

Personal information

1 – *What is your name?* Jan Ellis

2 – *What is your email address?*

3 – *What is your role, or in what capacity are you responding?*

Drop down menu – selected ‘on behalf of an organisation

4 – *If you are responding on behalf of an organisation please tell us the full name of your organisation, and what type of organisation it is?*

The CDI (Career Development Institute) is the single UK-wide professional body for everyone working in the fields of career education; career information, advice and guidance; career coaching, career consultancy and career management. It has almost 5,000 members

5 – *Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?* No

Making level 2 programmes more effective at supporting 16 to 19 year olds to progress to level 3

6. *Would a new form of transition programme be the best way to support progression for 16 to 19 year olds who want to take a level 3 but are not quite ready to progress and do not plan to take a T Level?*

Figure 3, (Post -16 level 2 and below study and qualifications in England, p.22) suggests the inclusion of a post-16 transition year to enable future progression to a level 3 studies or level 2 employment. One approach would be to offer greater flexibility over the period of study to attain a level 3 and where appropriate extend it beyond two years (with funding). This would provide opportunity to embed and build on level 2 learning offering a clear outcome from the beginning that supports a sense of progression rather than a sense of remedial learning that can reduce student motivation. An example of evidence-based practice would be a ‘foundation year’ with progression to a degree programme offered by HEIs.

7. *Do you have evidence of existing effective practice in the design of study programmes to support 16 to 19 year old student progression to level 3?*

Yes. Where schools and colleges have incorporated careers education and guidance within the design of study programmes (e.g. those holding the Quality in Careers Standard – see <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/>) young people have demonstrated increased levels of motivation and commitment to learning, and higher levels of attainment. Also, this practice supports more meaningful and sustainable engagement with employers.

8. Which elements should be included in a new form of transition programme to address barriers to progression to level 3?

The provision of careers education and guidance should be a central element of all forms of transition programmes. Integral to the programme should be personal guidance from a professionally qualified careers adviser. Research evidences that personal guidance with a qualified careers professional enables young people to explore barriers, identify solutions and move forward with their career plans, thereby offering an excellent return on investment (<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research/personal-guidance-english-secondary-education-initial-return-investment-estimate>).

Gatsby Benchmark 8 states that personal guidance is critical in helping students assimilate and make sense of what they have learned. All students are expected to have had at least one 1:1 personal guidance interview by age 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by age 18.

Only a careers adviser holding a minimum of a 60 credit qualification at Level 6 or above in career guidance/development and Registered with the Career Development Institute (and thus adhering to a professional Code of Ethics) should be employed to fulfil this Benchmark.

This is because they will have the requisite training in career guidance theory, labour market information and guidance skills to help students evaluate the myriad options and progression routes facing them and come to a better-informed conclusion regarding which option is right for them.

Careers Advisers are also adept in doing assembly talks, running group work sessions, delivering webinars and much else besides

(https://www.thecdi.net/write/Framework/143297_CDI_Booklets.pdf).

Improving outcomes for students who enter employment following level 2 study: Questions for employers

9. Are there employment opportunities in your industry, additional to those on the occupational maps, for students qualified at level 2?

Within the careers sector there are supporting administrative roles. However in the main, employment and training advisers are qualified to level 4 and career professionals are qualified at level 6 or higher.

10. Alongside apprenticeships, are classroom-based alternatives at level 2 necessary in your industry?

N/A

Improving outcomes for students who enter employment following level 2 study: Question for employers and providers

11. Where level 2 classroom based study leads to employment, our starting point is that it should be aligned with employer-led standards. What further actions can we take to ensure that, as far as possible, classroom-based qualifications hold the same value in the labour market as apprenticeships and that they work alongside each other effectively?

For classroom based qualifications that lead to employment to hold the same value in the labour market as apprenticeships they need to provide opportunity to evidence occupational competence through work experience and work-based assessment. This is especially important during times of recession when employers are less able to provide paid employment with training.

Improving outcomes for students who enter employment following level 2 study: Questions for providers

12. What evidence can you provide of existing effective practice in the design of level 2 classroom-based study and qualifications to support students to enter employment?

Where schools and colleges have incorporated careers education and guidance (e.g. employer engagement) within the design of study programmes (e.g. those holding the Quality in Careers Standard) young people have demonstrated increased levels of career readiness - higher

levels of resilience and self-confidence and work-related/employability skills (e.g. communication skills, problem solving, self-organisation and team work).

13. Where level 2 classroom-based study leads to employment, our starting point is that it should be aligned with employer-led standards. Which types of level 2 classroom-based study leading to employment would this not be suitable for?

Care should be taken to ensure that study aligned with employer-led standards does not inhibit the future progress of students who have yet to develop their vocational identity and have little knowledge or understanding of new or developing labour market opportunities and occupations.

Any level 2 class-room based study leading to employment should extend beyond meeting employer-led standards, to consideration of societal values and citizenship, and economic independence (e.g. management of personal finances).

Level 2 study that supports adults in employment to upskill

14. How useful are level 2 qualifications for the purpose of upskilling adults in employment?

Opportunity to attain a qualification at level 2 can provide focus alongside a sense of achievement. This may be particularly important where adults have been out of the labour market for some time and lack the skills and confidence to progress. These qualifications evidence levels of competence and are especially important in demonstrating the acquisition of new knowledge and skills to meet sector developments or change of occupation.

15. Does level 2 study play a role in supporting adults in employment to progress to level 3 qualifications?

Yes, studies at level 2 can provide the foundation of knowledge and skills that underpin the learning at level 3, as well as provide the necessary self-confidence and skills development to progress further. For the employer, evidence of a stepped approach demonstrates continuing application and commitment to learning and personal development – characteristics valued in the workplace.

Effective level 1 and entry level study for 16 to 19 year olds

16. What are the main factors providers consider when deciding whether a student should start at entry level rather than level 1?

Main factors to consider would be the student's level of competence and ability, taking into account their own assessment of self and that of parents/carers and other professionals (e.g. tutors, SENCO).

17. How do providers define good outcomes for 16 to 19 year olds studying at entry level?

- How do you define good outcomes?

A good outcome would be meeting learning outcomes that are clearly defined and achievable, plus the student having a sense of achievement and progression alongside greater personal independence.

- Which features are most effective in achieving these good outcomes?

The outcomes need to be clear to all parties at the start, with agreed milestones to provide opportunity to assess review progress, with additional support available if needed. Offering a

flexible, albeit structured, approach to learning and recognition of distance travelled. There should also be clarity around career pathways and opportunity for future progression (with funding).

18. What are the main factors providers consider when deciding whether a student should begin study at level 1 rather than level 2?

Main factors to consider would be the student's level of competence and ability, taking into account their own assessment of self and that of parents/carers and other professionals (e.g. tutors). There should also be clarity around career pathways and opportunity for future progression (with funding).

19. How do providers define good outcomes for 16 to 19 year olds

- How do you define good outcomes?

A good outcome would be active engagement and meeting learning outcomes that are clearly defined and achievable, plus the student having a sense of achievement and a progression plan.

- Which features are most effective in achieving these good outcomes?

These would include a supportive learning environment, a flexible, albeit structured approach, a range of learning resources and means of assessment, with work experience for vocational qualifications. Plus the provision of career guidance to enable an understanding of labour market and training opportunities, progression routes, and the relevance of the learning to career goals, supported by a career action plan.

Level 1 and entry level study for adults

20. How do providers deliver personal, social and employability skills to adults? N/A

- Is a qualification essential for this? YES

- Give reasons for your answer

There is less of a requirement for qualifications to evidence personal and social skills than employability skills. This is because employers seek evidence of applicants having certain skills at a standard, such as communication, personal organisation and planning, and team work, necessary for the occupational role.

For the adult, attaining a qualification provides evidence of progress and achievement and a readiness to progress to the next level.

21. How do providers deliver introductory vocational level 1 and entry level skills to adults? N/A

- Is a qualification essential for this? YES

- Give reasons for your answer

The provision of a qualification ensures the meeting of a minimum standard and equity across provision. In addition it evidences progress and attainment, and a readiness to progress to the next level.

Entry level qualifications (all age groups)

22. What are the benefits of having three sub-levels at entry level?

They offer greater inclusivity and a structured manageable progression route, thereby enabling the progress of students of all abilities to be recognised and valued. Structuring the learning across three stages with appropriate support at each level has enabled students with SEND to progress and succeed in attaining level two qualifications. This level of attainment should be regarded positively and not as 'over-representation'.

Personal, social and employability qualifications: Question for employers

23. When you are recruiting, do you value or recognise qualifications in employability, personal and social skills, or independent living? YES

- Give reasons for your answer

Personal, social skills and independent living should not be categorised as one. Any employer when recruiting expects the level of personal and social skills necessary to meet the occupational requirements, and these need not be evidenced by holding a qualification. However, independently of these, they will assess the applicant's employability skills where the required level of competence will vary more widely depending on the occupation and qualifications will play a larger part.

English and maths qualifications

24. Which students are GCSEs and FSQs not appropriate for, and why? - Please give reasons for your answer.

GCSEs are not appropriate for all students, especially those who have decided on vocational study because in the main they assess academic ability and focus less on vocational skills.

Functional skill qualifications are more appropriate to students engaging in vocational study because the content is more directly relevant to the development of vocational/employability skills.

For a minority of students with SEND neither GCSEs nor FSQs would be appropriate because they extend beyond the level of capability.

- What are the most effective features of alternative English and maths qualifications?

Effective features need to be considered in context. For example, a feature of GCSEs is that they provide a broad underpinning for all future learning (academic and vocational), whereas a feature of alternative qualifications, especially in English and maths, is the more direct focus on the development of skills and knowledge required in employment of a practical nature (e.g. craft and trades, technicians, health and social care).

25. Are the National Standards for Adult Literacy and Numeracy and the Adult English Literacy and Numeracy Core Curriculum still relevant for the English and maths qualifications that are available alongside GCSEs and FSQs? N/A

ESOL

26. Which features of ESOL qualifications are most effective in supporting students to progress to further learning or into employment? N/A

27. Are ESOL qualifications at levels 1 and 2 necessary? Yes.

Please give reasons for your answer, if you answered yes, what role do they play?

Learning a new language, especially one as complex and irregular as English, is difficult. Hence, students need evidence of attainment to mark progress, maintain motivation and demonstrate readiness to progress to the next level. Likewise, learning organisations and employers need evidence of levels of competence.

28. Are the National Standards for Adult Literacy and ESOL Core Curriculum still relevant and useful in relation to ESOL qualifications and their teaching? N/A

Please give reasons for your answer.

English, maths and ESOL: Questions for employers

29. When you are recruiting, do you value or recognise ESOL qualifications? Yes

If yes, please give specific examples of qualifications that employers have used and valued, and how they are used during recruitment or promotion.

An employer recruiting a career development professional qualified at level 6 (or higher) would recognise the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as evidence of competence in the English language. Also, that if the applicant has studied at an HEI in the UK that they would have met the UK universities requirement of a minimum of Band 6 with no individual component (Reading/Writing/Listening/Speaking) lower than Band 5.5.

Of other ESOL qualifications, in our experience the most widely recognised are the Cambridge English Language Assessment Exams which are offered at many levels.

If no, please explain how you assess communication and language skills. N/A

30. When you are recruiting, do you value or recognise English and maths qualifications that are not FSQs or GCSEs? Yes

If yes, please give specific examples of qualifications that employers have used and valued, and how they are used during recruitment or promotion.

See above re. ESOL qualifications. We would also recognise The European Baccalaureate as evidence of meeting the required level of competence in English and Maths. In some circumstances evidence of equivalent standing provided by NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) would be acceptable.

If no, please explain how you assess literacy and numeracy skills.

Digital skills qualifications at level 2

31. Do you agree that we should remove funding approval from the level 2 ICT FSQs and level 2 ICT User qualifications? No

Please give reasons for your answer.

To remove funding would be akin to removing crucial stepping stones to achieving potential and so withdraw opportunity for students to develop the digital skills necessary to succeed in education and to (re-)enter employment. This would have an adverse impact on inclusion and have a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable students and those with SEND.

Supporting students with special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities at level 2 and below

32. What needs to be retained or improved in the current level 2 and below offer to ensure that providers can accommodate the needs of:

16 to 19 year olds with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)?

A staged approach should be retained with improved funding and clear progression routes. It requires well-defined learning outcomes, and evidence of attainment and readiness for progression to the next level, that allow flexibility of approach within a structured programme of learning and assessment. Offers should retain opportunity to develop personal, social and employability skills critical to independent living and operating effectively in the workplace.

The offer must include careers education and guidance, and ensure that all students receive personal guidance from a careers adviser holding a minimum of a 60 credit qualification at Level 6 or above in career guidance/development and Registered with the Career Development Institute, to enable students to identify coherent pathways, engage in the learning, support decision-making and address barriers to achieving good outcomes.

Adults with learning difficulties or disabilities?

The current level 2 and below offer should include careers advice and guidance, and personal guidance from a careers adviser qualified to at least Level 6 in Career Guidance and Development and Registered with the Career Development Institute, for all adults - to support them in identifying coherent pathways, decision-making and addressing barriers, and to successfully navigate transitions. Offers incorporating careers advice and guidance ensure that providers accommodate the need of adults to achieve their potential and make a valuable contribution to society and the economy, especially those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

33. Thank you for taking the time to share your views, we may wish to contact you to discuss your responses in more detail. Are you willing to be contacted at the email provided in the personal information section?

Yes, I am willing to be contacted / No, I do not wish to be contacted