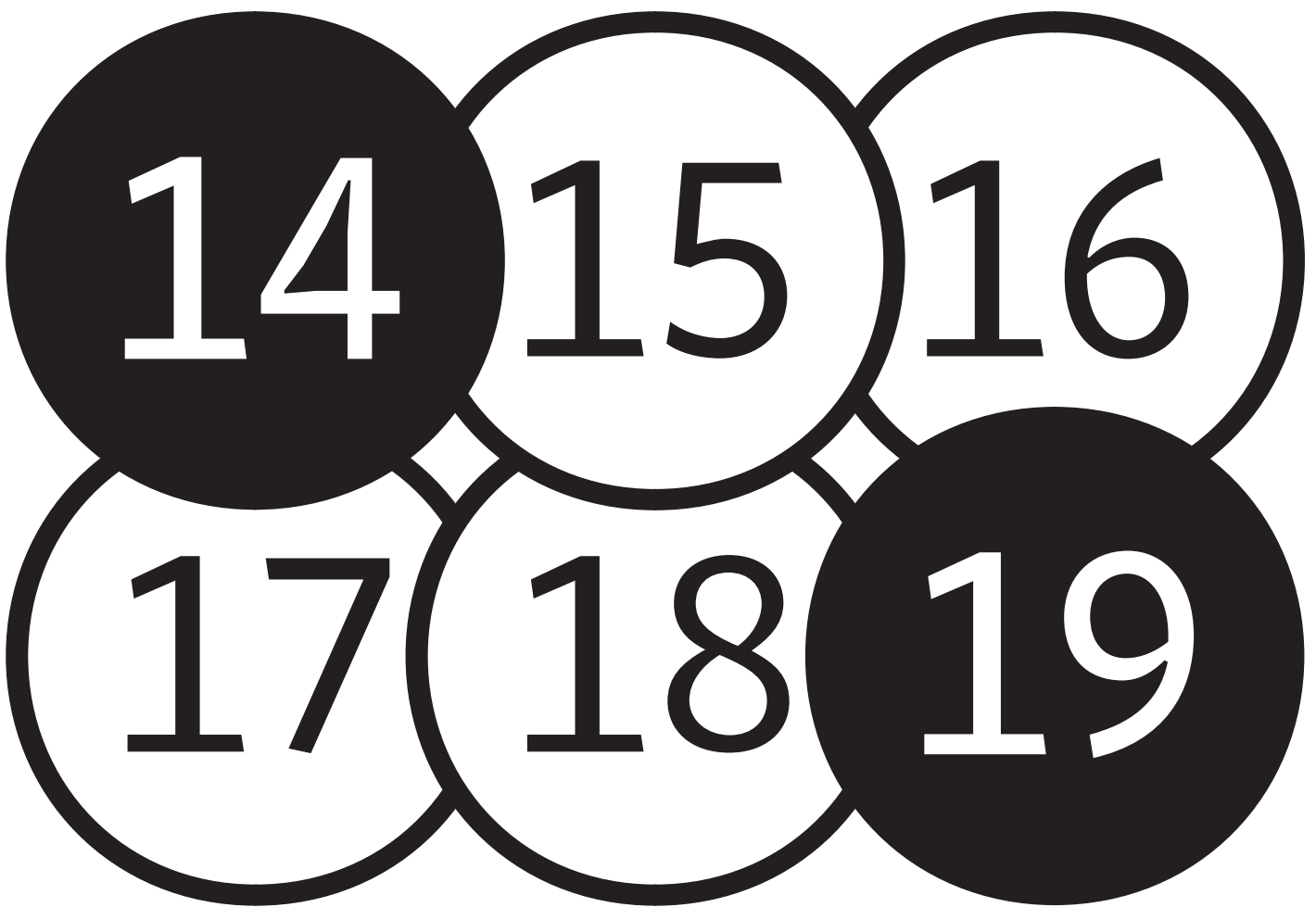
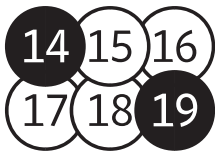


14-19 EDUCATION

A joint policy statement by
the National Union of Teachers and
the University and College Union

MAY 2008





This policy paper is based on the policies of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the University and College Union (UCU) which variously represent teachers and lecturers in schools, colleges, universities and other educational settings. The two unions have strong interests and policy history in education, including at the 14-19 stage. This paper is intended to summarise and collate their policies and to stimulate further discussion and debate. It builds on a number of years work by the two unions and also by UCU's predecessor unions. We believe that it demonstrates the strength of professional consensus across the education sector in relation to 14-19 education.

The paper further emphasises the importance of the school and college sectors working together to meet the needs for learners aged 14-19, and vitally, of the facilitation by government of an atmosphere in which such collaboration can thrive and build upon the excellent practice which already exists in many institutions and regions.

Foreword

We are delighted that UCU and the NUT have cooperated in producing this policy on the crucial 14-19 phase of education at a time when great changes are taking place. Members of our two unions represent every part—from pre-school to post-graduate. Their common desire is a truly inclusive education system that develops the talents of every young person and for young people's learning achievements to be recognised and valued by society.

Over the last twenty years 14-19 has increasingly emerged as a distinct phase of education; the time when the fundamentals for a full role in adult life should be established, including those to sustain employment, further and deeper study, and involvement in a wide range of roles in economic, civic, social and family life. Alongside the emergence of this distinct phase has come the realisation that education for this age group can only be delivered by partnerships of schools and colleges.

The policy developments in 14-19 education provide new opportunities for NUT and UCU to work together nationally and locally, for example: the new strategic role for local authorities to lead on 14-19 education; the commissioning process that local authorities will exercise in relation to provision; the changes to qualifications such as the new Diplomas; the changes to A levels and the policy direction recently announced in the government's 14-19 Qualifications Strategy.

We have a history of cooperation to build on and it is particularly pleasing that this particular piece of work had its origins in local co-operation and initiatives between NUT and UCU in Birmingham.

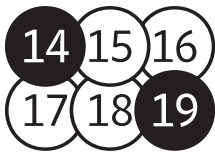
Work on advice and guidance to our local associations and branches to further the ambitions here is already in hand. Our joint campaign, 'Our schools, our colleges, our community', already provides a platform for activity around pay and in defence of public sector services. With teachers and lecturers increasingly teaching the same group of students, it is in all our interests that the differences in pay, conditions of service and professional status are removed.

We believe that this joint policy statement and the principles it sets out will be a powerful tool for teachers and lecturers as they work to strengthen relationships between the two sectors and provide opportunities and empower young people for their life journeys.

Finally we want this policy and the work we will continue to stand as a memorial for all the educational principles that our dear friend and colleague Steve Sinnott held dear and were at the core of everything he did as NUT general secretary. We commend this document to you.

Christine Blower Sally Hunt

Acting general secretary, NUT General secretary, UCU



Aims and objectives of 14-19 education

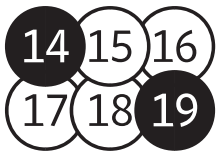
- ① The two unions support the concept of a coherent and distinctive 14-19 stage of education, spanning the compulsory and post-compulsory phases of education.
- ② 14-19 includes the transition from the end of compulsory schooling and the completion of study based on the National Curriculum, to further education, lifelong learning and training, and progression to sixth form studies, further and higher education and the workplace. It builds on the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1-3 and provides the foundation for adult lifelong learning and training in all its forms.
- ③ It is during the 14-19 stage that many young people gain the qualifications which form a foundation for their future learning and careers.
- ④ As important as forming the foundation for future learning and entry to the workplace, 14-19 develops the Key Skills which prepare young people to be able to engage and participate fully in adult life, family life, citizenship, an increasingly global society, workplaces, and the wider community. 14-19 education has the potential to contribute positively towards realising social cohesion, social justice and an inclusive society.

Equality, inclusivity and social justice

- ⑤ The NUT and UCU are committed to a system of 14-19 curricula and qualifications which is able to meet the needs of all learners regardless of socio-economic or other background factors. A developing system of 14-19 education should seek actively to remove barriers to achievement, wherever they exist.
- ⑥ Principles of equality for students, teachers and lecturers, and the wider community should underpin every aspect of 14-19 education.
- ⑦ 14-19 reform should seek to ameliorate existing inequalities and barriers to access whether defined by gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic background, special educational need, disability or any other background factor which may result in artificial barriers to participation being presented or discrimination being encountered.
- ⑧ Funding for schools, colleges and learning programmes should be on an equitable basis. There is a case for recognising that some students and the institutions in which they learn may be funded on a preferential basis to meet a specific need, for example to meet the needs of those students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, those students with English as an additional language, or those students with special educational needs, in order to realise a meaningful equality of opportunity for some young people.

Raising participation

- ⑨ The NUT and UCU support the principle that *all* 16-19 year olds should have access and an entitlement to high quality education and training opportunities. The government has made an important decision to seek to ensure that all young people remain in education or training to the age of 19.
- ⑩ Consideration of increasing participation in learning and training 16 to 19 should be made on the basis of offering an entitlement for all learners. Such an entitlement should seek to meet individual need, and not be based a punitive approach of forcing young people to learn.
- ⑪ Specialised, targeted support should be offered to individuals where there are particular issues of take-up, eg school refusers and reluctant learners. Appropriate curriculum offers need to be in place before disaffected or disengaged learners can be encouraged constructively to return to learning, and it will be necessary to provide the finance and other resources necessary to ensure that the capacity to meet the needs of all learners 16-19 is in place and thus to help meet the government's own aspirations.
- ⑫ It is essential that all schools and colleges receive funding sufficient to meet the needs of all students. It is also vital that both schools and colleges receive funding which meets need and is as transparent and objective as possible.



13 Capacity will need to be built throughout the education system in order to provide appropriate support for all young people to the age of 19, including those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, which have traditionally posed barriers to learning and training.

14 It is vital that employers have an investment in education and training 16-19 as well as government, schools and colleges and young people themselves. It is vital that employers engage with schools and colleges in a positive manner, based on equal partnership, to meet the needs of those young people 16-19 for whom an occupational or vocational route will best meet their aspirations. It is vital that employers as well as schools and colleges have an investment in the kind of 'general', transferable skills which can be beneficial in the workplace but which also enable young people to play a full role in society beyond the workplace. Government should seek means to create incentives for employers to invest in training young people, based on the example of those employers who already work positively with schools and colleges, young people themselves, and relevant trades unions in their employment sector as well as government. Among the ways of incentivising employer investment would be the introduction of fiscal measures such as tax credits for those employers who are investing in learning and training, or the raising of a training levy, part of which could be used to fund employer activities in 14-19 education.

The 14-19 curriculum

15 The 14-19 stage should be defined by a broad curriculum for all learners offering a balance between a general education entitlement—which provides a solid foundation of 'general' knowledge and skills which is transferable to a variety of settings, and high quality 'vocational'—and 'applied' options which are more geared towards the world of work.

16 The curriculum should be based on an entitlement for all learners within a framework of structured choice, and would not stream individual students into narrow pathways which were exclusively 'academic', 'vocational' or 'occupational'. All young people need skills which equip them for the world of work and for careers which meet their abilities, talents and aspirations. But all young people further need the wider skills which enable them to play a full part in society outside the world of work. The NUT and UCU believe that a key historic weakness of the British system of education has been a failure to recognise that this full range of skills is important to every learner, and that too often the curriculum and qualifications system fails to sufficiently connect some of these skills for some learners.

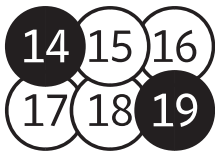
17 The curriculum should balance breadth with depth as learners progress through the various levels of attainment of the 14-19 stage. While learners will increasingly specialise as they progress through the levels of achievement, their studies should retain a focus on broad, transferable Key Skills regardless of their specific learning programme.

18 The curriculum throughout 14-19 should enable clear progression routes to be identified. Progression routes open to students should not be so narrow as to leave them at learning or career 'dead ends'.

Principles for 14-19 reform

19 Reform should be ambitious, but should develop at a pace which is manageable for learners, teachers, lecturers and others. Elements of reform should be properly piloted and evaluated. The process should embrace all partners, to ensure that new curricular and qualifications structures are supported, understood and valued by employers, universities, and the general public.

20 Teachers and lecturers should be involved throughout the reform process as key partners, and their expertise and experience harnessed. Evaluations of individual components of reform should take into account teacher and lecturer feedback.



21 The engagement of teachers, lecturers and other education professionals should not be cosmetic. It is those education professionals who will help advise and guide young people in making choices which will affect their future education, careers and adult lives. It is essential therefore that teachers, lecturers and others are fully able to understand and support new qualifications such as the 14-19 Diploma if they are to have the confidence to recommend them as a valid route for young people who seek their advice.

22 Reform should build on and incorporate the strengths of existing curriculum and qualifications structures which are popular with students and are well understood, but it should seek to address longstanding systemic design flaws, including the difference in status between 'general' and 'vocational' qualifications. Existing qualifications, including A levels and GCSEs, vocational qualifications such as the BTEC and occupational qualifications such as the NVQ could be adapted to form components of a single diploma system, for example.

23 Learners themselves should be involved in the reform process, as it is vital to meet all aspirations and needs and ensure that learners are engaged and motivated within a system which allows a 'guided choice'.

24 Learners must be supported by effective, independent and impartial advisory services in turn supported by appropriate funding, resourcing and professional development structures within a coherent policy framework. It is vital that there is the capacity to provide such advice for all young people, while ensuring that the most vulnerable, or those from backgrounds where achievements are traditionally lower on average than their peers, get particular support.

25 Funding requirements for reform and future investment plans which can ensure sustainability for the kind of inclusive programmes this policy envisages, must be audited and provided for. Such funding include not just course funding on a per pupil basis, but initial costs such as professional development and capacity building and establishing and developing effective working partnerships between institutions.

26 Partnership approaches to 14-19 provision should be based on incentivising and facilitating collaborative working rather than coercion. Bodies such as local authorities could play a key role in brokering partnership approaches across institutions within an area.

Qualifications structures

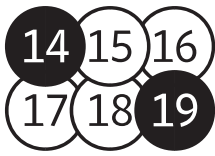
27 The NUT and UCU believe that in the longer term there remains a case for a single system of Diplomas at a range of levels, which apply to all learning routes.

28 The two unions broadly supported the main components for reform as expressed by Tomlinson, in particular a single diploma system, incorporating study at the full range of levels across both general and vocational routes. Diploma levels would 'interlock', allowing students to experience additional challenge or to develop those areas where they were making slower progress at a pace appropriate to them, as necessary. Students would be able to work at more than one level in different areas of their learning programme at any given point.

29 Diplomas would recognise positively achievement at all levels, including Entry and Foundation, and enable progress to the next level of achievement when the student was ready. Learners with Special Educational Needs would be assessed and awarded qualifications, and have their achievement recognised within the same scale of assessment as all other learners.

Assessment

30 14-19 reform should seek to reduce the overall assessment burden without adding to the workload of teachers and lecturers. Assessments of the same skills would be fewer. The cost benefits of fewer formal assessments could be re-routed to support effective teacher assessment. A reduced burden of assessment would allow greater focus on the core activities of learning and teaching.



31 Assessment models should be 'fit for purpose' depending on the nature of the learning programme. Existing experience of the use of portfolio, project, coursework and examination approaches could be utilised to form assessment instruments as appropriate to specific elements of a programme of study.

32 Assessment models should incorporate and develop the professional expertise of teachers and lecturers within a high trust system.

33 Assessment methodologies should seek, as far as possible, to incorporate formative 'assessment for learning' principles as well as awarding students with a summative end-of-course grade.

34 Project-based and extra-curricular work should be recognised as contributing to 14-19 learners' educational development, and should be recognised as far as possible within qualifications. This would help meet the aspiration for increasingly 'personalised' learning.

Organisation of 14-19

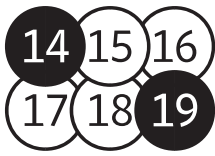
35 Schools and colleges should be enabled to work collaboratively rather than in competition. This is best achieved through all institutions being on an equal footing, under the auspices and democratic accountability of local authorities. Communities are better served by good local institutions rather than the 'choice and diversity' of a variety of different types of school or college such as Academies, Centres of Vocational Excellence, and Trusts. These may or may not incorporate a variety of different institutions, but may be exclusive in their relationship with other local schools and colleges to the detriment of a 'local family' of educational providers. They may be preferentially funded. The strengths and contributions of 11 to 16 and 11 to 18 school, sixth form college, and general FE college sectors should be recognised, as should their specific suitability for different learners but they should be enabled to work in a more co-ordinated and collaborative manner.

36 Funding disparities between institutions and sectors should be addressed. Some institutions, such as those who serve socially disadvantaged areas, may require enhanced funding. Preferential funding should be determined by demonstrable need and principles of social justice rather than institution type.

37 As schools and colleges work increasingly in collaboration, punitive inspection, target, and performance table measures by individual institution should be replaced with accountability systems which are developmental and support schools and colleges in improving provision. Such systems should recognise that more than one institution may be working to contribute to the development of individual learners or groups of learners through a collaborative approach. The current system of performance tables can be divisive and punitive, and may at worst mitigate against the development of partnership working.

38 Child protection and supervision issues, transport links, school and college planning and funding cycles, arrangements for monitoring attendance, and other issues which may act as barriers to school and college collaboration must be audited and addressed. Identified good practice and areas of concern from strategies such as Increased Flexibility Partnerships should be built upon.

39 Policy direction would reflect the range of settings, including rural and remote areas, in which 14-19 learners live, rather than being developed around predominantly metropolitan models.



The school and college workforce

40 Teachers and lecturers should be properly and appropriately qualified, highly trained, high status professionals, and their pay and conditions of service should be commensurate with that role. The difference in pay, conditions and professional status between the school and college sectors should be reviewed with a view to levelling up, not levelling down.

41 Professionally trained and appropriately qualified teachers and lecturers should be able to transfer their employment between the school and college sectors as appropriate, especially as the two sectors increasingly seek to work collaboratively to meet the needs of learners 14-16.

42 As high status professionals, teachers and lecturers should be engaged as key partners in education policy and reform, on an equal basis with other partners such as government, employers, higher education and others.

43 Professionalism should be underpinned by a defined entitlement to high quality professional development. The profession itself should be involved in determining professional development arrangements, and professionals should have access to a wide choice from a suite of provision which would best meet their continuing development needs.

44 Professional development must be a key component underpinning any reform process, and should be subject to consultation with the profession to determine and meet ongoing requirements.

45 Teachers and lecturers should be provided with adequate time and resources, including for cross-institutional liaison and activity, to support schools and colleges to work in collaboration to meet the educational needs of 14-19 learners within an area.

46 Key principles for a developing 14-19 system should be incorporated into initial and continuing teacher and lecturer training programmes.

Partnership approaches

47 There should be an appropriate balance, in determining education and training policy and provision, of representation from all key partners, including central and local government, education professionals, awarding bodies, higher education, employers, trades unions, learners, and the wider community. Each will have their own expertise and this should be recognised. Reform and provision should be established through consensus rather than through a desire to meet the perceived needs of any single group.

The future of 14-19 education

48 A wealth of new initiatives will begin to have an impact from September 2008, including a new secondary school curriculum and the first lines of learning for the new 14-19 Diplomas. It is of concern that the government did not learn the lessons of the hasty introduction, with insufficient teacher and lecturer involvement, of the *Curriculum 2000* reforms; chose not to adopt a well planned ten-year schedule of reform as proposed by the Tomlinson Review; and discounted any meaningful review of the direction of 14-19 policy as promised in the wake of the 14-19 White Paper. Reform should be a longer-term process which is able to gain a broad consensus, including among education professionals and across political parties as far as possible, to ensure sustainability. We urge government to open a dialogue with all associations representing teachers and lecturers, as well as other key partners in the education service, to continue to discuss policy direction and a meaningful plan for 14-19 reform which can be both successful immediately and sustainable into the future.



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