough for

attitude to punctuality. Youth unemployment in our country interest to make sure that young people

ncfe.

an offer that fits the bill.

For 2014 we've got an offer that really fits the bill!



At NCFE we pride ourselves on being able to offer a complete Study Programme solution. With our range of maths and English qualifications, our mix of work experience elements and the role of additional vocational qualifications to support the career path of the learner – we feel we have

something to make everyone's programme of study unique to them.

And now with **15% discount** available on our Study programme package there's even more reason to make the switch to NCFE.



Choose an NCFE qualification from our range of Entry to the
Uniformed Services, Photography, Sport, 14 available pathways in Skills
for Business and our full suite of Renewable Energy Engineering



Choose from our selection of vocational qualifications online at ncfe.org.uk



Choose any (or a range) of Awards in maths and English

And that's it! - Your **15% discount*** will be calculated off the total price.

well that's not everything...

We'll also offer a **Free External Moderation Bespoke Training Day** (listed price @ £675 for 10 staff)

for all centres who are spending over £10K on their

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TONI PEARCE

Too much pressure on providers?

Study programmes are billed as having put learners at the centre of funding requirements, rather than qualifications. Toni Pearce provides a learner perspective on the move.

nince September 2013, FE providers have experience if they prefer. been offering every student aged 16 to 19 a Study Programme based on their prior attainment

One of the major challenges of this policy is that students must continue to study English and maths at GCSE level if they don't already have a grade C, whether they are doing A-levels or a vocational

Let's start with the positives on this the funding for these programmes is now allocated per student, rather than based around the type of qualification being

This change to funding per student is

incredibly positive as students can take more challenging qualifications without fear that failure will affect the funding available to them.

It also means they can take fewer qualifications and spend time on work

While we agree with the sentiment of the policy's purpose, we don't believe that this is a realistic aim for many students. Almost 50 per cent of students fail to achieve a grade C in both of these subjects.

This means that the study programme policy puts huge pressure on providers to supply many more English and maths teachers and classes to help meet this imposed demand

Statistics also show that young people who have at 16 failed these subjects at GCSE rarely respond well to re-sitting the qualification post-16, and that there is a high failure rate here.

For example, traditional methods of teaching maths in a classroom-based setting clearly don't work for a significant number of young people, and forcing them to repeat the experience at level three is hugely

Lots of young people find maths to be entirely abstract, and struggle with motivating themselves to study it. Furthermore, their parents or carers may have struggled with maths at school, and some young people may be affected adversely by this

The study programme policy puts huge pressure on providers

It could be argued that these students would be better placed taking part in the Functional Skills provision, the essential skills needed for English, maths and ICT, which are vital for young people and adults to participate in life, learning and work.

This programme is a prime example of where student input in curriculum design will drive up quality and drive down

duplication of learning

However, the NUS would like to see more work-based learning. We believe that supporting the development and promotion of vocational education is integral to our future education and skills, and that this should be developed so as to be well integrated into the rest of our tertiary education system.

Maths and English learned entirely 'on the job' could be built into the compulsory work experience or work-based learning component of a level three programme.

We would ideally like to see a new level two qualification focussed wholly on 'applied' maths, focussing on problem-based learning and project work.

Another solution to explore would be to see how some school funding could be used to up-skill parents to help bridge the gap.

Schools could work with adult education providers to deliver courses designed to improve parents' confidence in English and maths which could then be passed on.

Vocational study and apprenticeships often aren't viewed with the same esteem as other routes of education.

Further education supports so many different types of students, with different backgrounds, different levels of ability and different needs, so it's time we raised the esteem of vocational qualifications and stopped expecting all of our students to learn the same things in the same way.

But we realise that this is only part of

to the improvement a student makes during their course creates a penalty for institutions who recruit students without GCSE maths or English. The additional funding made available by

the Education Funding Agency of £480 does not really compensate. GCSE results are not confirmed until the fourth week in August and colleges find themselves dealing with unpredictable numbers of post-16 maths and English students. They need better information from schools about which students will need extra support.

While study programmes have been

seen as tackling problems with literacy

and numeracy, they have also impacted

on the sector in ways that had not been

Leaders of sector bodies outline these

rovisional figures from our September

2014 enrolment survey suggest that

18-year-old students in FE colleges do not

percentage do not have GCSE English.

low levels of achievement in feeder

admissions.

iudgement about

whether a student can

achieve a GCSE in one

or two years, when they

have not been successful

teaching. Some students

after 11 years of school

will be on the cusp of a

C, others will not.

competitive nature

of recruitment of 16

to 18-year-olds and

performance tables or

Ofsted to give weight

the failure of the

The highly

The proportion of students in some

colleges is as high as 70 per cent, reflecting

schools and the inclusive nature of college

Colleges understand the credibility of a

GCSE in maths and English, but their staff

need to be able to exercise professional

have GCSE maths at grades A*-C. A similar

45 per cent of the new intake of 16 to

The unpredictable nature of GCSE assessment in 2014, particularly in English, is a problem in terms

of planning the post-16 curriculum A related issue is

the knock-on effect of admission decisions in other institutions. Some schools and academies make possession of grade C in maths and English a pre-condition of staying in their sixth form and a few sixth form colleges have

This means an increase in the number of students coming to college without these

LOST IN IMPLEMENTATION — UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF STUDY PROGRAMME REFORMS

Current English and maths GCSEs cannot be taught in a vocational context and the AoC is calling on the government to do more research into countries which perform better with 16 to 18-year-olds to see where England could improve.

Joy Mercer, senior policy manager for **Quality and Assurance**

he recent letter from Skills Minister Nick Boles to Ofqual in which he reinforced the position of Functional Skills was a welcome recognition at a ministerial level that GCSE isn't an appropriate course for all students.

Ofsted's survey report on study programmes perhaps didn't give enough recognition to Functional Skills, and the

present plans for future performance tables don't seem to either.

Schools will do their utmost to wring every last drop of attainment from students when it comes to GCSE maths and English, with the minimal funding available to Colleges they shouldn't be expected to magically transform the GCSE attainment of young people in the year after key stage four.

Stephan Jungnitz, colleges specialist for the Association of School and College

lmost uniformly, despite what party conference rhetoric might lead us to believe, political reform begins with benign intentions. This is particularly true of education, where all of the major parties see improving standards as central to their

programmes, these positive intentions can be easily lost in implementation. Statistics

> Colleges' Association demonstrate what 157 Group members have been reporting informally, that the maths and English requirement of study programmes is dissuading school sixth forms from taking on learners without a GCSE at grade C or above in English or

What was designed itself as a policy to iron out the unintended consequences of the previous system, where funding arrangements and performance tables were seen to be deterring schools and colleges from offering programmes with sufficient challenge for learners, has now manifested its own negative potential. We have replaced one set of unintended consequences with

Targets do not just measure outcomes they drive behaviour, and as the initial impact of the study

Andy Gannor

programmes policy has demonstrated still further that behaviour will not always match the expectations of policy makers. Allying the

English and maths requirements so soon to funding has changed what should be a mood of collaboration, where all institutions work together to ensure they are best placed

to deliver what each learner needs, into immediate competition, with some learners simply cast out by one institution with no clear idea of what else they might do.

While policy makers continue to pursue rapid change in the name of improvement. we will continue to witness behaviours which need not have occurred. The upcoming implementation of destinations based success measures for instance has the potential to be similarly enriching as well as hugely damaging.

Policy changes. be given the time and improve. People need to understand the rationale behind the change, as well as its immediate consequences. Only to stability and a recognition that targets

alone will not drive improvement will al Andy Gannon, director of policy, PR and research, 157 Group

t seems that more and more schools and colleges are setting entry requirements

and maths and they either do not have

the capacity or fear that it will affect their As a result, some independent training

providers and colleges are seeing an increase in young people needing this support.

Independent training providers have always built programmes around English and maths as they have been part of core work-based learning programmes, like apprenticeships, for many years.

There is a real challenge to build English

and maths training into complex workbased programmes, but providers continue to be flexible about the way that Functional Skills are delivered in a variety of classroom and workplace locations.

> mean some providers will need additional funding to provide these programmes and the contracting system

However, this will

must be responsive

We have to make sure that programmes such as traineeships and apprenticeships do not have entry requirements so that young people that have been failed by the school system have a chance to get the basic skills

The government should set an example and remove any plans for an entry requirement of GCSE English and maths for the Early Years programmes.

> There is a belief that the outcome of the new Ofqual inquiry into functional skills will be welcome because the sector knows we need to improve the understanding of these qualifications and improve the teaching and support of learners

> > We have to get to the stage where Functional Skills are seen as an equal qualification to GCSEs which means

we may have to look at the core content to ensure it meets employers' needs and to look at all of the issues that will improve the understanding of the qualification. If we are to build the credibility of functional maths and English, we have to ensure that they are not seen as a second rate option. That means we have to stop calling them 'stepping stone' qualifications and be clear to employers that they are a real alternative to GCSE

Stewart Segal, chief executive, Association of Employment and **Learning Providers**



Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM)

Meeting the maths demand

Among those to applaud the policy of getting post-16 learners up to standard on maths was the NCETM, but, as Stave McCormack explains, it came with an appreciation of the scale of the job ahead.

t the NCETM, we welcome the requirement that post-16 students who haven't yet netted a grade C or above in GCSE maths should continue to study towards that goal at whatever college or training provider they're attending.

It chimes with our belief, and the research evidence, that this threshold of maths competency is so important for progress in further and higher education. and the workplace that, to allow older teenagers to turn down a second chance to achieve it is doing them no favours at all.

But, when this requirement was introduced we did not applaud it with our

We realised it implied a substantial and sharp increase in the maths teaching capacity that colleges and providers in the sector were expected to provide

And we knew that, from a standing start, to find a couple of thousand or more teachers capable of teaching GCSE maths would be no trifling task.

So, a year or so ago, we developed a programme to support those teachers about to embark on teaching GCSE maths.

These were not people learning about maths teaching from scratch. Their qualifications and existing teaching roles included some elements of numeracy and maths — perhaps linked to business or computing, perhaps to basic skills.

But some needed their qualifications enhancing and all needed their mathsteaching skills enhancing. This programm is called the Maths Enhancement Programme (MEP) and, in order to reach a large number of teachers as quickly as possible, we also trained up 80 new professional development leads, so that they could go out and run the enhancement programme for teachers, trainers and

lecturers in the FE and skills sector, equipping them to start teaching GCSE

And, working alongside the Association of Centres of Excellence in Teacher Training (Acett) and with financial support from the Education and Training Foundation, we played our part in getting 2,200 people through the MEP.

Job done, then? Nope.

This feat, great success story though it is. only the start.

First, these teachers have only this term started teaching GSCE maths. They're doing something new and, in all probability, feeling their way a little

We knew that, from a standing start, to find a couple of thousand or more teachers capable of teaching **GCSE** maths would be no trifling task

Let's not forget, also, that their students may not be in the most motivated frame of minds, perceiving themselves as having failed, because they have not yet attained the C Grade they were told unlocked doors. The teachers will need ongoing support

from their managers, and ongoing access to the maths-specific advice and guidance from colleagues, ideally at their place of work, but, where this doesn't exist, through other networking arrangements. We at the NCETM stand ready to help facilitate that as much as we can.

the bigger picture. We know from our own subject specialists or not, need access to other professionals

We learn increasingly of providers with excellent practice in supporting maths teaching and of organisations, such as some of the holders of the NCETM CPD Standard, who provide high quality, tailored support for teachers, but there are still too many teachers who do not have access to such support, perhaps because they are the only person teaching maths in their organisation or because their needs are not understood.

need to repeat the enhancement programme year on year, and support every cohort with above paragraph.

But let's be positive. A significant start

experience, and from working with partners in the field, that teachers of maths, whether support and opportunities for working with

A crucial part of our work is to collaborate with others in the field to provide coherent opportunities for teachers of mathematics to continue their professional learning and to learn from each other.

And, given natural rates of churn, we'll exercise, perhaps with smaller numbers, the 'after-sales service' described in the

has been made. We just have to build on it.





learners be able to expect a world-class experience from our education system.

for their courses. This is normally

requiring A to C GCSE English and maths. This is a reaction to the fact that those schools and colleges have to teach English



Study programmes 'not adequately funded' and 'in need of better design'

Almost 100 respondents gave their views on study programmes in a flash survey carried out by FE Week.

Six simple questions on the issue were posed, including has your experience of study programmes been positive, negative or neither; are study programmes adequately funded; and could study programmes better designed?

There was also a question on whether engaging and teaching learners who don't already have their GCSEs in English and maths had been problematic; and whether providers have taken on extra teaching staff for English and maths.

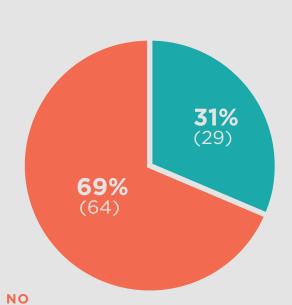
The final question asks simply 'do you expect study programmes to be around in 10 years' - and the answer suggests that many might believe FE Week will have to produce another supplement

on a successor system within a decade.

Along with a percentage breakdown of the results (with actual response figures in backets). a number of in-depth responses are also featured, providing key insights into what is happening 'on the ground' in the FE and skills sector in reaction to the implementation of study programmes.

The 24-hour survey opened on October 14 and elicited 93 responses.

Are study programmes adequately funded?



MIS co-ordinator at an independent

learning provider

We're a small training provider working with young people who have hectic lives (pregnant / voung mums).

Study programme funding is thoroughly skewed towards big colleges who can expect large learner

College, vice principal - curriculum

But still not a fair playing field - deprivation and starting points are still not fully taken into account

Graham Taylor, principal, New College Swindon

But won't be when 450 hrs becomes 540 next year (c20% gain in productivity) for the same income

NO

John McCollah, operations director, The Vocational College

A more realistic bursary allocation is desperately needed as providers are soaking up the additional costs in order to maintain occupancy levels

cohorts who can dedicate themselves to fulltime study. Organisations working with learners who are harder to reach and are less likely to devote so much time to learning will not be able to devise study programmes that attract the bigger rates and will often find themselves the wrong side of the funding band "cliff edges"

YES

Mike Shaw, vice principal - quality and curriculum. Hereward College

Think they have enough flexibility in them, however, the maths and English component, particularly for those with a grade D expected to take GCSE is most definitely a looming issue

Geoff Mount, head of operations,

Yes and no. Guidance for providers could be so much clearer

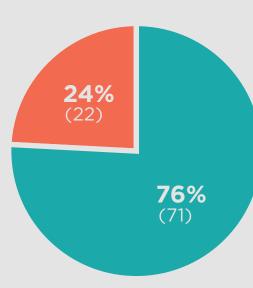
Contract data and performance manager

Lots of flexibility for providers to design their own programmes.

If they were designed by the funding body then this could be prohibitive to the individual learner

College principal

We have a lot of freedom to design them at the moment, but I don't expect this to survive many audits



Could study programmes be better designed?

Foundation team leader at independent learning provider

It seems although flexibility is the key word there are restrictions that have made it less flexible for multi-

Independent learning provider managing director

More clarity needed on expectation of qualifications and ability to run short, roll-on roll-off courses for

Also, ability to adapt programme for level one students if apparent they are on the wrong level or size of qual. Once committed to a full year main aim, they cannot change



Phil Hastie, vice principal, Stockton

There has been insignificant consideration to the different needs of different programmes, with A-levels and vocational programmes having vastly different experiences through the study programmethey cannot change



SOMEWHAT

93 people answered the survey

Has your experience of study programmes been:

NEITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE

College interim vice principal — curriculum

It has been a mixed blessing - we have control to put things together and yet harnessed by hours to be allocated

College head of division

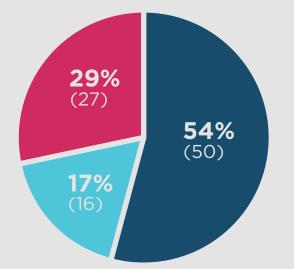
Implementation alongside the continued series and reforms and changes in the sector have placed staff and managers under pressure, again

NEGATIVE

Team leader/quality co-ordinator at an independent learning provider

Mainly because new information or changes to the guidance are not always shared effectively by the EFA.

Sometimes you go looking for one piece of information and find that a whole raft of changes



and new documents are available which we haven't been made aware of

Support has also been poor. At one point we were given incorrect information directly by the EFA and it was only because we had spent a lot of time going through the guidance we had that we were able to challenge what we were being told.

College employability manager

I manage the work experience team, finding placements for study programme students The opportunity for more students to undertake work experience has been beneficial for them and a learning curve for curriculum

Independent learning provider director

We have seen some excellent examples of welldesigned study programmes, placing the needs of the learner at the heart of the programme and ensuring they are developing the skills needed to $successfully\ progress-rather\ than\ accruing\ basic$ qualifications that mean nothing in the 'real' world

We really had to stick to our guns before they admitted that we were right and that they had misread their own guidance

College lecture

Core hours have been taken out of the level two programme to fund the maths and English

Has engaging and teaching learners who don't already have their GCSEs in English and maths been problematic?

Susan Popplewell, vice principal - learner pathway, Linkage College

The majority of our learners have not been on a GCSE programme.

We are taking advantage of the range of Functional Skills qualifications that have been developed in bite-sized chunks to enable our learners to progress in English and maths at a level and pace appropriate to their needs and abilities

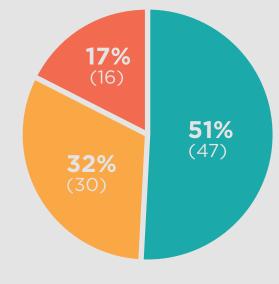
Chris Pritchard, managing director, JACE Training Ltd

We are in childcare and there is really no hope of us having grade C and above when the exams are only available by twice a year. I am writing to MP and SFA again

Sue Jones, head of learner journey, The Cornwall College Group

There has been no direct messaging to learners on why English and maths are vital to their future employability.

Some have had poor experiences pre-16 and come with a lack of confidence in these subjects



that puts them off taking them. We have tried to emphasise that post 16 experience will be different and support will be there for them and link to why you need these subjects in particular careers eg contextualise

Kevin Standish, deputy principal - curriculum and standards, East Surrey College

A few students have become NEET rather than re-take English.

Some parents have asked if they could opt-out of funding and pay a full cost fee to avoid the need for English or maths which have caused so much distress to some students

Paula Hayes, director, Training Plus Merseyside

We have had to outsource some of our English and maths to cope

Have you taken on extra teaching staff for English and maths?

NO

Independent learning provider pre-apprenticeship co-ordinato

Have had to manage with my existing staff as financial budget does not allow for more. However staff have been happy to embrace change and develop their own skills base

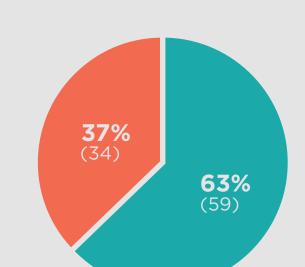
Angie Crowther, programme delivery manager, Independent Training Services

We already delivered GCSEs so no extra staff needed

Susan Popplewell, vice principal - learner pathway, Linkage College

We have been offering English and maths for all our learners anyway.

We do employ some multi-skilled lecturers who have taken up the challenge of delivering English and Maths. As the ability range of our learners is very wide, we do have smaller classes learning at different levels which eases the delivery somewhat



YES

College campus director

Only three but the quality of applicants is not great even with the SFA recruitment programme and funding.

We are training our existing staff to deliver GCSE but it takes time and results suffer in

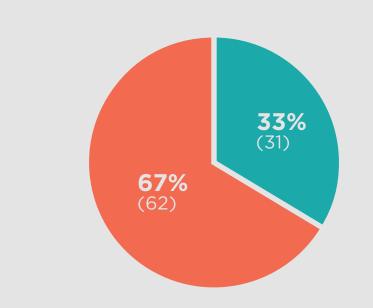
Sara Marshall, operations director, The TTE

Two new full-time staff and two learning support staff

Shelagh Legrave, principal, Chichester College

Yes, but we implemented the change last year so we have added two or three lecturers in each discipline as GCSE grades have dropped in local schools, but the larger recruitment drive was 12/13

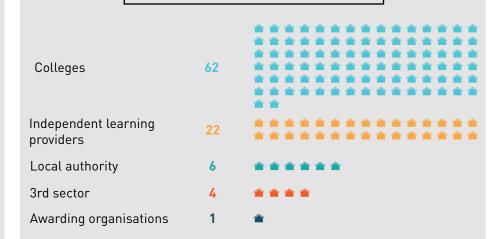
Do you expect study programmes to still be around in 10 years?



Who took part in the survey?



Where were they from?





BETH GARDNER

Coming to terms with work experience

Work experience is a key element of the study programme framework, but one that can also prove problematic, explains Beth Gardner.

hile implementation of much of the 16 to 19 study programmes package is going well, many providers are still struggling to come to terms with the requirements for the integration of meaningful work experience, with the aim of supporting young people to develop employability skills.

At a time when the British Chambers of Commerce lament the fact that young people are not ready for employment, due in the main to a lack of work experience; and the CBI is calling for young people to be better prepared for the world of work; demand for high quality, meaningful work experience has never been higher.

There is clearly a need for providers to improve their work experience programmes, with a recent Ofsted report finding that: 'Very few providers are able to arrange sufficient good-quality, work-related learning, including external placements with programme.

local employers, for all their learners'. So. why then are providers not accessing the tools available to them to assist with this?

The national Work Experience Quality Standard accreditation was created as a framework for development, to support both employers and providers of training to build a high quality and robust programme of work experience for young people. The framework covers setting up, implementing and evaluating work experience, as well as the organisational infrastructure required to support this.

Fair Train developed the accreditation along with a group of providers and employers who wanted a tool specifically for providers and employers.

Fair Train was also assisted by both the Department for Education and Ofsted, who provided support to the steering group as

Organisations demonstrating that they meet the standard are likely to attract the very best and most talented young people, who will be reassured that they will receive an excellent, well-structured training

To those providers looking to establish a high quality work experience programme as part of their Study Programme implementation, the accreditation provides an obvious solution to the issue of quality

Not only does achieving the standard provide an external validation of the quality of their own programme in-house, many providers are now expecting those employers with whom they work to obtain the accreditation, as part of their due diligence

The standard recognises those organisations which offer high quality work experience and manage risk effectively,

There is clearly need for providers to improve their work experience programmes

and the external verification means that providers have the confidence to monitor their own work experience programme.

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College was one of the first adopters of the Work Experience Quality Standard. Martin Shelton, the vice principal told me introducing the standard has enabled the college to ensure its approach and due diligence was consistent, robust and that all learners enjoyed an excellent experience of valuable placement opportunities

For the college, work experience is an element of a wider Teaching and Learning Strategy and is absolutely key in supporting the development of employability skills by working in a collaborative way with employers and learners.

The Work Experience Quality Standard ensured they provide the highest quality service against a clearly defined set of criteria by which we can assess our performance, the progression of learners and their conversion into sustainable employment.

Monitoring the sheer breadth of employers offering work experience placements can be overwhelming for any provider. In the recent report. Ofsted highlighted school and academy leaders in particular were unaware of the full extent of the requirements of the study programmes, citing that implementation was generally too slow in these types of institutions.

Having worked with a variety of providers and employers, Fair Train is able to provide advice and guidance to those providers keen to develop their own provision in line with the new requirements.

Throughout our audit process, we have gathered a wide range of good practice from across the sector, which can be used to support providers to create flexible and tailored solutions to suit the particular needs of their own students.



DAVID MASSEY

Employment and Skills (UKCES)

Making study programmes work

David Massey looks at the hurdles providers face in organising work experience for learners.

■ he shift to study programmes based around substantial qualifications with a focus on English and maths is a welcome move that should significantly improve young people's chances of employment.

However, while literacy and numeracy are 18-year-old school leavers, with 4 per obviously important, improvements in these alone will not achieve the change we need.

More and better work experience is the key that will unlock opportunities for young will have noticed, employers are generally people.

Here at UKCES, we gather extremely comprehensive data on employer attitudes to

We ask employers who have recruited young people what they think of them.

Happily, most find their youngest employees well or very well prepared for

But where this isn't the case, the main

thing lacking isn't knowledge or skills — it's experience.

Of employers who've taken on a 17 to 18-year-old college leaver, the share who bemoan poor literacy and numeracy skills is just 2 per cent, but the share citing lack of experience is seven times greater at 14 per

A similar picture applies to 17 to cent complaining about poor literacy or numeracy and 18 per cent poor experience (an aside — as I'm sure FE Week readers happier with college leavers than school leavers of the same age).

UKCES surveys have consistently found work experience to be key in recruitment.

Indeed, it's often the first thing that employers look for. And because young people are less likely to have this, they are at a disadvantage in the labour market.

For this reason, it was disappointing to read the Ofsted's recent review of study

programmes, with the findings on work experience particularly stark.

It seems that across different levels and types of programmes, work experience is just not given the prominence it deserves.

But it is unfair to just blame schools, colleges and training providers, as it is not in their gift alone to make work experience happen.

Employers must be ready, willing and able to step up. Our data tells us that while the majority of employers think work experience is vital when recruiting, only a small minority actually offer it.

Until this dissonance ends, we're unlikely to make progress on study programmes.

It was disappointing to read Ofsted's recent review of study programmes

A lack of clear, simple brokerage doesn't help — in some parts of the country. Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) are still active, while in others, charities and the third sector step in, the form of Business in the Community or MyKindaCrowd, for

But brokerage is not essential, and some

of the best work experience partnerships are formed locally with no third-party

The most successful approaches are those that recognise what the barriers might be. and which seek to actively address them.

Again, UKCES research can help. Our surveys show that for some employers, a simple lack of time and resource prevents them offering work experience, while others say no one (a school or college for example) has asked them (on this latter point, the proportion of employers saving no one's asked has fallen, suggesting that providers are being more proactive).

However, the main reason given by employers for not providing work experience is that they don't have suitable roles.

Unpacking this, it appears that some employers believe work experience is something done by 14-year-olds for a week in the summer. They do not understand that policy has changed, and that work experience doesn't have to mean 14-yearolds, and can be much broader than a week's placement

For many employers, having older learners, for example 17-year-olds, in the workplace may be a more appealing

Restrictions for under-16s don't apply and as some placements will be towards the end of the course there's a real possibility that employers can use work experience to "try before you buy" when they recruit.

ncfe.

the complete package.

We know when it comes to the Study Programme a structured programme of learning must be in place for 16-19 learners, which should consist of a substantial qualification, English, maths and work experience.

We understand that for our customers, meeting learners' needs and providing them with tailored programmes of study, as well as great progression routes is crucial. This is why NCFE has developed a complete package – from a range of substantial qualifications, to maths and English units to work experience elements!

Our customers are also able to access the 15% discount available when they register for the whole Study Programme offer.

Don't miss out, book an appointment with one of our local Business Development Officers today by emailing switching@ncfe.org.uk or calling 0191 239 8003.

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