

### Terms of Reference

#### Introduction

People with the right skills are critical to national and global economic renewal. At the heart of the English further education and skills sector's ambitions to contribute fully to securing our future prosperity, is a determination to ensure that teaching and learning is outstanding, in order to support the success of learners, and employers at home and internationally.

The aim of the independent Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning is, therefore, to raise the quality, and improve the outcomes and impact, of adult vocational teaching and learning in the further education and skills sector for learners and employers.

It is rooted in a commitment to supporting the development of teachers and trainers in the diverse contexts of further education and skills, and the workplace, on the basis that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers'<sup>1</sup>.

#### Background

The creation of an independent Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning was announced in *New Challenges, New Chances*<sup>2</sup>, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' reform plan for the further education and skills sector, published in December 2011.

In his opening message, the Secretary of State Vince Cable stresses the importance of equipping people with '*the right skills to design, produce and sell a quality product efficiently*', and for individuals – '*...to earn a wage...support themselves and their families...take pride in their self-reliance and find a release for their own creativity and capacity to innovate*'.

The establishment of the Commission stems from Minister John Hayes' wish for '*the sector itself to develop, guided by its own insights and experiences...*' over the life of this parliament. '*We will meet our potential only when those lecturers, trainers and managers, working to deliver education and training in communities and businesses, are free to do their best.*'

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<sup>1</sup> McKinsey&Company: [How the world's best performing school systems come out on top](#), September 2007

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/f/11-1380-further-education-skills-system-reform-plan>

*New Challenges, New Chances* also notes Ofsted's most recent Chief Inspector's report<sup>3</sup> (2010/11) which found '*too little outstanding teaching and learning*'. It invites the sector to develop its own policy to support outstanding teaching and learning, supported by a Commission which will:

- bring together industry, teacher training colleges, professional associations and practitioners in the FE sector;
- be supported by LSIS and the Institute for Learning, and draw on evidence from Ofsted;
- explore how the best colleges and providers work with employers;
- set out the standard expected of a good learning opportunity for an adult and an apprentice, and define a range of effective pedagogical approaches.

### Aim

The aim of the independent Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning is to raise the quality, and improve the outcomes and impact, of adult vocational teaching and learning in the further education and skills sector for learners and employers.

The Commission's focus will be on improving outcomes for adult vocational learners and employers. This will involve:

- articulating the features of a good or outstanding programme of vocational learning for an adult, wherever it is delivered including the workplace;
- an appraisal of the range of pedagogical approaches to adult vocational teaching and training, reflecting the diversity of adult learners' and employers' needs;
- investigating the role of technology in supporting good or outstanding adult vocational teaching and learning;
- creating a new national 'movement' to raise the quality of adult vocational teaching and learning by bringing together a wide range of stakeholders from industry, teacher training, professional associations and practitioners in the further education and skills sector;
- exploring how the best colleges and providers work with employers;
- raising the status of adult vocational teaching and learning beyond the further education and skills sector;

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/annualreport1011>

- developing a sector owned framework to raise the quality of teaching and learning;
- reporting on findings, conclusions and recommendations in March 2013; and
- disseminating the Commission's findings widely.

### Ways of working

The Commission is committed to working openly, inclusively, and transparently, to serve the further education and skills sector, and the learners and employers who benefit from adult vocational teaching and learning. It will take account of the views of learners and employers at every stage of its work.

A wide range of stakeholders will be actively engaged in informing and shaping the Commission's findings, including: teachers, trainers, teacher educators, leaders of learning, professional bodies, and learning technologists, as well as learners and employers.

A range of communications will be adopted to ensure wide access to, and engagement with, the Commission's work and to encourage on-going discussion and debate about what makes for good and outstanding teaching and learning.

Its work will be underpinned by a rigorous approach to research in order to ensure its findings, conclusions and recommendations are compelling and evidence-based. Evidence will be gathered from a wide range of sources, including from practitioners, Ofsted, the research community, and international literature.

### Phases of work

The Commission will broadly work in three phases:

Phase 1 – spring/summer 2012: consult widely, gather evidence, listen to a wide range of perspectives, review research literature and good practice.

Phase 2 – autumn 2012: explore cross-cutting themes, synthesise evidence and emerging findings with a wide range of stakeholders.

Phase 3 – winter/early spring 2012-13: develop, test and refine a framework for supporting outstanding teaching and learning, and prepare final report of the Commission's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

### Themes

Some of the initial themes of enquiry for the Commission will include:

- the role of technology;
- higher level vocational teaching and learning;
- teacher training and continuing professional development;
- managing, reviewing and assessing learning;
- embedding English and maths in vocational teaching and learning;
- leading adult vocational teaching and learning;
- international comparisons.

These and other themes will be explored through:

- a range of seminars with teachers, trainers, teacher educators and leaders of learning; and learners, employers, professional associations and learning technologists;
- a programme of visits to enable commissioners to see good and outstanding teaching and learning in practice;
- online discussions; and
- a rigorous review and synthesis of the evidence base, including literature reviews; calls for evidence; and commissioned research.

### Commissioners

The Commission represents a significant opportunity for the FE and skills sector to shape future policy and practice in relation to adult vocational teaching and learning, based on the expertise and experience of teachers, trainers, learners, employers and leaders of learning across a diverse range of settings – from colleges to workplace learning.

Frank McLoughlin CBE, Principal of City and Islington College, has been appointed as chair of the Commission, working with two vice chairs: Fiona McMillan OBE, President of the Association of Colleges and formerly Principal of Bridgwater College; and Graham Schuhmacher MBE, Head of Development Services at Rolls-Royce. Other commissioners have been recruited from a range of constituencies to reflect the diversity of interests in adult vocational teaching and learning:

The 19 commissioners are:

**Frank McLoughlin CBE**, Chair, and Principal of City and Islington College

**Fiona McMillan OBE**, Vice Chair, and President of the Association of Colleges and former Principal, Bridgwater College

**Graham Schuhmacher MBE**, Vice Chair, and Head of Development Services at Rolls-Royce

**Bill Alexander**, Head of Training and Skills, National Skills Academy - Railway Engineering

**Richard Atkins**, Principal, Exeter College

**Mariane Cavalli**, Principal, Warwickshire College

**Rob Hammond**, Managing Director, Direct Training Solutions Ltd

**Professor Matthew Harrison**, Director of Education, The Royal Academy of Engineering

**Sue Hill**, Head of Teaching and Learning, West Herts College

**Gary Hughes**, Director of Curriculum and Developments (Adults), Hull College

**Colonel Carolyn Johnstone**, Ministry of Defence

**Roshni Joshi**, Student, South Downs College and NUS representative

**Martina Milburn**, Chief Executive, The Prince's Trust

**Shauni O'Neill**, National Apprentice of the Year 2011, Transport for London

**Jacqui Ramus**, Practice Development Manager, St Monica Trust

**Mike Smith**, Curriculum Development Manager, Eagit Training

**Alastair Taylor**, Quality Advisor, Landex

**Tom Wilson**, Director, Unionlearn

**Dereth Wood**, Director of Operations, learndirect

### A wider reference forum

A wider reference forum will extend the reach of the Commission to enable the widest range of stakeholders and partners to be engaged in shaping the design, work and conclusions of the Commission.

Additionally, two partners meetings will be convened during the life of the Commission with representative bodies.

### Academic partner

Professor Lorna Unwin from the University of London Institute of Education has agreed to act as the academic partner to the Commission.