

Public Bill Committee call for evidence on Technical and Further Education Bill– CIOB submission

The Chartered Institute of Building submission to the House of Commons Public Bill Committee on the Call for Evidence on amendments to the Technical and Further Education Bill.

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Executive Summary

- Given the range of opportunities presented by our country's construction programme, we are clear that schools, colleges and employers all have a vital role to play in terms of ensuring individuals enter the world of work with the skills required.
- Improving the quality of careers advice is paramount if the industry is to overcome some of the skills issues known to exist and realise its potential. The success of the proposed Bill will largely depend on the extent to which policymakers and industry can initiate a joint step change in attitudes towards apprenticeships and technical qualifications.
- Given the inherent complexity in the current education system, the CIOB welcomes the government's commitment to simplify the apprenticeships and technical qualifications and build employer confidence.

1. About the CIOB

- 1.1 The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) is at the heart of a management career in construction. We are the world's largest and most influential professional body for construction management and leadership. We have a Royal Charter to promote the science and practice of building and construction for the benefit of society, which we have been doing since 1834. Our members work worldwide in the development, conservation and improvement of the built environment. We accredit university degrees, educational courses and training. Our professional and vocational qualifications are a mark of the highest levels of competence and professionalism, providing assurance to clients and other professionals procuring built assets.
- 1.2 Professionalism at all levels and stages within the construction industry is at the core of our work. We play a leading role in the development and continued improvement of standards in the industry at a national and international level. We recognise the challenges facing the built environment, such as the unprecedented skills shortage in the professions, the ageing workforce and the complexity of developing policy that improves coordination, design and the overall decision-making process, and we work with government and industry to outline solutions.

2. The Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education

- 2.1 The CIOB welcomes the proposal to rename the Institute of Apprenticeships and include the term technical education.
- 2.2 As a professional body, the CIOB considers we need to make better use of the opportunities presented by our country's very substantial construction programme to secure training and work for the unacceptably large number of individuals who are currently NEET.
- 2.3 Given that the professions account for the largest single share of UK output and are expected to provide an additional 1.5 million jobs by 2020¹, we are clear that there is a strong impetus to help the unemployed into work and alleviate some of the skills shortages in the labour market.
- 2.4 Establishing proper careers education, advice and guidance is essential to help the unemployed into work and widen access to the professions by ensuring those seeking work are equipped with the knowledge and expertise they need to access apprenticeships and technical education. The success of the Bill will, to some extent, be decided by some of the measures introduced alongside it – including the degree to which policymakers and industry are able to bring about a step change in attitudes towards vocational education.
- 2.5 The CIOB is particularly encouraged to read the recommendation from The Private Equity Foundation which suggests the inclusion of a clause which focuses on social mobility to ensure that access, completion and progression for apprenticeships and technical qualifications is monitored. From our own research on social mobility, we know first-hand construction is an industry recognised for having a strong degree of social mobility and numerous opportunities for progression. We would therefore welcome the clause on social mobility.
- 2.6 A key factor in the development of the hourglass economy is the rapid decline in well-paid skilled trades occupations, which provide for many a route from manual jobs into management and professional careers. Construction is one prominent industry where this decline has not occurred. Unlike other industries, the diverse range of construction's products, and consequently tasks, has meant the drive towards automation has been limited and had relatively little impact on craft skills.
- 2.7 The construction industry is now the dominant sector for skilled trade occupations, overtaking manufacturing at the turn of the century. The sector offers a significant number of apprenticeships and technical education courses. In the UK, it now accounts for a third of all employment in this occupation group and a greater proportion of new job opportunities (*figures from the UKCES skills forecast*).

3. The Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education vs. Ofqual

- 3.1 Whilst the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) publishes information of university courses and enables the user to rank performance, there

¹ Spada, [Social Mobility Toolkit for the Professions](#), March 2012

is not, as of yet, a similar system in place for apprenticeships. This presents a problem for individuals studying for an apprentice and for employers who are, currently, largely unable to gauge performance or the quality of each course.

- 3.2 One of the key issues for policymakers to consider is how to measure quality in the apprenticeship and technical education market. From the Bill, it remains unclear as to the exact remit of the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education - and how its work will likely overlap with Ofqual. Given the previous point on measuring quality, the CIOB therefore welcomes greater clarity on this issue to avoid duplication and potential confusion amongst education providers.

4. Providing licenses to providers

- 4.1 The CIOB welcomes the provisions in the Bill which indicate a shift away from the current awarding organisation market model in which qualifications that deliver similar outcomes compete with one another - to a licensed based approach. We believe this will help simplify the market and make it easier for employers to infer the quality and rigour of each qualification.
- 4.2 Whilst the CIOB welcomes the potential for employers to contribute towards careers advice, education and training we do have reservations concerning the time and resources employers will have at their disposal to set standards for apprenticeships and technical qualifications.