



QWCC1-036_18E

08/02/2018

Dear Responsible Officer

Today we are publishing the report on our Sector Review of Construction and the Built Environment: Building the Future.

In this report we outline the context, methodology and findings of our second Sector Review. We also:

- outline some actions we will take in the short-term ('phase 1'), in the light of the findings of the review
- set out our proposals for longer-term reform of CBE qualifications in Wales.

We are running an online consultation on these longer-term proposals from 8 February to 13 April and would encourage you to respond to this, particularly if your awarding body delivers qualifications in this sector.

I would also like to draw your attention to two of the short-term actions (set out on pages 71 to 73 of the report), that are particularly relevant to awarding bodies. The first, Action 1, relates to concerns about assessment.

Action 1

*We will write to the awarding bodies for 16-19 and NVQ qualifications in the sector, urging them to consider the findings of the report in chapter 6, relating to the **assessment** of their qualifications, to identify whether the findings apply to them and, if they do apply, to propose how they will respond to them.*

We will draw attention, in particular, to:

- *the burden of assessment and whether it is proportionate and reasonable;*
- *the inaccessible forms of questioning used within written assessments, including wholesale extracts from occupational standards;*
- *the reported low incidence of on-site observations of learners for NVQ qualifications;*
- *the use of photographs of completed work as evidence for NVQ qualifications where the contribution of the learner cannot be adequately confirmed;*



- *tick-box, non-verifiable, approaches to the recording of competence;*
 - *the extent to which written assessment is used to demonstrate underpinning knowledge for NVQs;*
 - *External Quality Assurers placing inconsistent requirements upon centres;*
- and*
- *the extent to which assessors are sufficiently competent – and current – in their technical expertise to make sound assessment decisions.*

In the light of this action we, therefore, urge those awarding bodies who deliver construction and/or building services qualifications in 16-19 and/or apprenticeship settings to consider carefully the findings and issues set out above, and more fully in the report. Should you consider that any of these findings apply to qualifications that you award in Wales, we ask that you inform us of the steps that you will take to address these findings (using the constructionreview@qualificationswales.org email address) by 30 April 2018. We will consider any submissions received and identify any follow-up steps that we may take.

Action 2 relates mainly to the content of qualifications and is addressed primarily at the sector bodies. However, it is also relevant to awarding bodies and we would urge you to consider these findings too. Similarly, if you identify any steps that you will be taking (or may have recently taken) to address these particular findings, please notify us by 30 April 2018 at the same email address. Again, we will consider any submissions received and identify any follow-up steps that we may take.

Action 2

We will write to the sector bodies (including CITB), urging them to consider, in conjunction with awarding bodies, the concerns raised in chapters 4 and 5 of the Review about the content of the qualifications and the national occupational standards. The issues for consideration would include:

- *whether the mandatory occupational standards required for each occupation could be streamlined, to ensure that they are essential and likely to be achievable by learners in a wide range of workplaces;*
 - *how they might ensure that qualifications require the use of up-to-date technologies, tools, materials and processes;*
 - *how they might ensure that learners understand the differences between the tools, materials, processes and skills/knowledge needed for traditional and modern buildings;*
 - *how they might address the repetition of content between levels of the qualifications and the lack of sufficient differentiation between levels – including the high incidence of level 2 units in level 3 qualifications;*
 - *whether it is appropriate, in some level 3 NVQs, to include a level 5 unit which is commonly interpreted as requiring supervisory skills;*
 - *whether the current industry-specific assessment strategies (which provide guidance to awarding bodies on assessing NVQs in the sector) remain appropriate in the light of the findings of the Review;*
- and*
- *how awarding bodies can address the lack of coherence of Electrical 16-19 Diplomas with the NVQ route.*

While the report relates specifically to qualifications and the qualification system in Construction and the Built Environment, some of the findings may not be unfamiliar to awarding bodies offering other vocational qualifications. I would therefore urge any who do so to read the report and to consider whether any of these findings may apply similarly to your qualifications in other sectors.

We hope that you find the report interesting and informative. Please do respond to the consultation: we look forward to receiving your consultation responses – and, where appropriate, your action plans.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip Blaker', written in a cursive style.

Philip Blaker

Chief Executive