



Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice - Consultation

You can reply to this consultation online at:

<https://bisgovuk.citizenspace.com/he/fulfilling-our-potential>

A copy of this response form is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice>

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available, on public request, individual responses.

The closing date for this consultation is 15/01/2016

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Please tick the box that best describes you as a respondent to this consultation.

	Alternative higher education provider (with designated courses)
	Alternative higher education provider (no designated courses)
	Awarding organisation
	Business/Employer
	Central government
	Charity or social enterprise
	Further Education College
	Higher Education Institution
	Individual (Please describe any particular relevant interest; parent, student, teaching staff etc.)
	Legal representative
	Local Government
✓	Professional Body
	Representative Body
	Research Council
	Trade union or staff association
	Other (please describe)

Public sector equality duty

Question 1:

a) What are your views on the potential equality impacts of the proposals and other plans in this consultation?

The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) supports the aim of the proposals, to widen participation in higher education. The CIOB would welcome monitoring of adult learners entering high education as widening participation must extend to monitoring opportunities for career changes for adult learners. Data on the groups mentioned in paragraph 37 of the Green Paper may be available from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

b) Are there any equality impacts that we have not considered?

Yes No Not sure

Please provide any further relevant evidence.

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (Part A: Chapters 1-3)

Question 2: How can information from the TEF be used to better inform student and employer decision making? Please quantify these benefits as far as you can.

As a professional body founded on education, the CIOB has concerns with how the TEF would reconcile degree value with industry values and employability.

There is not a standard degree product. Unlike GCSEs and A Levels, degrees vary widely across institutions. Some are more academic, some are more vocational and some have a technical bias according to the purpose of the award and who they are designed for. This will make it difficult and potentially undesirable to apply a standard measure of teaching excellence across the sector.

Higher education is as much about learning as it is about teaching. Its purpose is to develop students' critical thinking, ability to work independently, ability to analyse and interpret information in different contexts, problem solving, academic writing skills, reading skills and the ability to apply research methodologies. In this context, the TEF would have to assess the provision of these particular skills that define a graduate. However, the ways in which these skills present themselves between subjects vary dramatically, and again it would be difficult to assess in a single measure.

For employers, professional body accreditation is the measure used for professional degree subjects. For students, graduate destinations and professional body accreditation which are already part of the Key Information Sets are the most reliable measure. These features must be present in any TEF going forwards, to ensure student and industry buy-in.

The CIOB would however, support additional data on how research into teaching and learning theory, methodologies and practice informs the delivery of the degrees. Additionally, we would support the use of KPIs that measure the level of employer engagement in the design and delivery of the curriculum of vocational degrees.

Question 3: Do you agree that the ambition for TEF should be that it is open to all HE providers, all disciplines, all modes of delivery and all levels?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answers.

If it is to be implemented, it must apply to all providers of higher education, including colleges with higher education provision, and any new providers that use the proposed new single-route into HE provision.

Question 4: Where relevant, should an approved Access Agreement be a pre-requisite for a TEF award? What other mechanism might be used for different types of providers?

The CIOB believes that all institutions should have transparent fees structures. Access Agreements are widely used by most universities in the UK, and we would support their expansion to all involved in the teaching of higher education. However, we do not believe that access agreements are relevant to teaching quality. Higher fees are often associated with the university's status or cost of delivery rather than quality.

Question 5: Do you agree with the proposals on:

a) what would constitute a 'successful' QA review

Yes No Not sure

b) the incentives that should be open to alternative providers for the first year of the TEF

Yes No Not sure

c) the proposal to move to differentiated levels of TEF from year two?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

We believe that it would be of benefit to consider allowing professional body accreditation as an admissible assessment criterion. The CIOB looks forward to providing evidence to the Technical Consultation on the TEF's operational detail, later in 2016.

Question 6: Do you agree with the proposed approach to TEF assessments on

Timing?

Yes No Not sure

Assessment panels?

Yes No Not sure

and process?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

Unable to comment as we are not a university.

Question 7: How can we minimise any administrative burdens on institutions? Please provide any evidence relating to the potential administrative costs and benefits to institutions of the proposals set out in this document.

Unable to comment as we are not a university.

Question 8: Do you agree with the proposed approach to differentiation and award as TEF develops over time?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

We have concerns that subjectivity could influence the award of different levels. We also do not see how the differentiation could take into account the nuances between courses of the same topic. For example, how a vocational degree is compared to a degree with a more academic or technical bias.

The framework should be carefully considered to ensure that a course or institution is not penalised due to pedagogical differences. The CIOB sees a benefit in specialist organisations such as professional institutes which have a long history of developing knowledge and learning in their field gaining single subject degree awarding powers. These single subject degrees would provide a quality benchmark for universities to reference.

Question 9: Do you agree with the proposed approach to incentives for the different types of provider?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

We believe that there is a need to bring in new providers that can assure the quality and high reputation of UK degrees and we would favour decoupling degree awarding powers from teaching in order to achieve this. Those organisations with chartered status and high quality professional qualifications should be afforded an accelerated route to achieving DAP.

Question 10: Do you agree with the focus on teaching quality, learning environment, student outcomes and learning gain?

Yes **No** **Not sure**

Please give reasons for your answer.

We would expect that learning environment includes a digital environment and is not wholly focussed on physical learning resources.

Question 11: Do you agree with the proposed approach to the evidence used to make TEF assessments - common metrics derived from the national databases supported by evidence from the provider?

Yes **No** **Not sure**

Please give reasons for your answer.

The CIOB broadly agrees with the approach described. We would highlight that statistics on employment and destinations could be unreliable due to a lack of data. For example, HMRC may not hold information on the large number of overseas students who leave the country, on those UK students who go abroad, on women on maternity leave, on those taking a career break, or on retired people enrolling on a degree. These gaps would have to be addressed.

The CIOB strongly supports the use of institutional evidence, particularly:

“How institutions ensure that employers get graduates with the skills they need, for example by involving employers, learned societies, and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) in course and curriculum design, delivery and accreditation.”

The weighting of this evidence should be carefully considered. As discussed above, both students and employers strongly value professional body accreditation, so this should clearly play a significant role in the TEF where relevant.

Social mobility and widening participation (Part A: Chapter 4)

Question 12:

a) Do you agree with the proposals to further improve access and success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds?

Yes **No** **Not sure**

Please give reasons for your answer.

The CIOB supports the Government’s efforts to improve access and success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and wants to build on the construction industry’s historic success. We believe a university education has a significant role to

play in addressing inequality in our society. However, professional bodies also make a significant contribution to this. The construction industry has a demonstrable track record of providing career paths and opportunities for those who aspire to a professional role in the construction industry. CITB Research shows that, of those who entered construction directly at 16 years old, 28 per cent went on to become managers and 16 per cent were in other professional roles. The CIOB provides routes to chartered membership for all who aspire to it. We accredit academic and vocational qualifications and award our own qualifications which are designed to enable operative and trades specialists to move into supervisory and management roles.

b) Do you agree that the Office for Students should have the power to set targets where providers are failing to make progress?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

The CIOB would be cautious about punishing providers for failing to make progress on these issues. Some of these failures are not of the universities' making. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may not feel confident to apply to Oxbridge or other Russell Group Universities. Likewise, where industries suffer from perception issues which make them less attractive for a particular section of society, the issue should be addressed at an industry-level by professional bodies and employers, rather than by punishing providers who may be delivering excellent teaching.

The Office for Students should ensure higher education provides high quality and widely-available outreach programmes and support through personal tutoring to address these issues.

c) What other groups or measures should the Government consider?

Key to the sustainability and development of the construction industry in the next decade will be career changers and adults entering higher education in order to improve their career prospects. This was highlighted in the Government's Commission on Social Mobility and Child Poverty Elitist Britain report as 'second chances'.

As stated by the Commission, "qualifications play an important role in allowing people to progress in the labour market – those with few qualifications have lower employment rates and less earning potential". The report adds that "access to opportunities to gain qualifications and update skills throughout adulthood is important in giving people a 'second chance' to succeed". Greater access to higher education throughout an individual's career is a route out of low pay, opens up exciting new opportunities, and helps to develop a long and fulfilling career.

Question 13:

a) What potential benefits for decision and policy making in relation to improving access might arise from additional data being available?

Social mobility can be measured more effectively when looking at lifelong learning and lifelong earnings.

b) What additional administrative burdens might this place on organisations? If additional costs are expected to be associated with this, please quantify them.

Unable to comment as we are not a university.

Opening up the sector to new providers (Part B: Chapter 1)

Question 14: Do you agree with the proposed single route into the higher education sector?

Yes **No** **Not sure**

Please give reasons for your answer, including information quantifying how the potential cost of entry would change as a result of these proposals.

While we agree that there is a need to reduce the bureaucracy and onerous processes for achieving Degree Awarding Powers (DAP), we believe that proposals to open up the market should focus on providing access to organisations with a strong history of assessing knowledge at honours degree level, and who can demonstrate evidence of competence and ethics.

The CIOB would welcome the decoupling of DAP with teaching to allow professional bodies to apply for DAP in their particular areas of expertise. In June 2013, our MCIOB qualification was independently benchmarked against the English Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) and is comparable to a UK bachelor honours degree.

We believe few traditional higher education providers can boast better, industry-led credentials. Professional bodies are best placed to widen participation whilst maintaining the high standards that the UK is known for across the world.

For example, our 1980 Royal Charter defines the organisation's two objectives as:

- The promotion for the public benefit of the science and practice of building and construction.
- The advancement of public education in the said science and practice including all necessary research and the publication of the results of all such research.

Question 15:

a) Do you agree with the proposed risk-based approach to eligibility for degree awarding powers (DAPs) and university title?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

The CIOB believes that the model should be risk-based because it would ensure high-quality education whilst widening provision, and appears consistent with other regulators, for example, Ofqual.

This approach would also help to address several issues the construction industry faces. Currently, the construction industry is facing a significant skills gap. The CITB's latest estimates show that the industry will need to find almost 182,000 new recruits by 2018. However, businesses across the sector are concerned about their ability to recruit the right people. According to a recent CBI survey, a negative balance of 34 per cent of businesses in the construction sector are not confident about the supply of labour with strategically important occupational skills. A supply of highly skilled labour is critical for the future prosperity of the construction industry and the overall UK economy. It will ensure that vital projects are not delayed and are delivered to the highest standards. As an organisation at the heart of the industry, the CIOB believes that the ability to provide high-quality education through DAPs will significantly help reduce the skills gap.

Consideration must be given to allowing organisations that do not teach but have a strong history of awarding level 6 qualifications to enter this market. These degrees will naturally link to industry best practice and chartered professional qualifications. Professional Bodies such as the CIOB are well placed and have the capability to develop accessible and affordable high quality vocational degrees as part of their charitable mission. We are sceptical that existing teaching organisations will be able to deliver quality and affordability.

b) What are your views on the options identified for validation of courses delivered by providers who do not hold DAPs?

Step-change is required to break the stranglehold of established incumbent providers in the higher education sector. To allow for this to happen, we believe that the QAA, or the quality assurance aspect of the OfS, should oversee all applications for DAPs. There should be no need for a validating body. The QAA, for example, should make decisions on whether an organisation has the knowledge, resources and experience to award degrees. We would favour a system of universal peer review for both established and new providers as the best means of standardising and improving the quality of provision in a deregulated environment.

Barriers to entry into the higher education market are no longer justifiable and the link between DAP and teaching is in our opinion the most significant barrier. This will

require legislative change to decouple DAP from teaching to allow the development of high quality professional degrees awarded by chartered bodies.

In June 2013, the CIOB conducted a benchmarking study with the National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC), to assess the comparability of the CIOB's chartered membership grade (MCIOB) against national qualification standards. The study found that the MCIOB grade is comparable to a Level 6 qualification under QCF, additionally meeting some Level 7 criteria. The CIOB's Fellowship grade – FCIOB – was also benchmarked, attaining a mixture of Level 7 and Level 8 competencies, comparable to post graduate level study. One of the key findings of the study was the ability of the MCIOB and FCIOB grades to measure the competencies of industry professionals and to meet the standards expected of a Chartered Builder.

The CIOB has also been instrumental in the development of leading Trailblazer apprenticeships. Alongside Balfour Beatty, Carillion and other prominent companies, the CIOB has developed new higher and degree level apprenticeships to ensure that the workforce is educated to the highest standards. These professional and high quality apprenticeships provide participants with a route into professional accreditation.

Depending on the final outcome of the Government's reforms, the CIOB believes a useful way forward would be to work in partnership with other industry bodies, including those outside the built environment profession. By partnering with organisations that already possess DAPs, professional bodies like the CIOB could respond more rapidly.

Question 16: Do you agree with the proposed immediate actions intended to speed up entry?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

The approach suggested seems sensible, although we would question whether a validating partner is the best way forward in what would become an increasingly commercial and competitive environment. We suspect that this requirement could be a barrier for new entrants into the market. We would support handing the entire process to an independent body such as QAA or OfS and creating a system of peer review for all higher education providers.

Provider exit and student protection (Part B: Chapter 2)

Question 17: Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a requirement for all providers to have contingency arrangements to support students in the event that their course cannot be completed?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer, including evidence on the costs and benefits associated with having a contingency plan in place? Please quantify these costs where possible.

This is an essential protection for students.

Simplifying the higher education architecture (Part C)

Question 18:

a) Do you agree with the proposed changes to the higher education architecture?

Yes **No** **Not sure**

Please give reasons for your answer.

The proposed approach to merge the different bodies carrying out functions for the higher education sector seems appropriate. This should ensure better communication between the various bodies involved, consequently improving the student experience.

b) To what extent should the Office for Students (OfS) have the power to contract out its functions to separate bodies?

Fully **Partially** **Not at all**

c) If you agree, which functions should the OfS be able to contract out?

N/A

d) What are your views on the proposed options for allocating Teaching Grant?

Option 1: BIS Ministers set strategic priorities and BIS officials determine formula.

Agree **Disagree** **Not sure**

Option 2: BIS Minister sets strategic priorities and allocation responsibilities divested to OfS

Agree **Disagree** **Not sure**

Please give reasons for your answer,

Unable to comment as we are not a university.

Question 19: Do you agree with the proposal for a single, transparent and light touch regulatory framework for every higher education provider?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer, including how the proposed framework would change the burden on providers. Please quantify the benefits and/or costs where possible.

No additional comments.

Question 20: What steps could be taken to increase the transparency of student unions and strengthen unions' accountability to their student members?

No comments.

Question 21:

a) Do you agree with the proposed duties and powers of the Office for Students?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

The CIOB would caution that as a student-facing organisation which will take on some public functions to ensure tax payer money is used effectively, the OfS' priorities must be clearly defined to ensure that spending allocations never affect work undertaken or conclusions reached on academic matters. It may be better to call it the Office for Higher Education.

b) Do you agree with the proposed subscription funding model?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

Due to not being a university we are not best placed to answer. However, we would expect that any subscriptions should not be a barrier to new entrants into the market.

Question 22:

a) Do you agree with the proposed powers for OfS and the Secretary of State to manage risk?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

N/A

b) What safeguards for providers should be considered to limit the use of such powers?

N/A

Question 23: Do you agree with the proposed deregulatory measures?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer, including how the proposals would change the burden on providers. Please quantify the benefits and/or costs where possible.

The CIOB believe the deregulatory measures seem appropriate.

Reducing complexity and bureaucracy in research funding (Part D)

Question 24: In light of the proposed changes to the institutional framework for higher education, and the forthcoming Nurse Review, what are your views on the future design of the institutional research landscape?

No comment as we are not a university.

Question 25:

a) What safeguards would you want to see in place in the event that dual funding was operated within a single organisation?

N/A

b) Would you favour a degree of hypothecation to ensure that dual funding streams, along with their distinctive characteristics, could not be changed by that organisation?

Yes No Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer

N/A

Question 26: What are the benefits of the REF to a) your institution and b) to the wider sector? How can we ensure they are preserved?

N/A

Question 27: How would you suggest the burden of REF exercises is reduced?

N/A

Question 28: How could the data infrastructure underpinning research information management be improved?

N/A

Do you have any other comments that might aid the consultation process as a whole?

As an organisation at the heart of a management career in the construction profession, the CIOB is well positioned to comment on the issues raised in this consultation. Across sectors such as technology, financial services and retail, the ability for organisations to disrupt established incumbents has led to a markedly better deal for consumers and resulted in ground breaking innovation. The expansion of DAPs in the education market has the potential to produce the same result, and the CIOB is well positioned to deliver.

The CIOB is the world's largest and most influential body for construction management and leadership. Since 1980, the organisation has held a Royal Charter to promote science and the practice of construction for the benefit of the society. Members of the CIOB work across the world in the development, conversation and improvement of the built environment.

Accreditation of university degrees, educational courses and training is at the core of the CIOB's activities. CIOB accreditation is a mark of the highest levels of competence and professionalism, which ensures that graduates are work ready. We also play a leading role in the development and continual improvement of educational standards at a national and international level. In addition, UK NARIC found that the CIOB's membership qualification is comparable to a level 6 qualification, a bachelor's degree, while additionally meeting some level 7 criteria under the English QCF.

Due to our close links with industry, we recognise the challenges it faces. Currently, this includes the unprecedented skills gap, an ageing workforce, a shortfall in recruitment, and rising wages due to demand for highly skilled labour. DAPs for the CIOB would provide a significant shift in how the industry can respond to these challenges now and in the future.

We are happy for this response to be made publically available

Thank you for your views on this consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you tick the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

At BIS we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be okay if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

BIS/15/623/RF