

Summary of Sainsbury Key Recommendations on 16-19 Technical Education

Recommendation 1:

We recommend the Government develops a coherent technical education option which develops the technical knowledge and skills required to enter skilled employment, which leads from levels 2/3 to levels 4/5 and beyond, and which is highly valued because it works in the marketplace.

Recommendation 2:

The technical education option should be recognised as having two modes of learning: employment-based (typically an apprenticeship) and college-based.

Recommendation 3:

While it is necessary for government to design the overall national system of technical education, employer-designed standards must be put at its heart to ensure it works in the marketplace. A single, common framework of standards should cover both apprenticeships and college-based provision. These standards must be designed to deliver the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to perform successfully in specific occupations, not the narrower job role-focused needs of individual employers.

Recommendation 4:

We recommend the Government incentivises the development of short, flexible bridging provision to enable individuals to move, in either direction, between the academic and technical education options and to support adults returning to study.

Recommendation 5:

We recommend that a common framework of 15 routes is established which encompasses all employment-based and college-based technical education at levels 2 to 5. These routes are:

Agriculture	Engineering and Manufacturing
Environmental and Animal Care	Hair and Beauty
Business and Administrative	Health and Science
Catering and Hospitality	Legal, Finance and Accounting
Childcare and Education	Protective Services
Construction	Sales, Marketing and Procurement
Creative and Design	Social Care
Digital	Transport and Logistics

Recommendation 6:

The 15 technical education routes should provide training for skilled occupations where there is a substantial requirement for technical knowledge and practical skills. We are clear that occupations which require little or no technical knowledge and skill fall outside the scope of technical education.

Recommendation 7:

The remit of the Institute for Apprenticeships should be developed and expanded to encompass all of technical education at levels 2 to 5. The Institute should be responsible for assuring standards and bringing relevant experts together to agree the technical knowledge, practical skills and behaviours to be acquired in each route for both apprenticeships and college-based provision. This will allow the Institute to maintain a single, common framework of technical education standards, qualifications and quality assurance.

Recommendation 8:

While it is right for the Institute for Apprenticeships to be delegated wide-ranging autonomy across its operational brief, responsibility for key strategic decisions must be reserved for the Secretary of State. Crucially these decisions include those relating to the shape of the overall national system of technical education (such as adding new or removing existing routes, or changing the title of a route) if we are to ensure the new system remains coherent and stable over time.

Recommendation 9:

We recommend the Institute for Apprenticeships convenes panels of professionals to advise on the knowledge, skills and behaviours to be acquired for the standards in each route and on suitable assessment strategies. These professionals should be appointed in an individual capacity, not as representatives of their employers.

Recommendation 10:

Institute for Apprenticeships panel members should be remunerated from the public purse.

Recommendation 11:

At the earliest opportunity, the Institute for Apprenticeships reviews all existing apprenticeship standards to satisfy itself that there is no substantial overlap between standards, and that every standard is occupation- rather than firm-specific and contains sufficient technical content to warrant at least 20% off-the-job training. Standards found to be overlapping or wanting in terms of breadth or technical content should be revised, consolidated or withdrawn.

Recommendation 12:

We recommend the Government moves away from the current awarding organisation market model, where qualifications which deliver similar but different outcomes compete with one another, and instead adopts a licensing approach. Any technical education qualification at levels 2 and 3 should be offered and awarded by a single body or consortium, under a licence covering a fixed period of time following an open competition.

Recommendation 13:

The Institute for Apprenticeships should maintain a register of approved technical education qualifications at levels 4 and 5 that meet the standards set by its panels of professionals. Only qualifications on this register should be eligible for public subsidy.

Recommendation 14:

The Government should undertake further work to examine how to ensure clear progression routes develop from levels 4 and 5 to degree apprenticeships and other higher education at levels 6 and 7. This work should be carried out in the context of existing and proposed structures and funding rules for higher education provision in England.

Recommendation 15:

Every college-based route should begin with a two-year programme suitable for 16-18 year olds (although some individuals may take more or less time to complete it). Each of these two-year programmes should begin with a 'common core' which applies to all individuals studying that route and is aligned to apprenticeships.

Recommendation 16:

After the common core, individuals should specialise to prepare for entry into an occupation or set of occupations.

Recommendation 17:

We recommend that, in addition to any separate requirements as a result of the English and maths funding condition, there is a single set of maths and English 'exit' requirements governing college-based technical education and apprenticeships. These should be seen as the minimum level of maths or English which all individuals must achieve ahead of securing technical education certification, as is already the case for apprentices.

Recommendation 18:

In the longer term, as the quality of pre- and post-16 maths and English teaching and associated learner outcomes improve, government should raise maths and English requirements to reflect those of higher-performing international technical education systems.

Recommendation 19:

We recommend the Institute for Apprenticeships encourages its panels of professionals to incorporate additional, occupation-specific maths and English requirements into the standards for each route.

Recommendation 20:

In addition to work taster or short-duration work experience opportunities, every 16-18-year-old student following a two-year college-based technical education programme should be entitled to a high-quality, structured work placement. Successful completion of this work placement should be a requirement for full certification at the end of the study programme. As part of the work placement, the student, college and employer should complete a log book – ideally online – that evidences the key tasks the student has undertaken and what they have learnt.

Recommendation 21:

We recommend the Government makes additional funding available to colleges to support work placements for technical education students on college-based study programmes. We suggest the most straightforward way of doing this is to increase the base rate per student for each 16-18-year-old technical education student who successfully completes a work placement. Initial evidence suggests that such an uplift might need to be around £500 per placement, but further work will be required to set the precise figure.

Recommendation 22:

For both employment-based and college-based technical education at levels 2 and 3, there should be a single, nationally recognised certificate for each technical education route.

Recommendation 23:

For college-based technical education at levels 2 and 3, we recommend that the system of qualifications is simplified dramatically, with only one tech level qualification approved for each occupation or cluster of occupations.

Recommendation 24:

We recommend the Government restricts public subsidy for college-based technical education to that leading to qualifications approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships. This includes funding for 16-18 year olds and advanced learner loans available for adults aged 19 and older.

Recommendation 25:

For college-based technical education we recommend the Institute for Apprenticeships publishes guidance on the use of a range of common assessment strategies, makes assessment expertise available to the panels of professionals, and sets overarching quality criteria to apply to all tech levels.

Recommendation 26:

Regardless of the forms of assessment used, all qualifications in college-based technical education should assess both the common core for the relevant route and the specialist / occupation-specific knowledge and skills. The assessment of every technical education qualification should include realistic tasks as well as synoptic assessment which, together, should be designed to test a student's ability to integrate and apply their knowledge and skills. All qualifications should include external assessment to ensure comparability and reliability.

Recommendation 27:

Individuals who are not ready to access a technical education route aged 16 (or older if their education has been delayed) should be offered a 'transition year' to help them prepare for further study or employment. The transition year should be flexible and tailored to the student's prior attainment and aspirations.

Recommendation 28: We recommend the Government commissions additional work into the design and content of a transition year, while ensuring the key objective for the year is offering tailored provision with a sharp focus on basic skills and progression. Such work should be undertaken in good time to ensure the new transition year is available to students alongside first teaching of the technical education routes.

Recommendation 29:

We recommend the Government adopts the Gatsby benchmarks as the basis of a common national approach for careers education and guidance, and sets an expectation for schools and colleges to use the benchmarks when developing their careers provision.

Recommendation 30:

Government should support schools and colleges to embed into careers education and guidance, from an early age, details of the new 15 technical education routes, so that young people and their parents understand the range of different occupations available and how to reach them.

Recommendation 31:

The National Careers Service should review how it presents its career information and guidance in the light of our recommendations for reform of the technical education system.

Recommendation 32:

We recommend that the ONS examines how to make the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) more relevant for stakeholders – including expanding it to 5-digits. We further recommend that the Government explores how to make more occupational information available to the Institute for Apprenticeships, colleges and individuals by supplementing the nationally collected datasets with information from the American O*NET system and other sources.

Recommendation 33:

We recommend that, when national and local decisions about the provision and funding of technical education are being taken, consideration is given to restricting funding to colleges and training providers which meet clear criteria of quality, stability and an ability to maintain up-to-date equipment and infrastructure.

Recommendation 34:

We recommend the Government reviews what constitutes sufficient funding for technical education to deliver on its aims of meeting employer needs. This work should benchmark expenditure in England against that in other countries and be used to set appropriate funding levels for technical education when the new routes system is introduced.

For the full Report:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536043/Post-16_Skills_Plan.pdf

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