

Policy Updates October 2019

T Levels – Consultations on Outline Content

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is finalising the Outline Content for the three Engineering and Manufacturing T Levels: Design and Development; Maintenance, Installation and Repair; and Manufacturing, Process and Control.

These courses will be designed to follow GCSEs and will be equivalent to three A Levels. They will combine classroom theory, practical learning and a 3-month industry placement with an employer to make sure students have real experience in the workplace. The Post-16 Skills Plan sets out the government's vision to reform technical education by creating a technical education option that prepares individuals for skilled employment; developing the technical knowledge and skills needed by employers and industry.

The consultations on the outline content for the Maintenance, Installation and Repair and Manufacturing, Process and Control T Levels are [expected to be launched](#) on 3 December 2019 and will close on 7 January 2020.

Apprenticeship Standard Review

A consultation on the Institute's review of the Engineering and Manufacturing Route is running in parallel to the T-Level work, from 16 October to 8 January 2020. This will cover the Engineering and Manufacturing occupational map and 59 apprenticeship standards.

The [public consultation](#) forms a part of the wider review process as discussed and documented in recent ATEAG meetings. Following the public consultation, there will be an additional four-week period where trailblazer groups will have the opportunity to feed in their views. This will end on 5 February 2020.

It is expected that Energy & Utility Skills members will want to complete the consultation themselves and potentially contribute to a shared sector response to IfATE. We will be in touch shortly with the details of how we will support members' responses and involvement with the review.

Apprenticeship Levy

SMEs and new Apprenticeship Service

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has launched a campaign to engage SMEs and encourage them to use the new Apprenticeship Service.

This has been presented to stakeholders as an online 'hub' via which employers can manage their apprenticeship funding and select providers. It gives the option to individual employers to delegate administration of their account to their training provider. No release date is available for the new system yet, but it is undergoing testing and the ESFA is hopeful that it will be ready for early January.

Energy & Utility Skills has attended an Intermediaries event, hosted by the ESFA, on behalf of members and has been briefed on the new Apprenticeship Service.

DfE Updates to Retraining Service

The DfE has updated its policy on the National Retraining Scheme (NRS). The national retraining scheme is the government's new programme to help adults retrain into better jobs and be ready for future changes to the economy, including those brought about by automation.

To support the development of the scheme, the government announced £100 million in the Autumn Budget 2018. This is for the continued testing and development of the scheme, as well as delivering the first parts of the scheme to the public.

During its testing phase, the first part of the scheme, 'Get Help to Retrain', is available to eligible adults in six areas across England. This part of the scheme is then being rolled out beyond the six initial areas in 2020.

The scheme is part of the government's industrial strategy to improve productivity.

Eligibility

The scheme will initially support adults who:

- are already in work
- are aged 24 and over
- do not have a qualification at degree level
- are paid below a certain wage threshold – this threshold will be tested with people earning low to medium wages as the scheme is developed

Government is investing in this group of people first as they:

- have comparatively less access to existing government support

- are most in need of adapting their skills so they can take advantage of new opportunities

Adults who are eligible, but don't live in one of these areas, will be able to access the service when it is rolled out across England in 2020. In the meantime, additional information, advice and guidance can be provided by the National Careers Service.

What the scheme will include

The National Retraining Scheme aims to:

- support people already in work to move into better jobs through training and tailored advice
- complement existing training programmes for adults
- encourage people to develop their flexibility and resilience in the world of work, so they can take advantage of new opportunities

The scheme will include a range of services to support people while they train and look for jobs. It will provide:

- tailored advice and guidance from a qualified adviser
- functional skills training, initially focusing on English and Maths
- flexible online and blended learning, a mix of online and face-to-face provision, enabling more adults to access training
- in-work vocational training, learnt on the job

Welsh Apprenticeship Frameworks Consultation

This consultation on the structure of Welsh Apprenticeship Frameworks and supporting pathways will close on 9 December 2019.

Welsh Government is focusing on building and improving its apprenticeship offer in order to grow its economy, in the wider context of its National Strategy. This consultation aims to propose a new, simplified structure for apprenticeship frameworks in Wales, based on clear occupational sectors and pathways. It also seeks to ensure that current frameworks are fit for purpose.

Energy & Utility Skills is considering how we can best support our members to input into this. In the meantime, the consultation document can be viewed [here](#).

Welsh Government also recently consulted on the future role of the Issuing Authority for issuing Apprenticeship Frameworks in Wales and whether the Welsh Ministers should adopt this role and, if so, what the criteria for issuing apprenticeship frameworks should be to meet the needs of the economy, employers and apprentices. A formal response to this is expected imminently.

Party Conference Season

Key themes emerging from this year's political party conference season.

Skills

- Conservatives focus on ramping up standards in technical education and scaling up roll out of IoTs, supported by Skills and Productivity Board
- Labour plans major push on uptake of apprenticeships and T-levels, with education and training 'free at point of use' under 'National Education Service'
- Lib Dems emphasise a clear zero carbon dimension to education and skills, with a personalised spending allowance per adult in England
- Greens focused on nationalisation of education
- The SNP will continue to maintain at least 116,000 full-time equivalent Scottish Government-funded college places and, by 2020, a further 30,000 Modern Apprenticeship opportunities will be available every year

Sector

- Conservatives plan to invest in 'green growth'
- Labour issued an open ended commitment to achieving climate change obligations, alongside low carbon investment
- Lib Dems and Greens propose bringing forward a ban on petrol and diesel vehicles – (with growing cross-party support for bringing forward the sale ban to 2035)

Employment

- Cross party support for raising minimum wage (although pace and extent varies)
- Labour proposes reduced working week, with push for improved pay and conditions for workers from Lib Dems.
- The SNP has committed to a place in learning or training for every 16 to 19-year-old who is not currently in employment, education or training

Ownership

- Labour proposes renationalisation of public services, with the water industry first in line

Devolved nations

- Labour and Lib Dems specifically mention expanded devolved powers