



Brussels, 20 December 2010
EAC/A1/PA D (2009)

Preparation of the 2012 Joint Report on the implementation of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020)

The Joint Report¹ is a main element of the open method of coordination in education and training and has **3 main functions**:

- (1) Report on progress on the implementation of ET2020
- (2) Ensure dialogue between the Commission, Member States and stakeholders on policy reforms
- (3) Provide the foundation for proposing new priority areas for the following cycle (probably 2012-14)

The link between the forthcoming ET2020 reporting exercise and Europe 2020 should be strong. Therefore, as discussed at the High Level Group meeting 1-2 December in Budapest, the structure will be as follows:

First, in order to ensure that countries demonstrate a clear link between their **National Reform Programmes** (NRPs) and the ET 2020 reporting, the first two pages of each national report should cover the education and training contribution to the NRP.

Secondly, also the **focus** of the next Joint Report will be on priority themes highlighted under the **Europe 2020 strategy**. While it is of course too soon to report on the implementation of Europe 2020, it is useful to establish a baseline for four key themes and the corresponding measures referring to the headline targets and flagship initiatives, which also figure high as priorities under the ET2020 strategic framework: early school leaving, tertiary education attainment (or equivalent), mobility (all covered by Youth on the Move), and elements of new skills and jobs. To report on Europe 2020 issues also under ET2020 would be justified by the fact that the National Reform Programmes will

¹ The Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training of 12 May 2009 say: “Progress reporting: at the end of each cycle — and in the case of the first under the new framework, no earlier than the beginning of 2012 — a joint Council-Commission report should be drawn up. This will evaluate the overall progress in achieving the objectives under this framework during the most recent cycle and/or in a particular thematic area which would be defined by the Commission in cooperation with the Member States. Joint reports should be based on national reports drawn up by the Member States, as well as on existing information and statistical data. The joint reports may be developed to include factual analyses of the different situations in individual Member States, with their full agreement. The joint reports should also serve as the basis for establishing a fresh set of priority areas for the following cycle.”

be short political documents and provide limited space for setting out education and training issues. The ET 2020 national reports will go more into depth than is possible in the Europe 2020 context (NRPs and Annual Growth Survey).

Finally, it is suggested to ask Member States for their ideas concerning the priorities of the subsequent ET2020 cycle.

Please see annex for the guidance note based on this structure.

ANNEX

Guidance Note for the 2011 national reports

Practical information:

The following sections set out a structure for the national reports. In the interests of receiving reports which are comparable, please respect this structure and provide information on all elements of the guidelines.

When producing your contribution, please take account of the following:

- Reports should be around 20 pages. They may be written in your own language but where they are not written in EN, FR or DE a translation of your report into one of these languages is kindly requested.
- Reports should describe and analyse individual countries' progress on the implementation of the chosen elements and in line with the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). Focus should therefore be on developments since 2009. Reports should give the information necessary to present a valid and coherent view of the current priorities and developments. The purpose is not to describe national education and training systems in full and in detail, as this information is available through Eurydice and Cedefop. If you have provided relevant information in other reports to the Commission, Eurydice or Cedefop please cross refer to the relevant portion of that report.
- Examples of specific measures / good practices are requested for illustrative purposes, but the emphasis should be placed on the overall approach taken by your country to the development / reform of the systems. Such examples should be annexed to your report (they do not count towards the 20 page limit).
- If you have consulted social partners and stakeholders in the preparation of the national report, please let us know.
- When referring to a new policy, please give a clear indication of its title, year of adoption and the state of play concerning its implementation. References for further enquiries should also be supplied, in particular websites, but also contact points or other relevant documentation.
- For your information please find under this link http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc36_en.htm the list “European Co-operation: Main policy initiatives” which include references and links to the main documents referred to in these guidelines. The European Commission website on Education and Training also contains a wealth of information:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm.

Member States are kindly requested to send their contributions by 29 April 2011 to: eac-unite-a1@ec.europa.eu and Pernille.Andersen1@ec.europa.eu. When you send your report, please include the name and contact information for the person who has coordinated the work on your national report.

CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMMES (approx. 2 PAGES)

QUESTION 1

Please provide a summary of the main education and training elements in your National Reform Programme (NRP):

The Government is committed to creating an education and skills system that is responsive to the needs of employers and learners, and ensures that there are open routes for individuals from wherever they begin, to enable them to succeed in work. Skills are vital for our future and essential to building sustainable growth and stronger communities. A skilled workforce is also necessary to stimulate the private-sector growth that will bring new jobs and new prosperity for people across the UK. In England there remains an attainment gap between pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds. A strong and inclusive education and skills system is fundamental to narrowing this gap. Education and skills are a devolved power, with each of the administrations making their own policy decisions.

The Government is committed to reform every stage of education and skills provision, moving away from a culture of bureaucratic central planning towards a system that responds better to the needs of employers and benefits learners. The reforms will raise standards and enable learners, particularly those who have the greatest need, to gain the required and necessary qualifications in order to secure and progress in work, and play a full part in society.

In particular the Government will: place teachers firmly at the heart of school improvement and free schools from the constraints of central government direction; improve vocational education, including by taking forward recommendations from the *Wolf Report* on vocational training; and expand the University Technical Colleges programme to establish at least 24 new colleges by 2014.

The Government in November 2010 published *The Importance of Teaching*³⁰. This set out a radical reform programme for the English schools system, with schools freed from the constraints of central government direction and teachers placed firmly at the heart of school improvement. Following the ambitions set out in the White Paper, there are now more than 450 academies open, and the first free schools are due to be open in September 2011. The Government is also developing a new National Curriculum that will set out only the essential knowledge that all children should acquire, and gives teachers greater professional freedom over how they organise and teach the school curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils. The Skills Strategy, *Skills for Sustainable Growth*³¹, published in November 2010, sets out the Government's reform plans for the further education and the skills system based on the Coalition principles of fairness, responsibility and freedom. The Strategy ensures that all those who have left school without basic skills in literacy and numeracy will continue to have access to state funded training, with those without a first full level 2 or 3 qualification eligible for fully funded training until the age of 24. It also sets out a system of government backed loans from the 2013-14 academic year to help individuals finance other intermediate and higher-level qualifications to help them realise their potential within the labour market. In 2013-14, £129 million will be available for further education loans and £398 million in 2014-15. The Strategy also establishes a new National Careers Service from April 2012, building on the existing provision to offer more intensive support for those with greatest need, to ensure that they have sufficient information to make their next career move.

The Government is committed to improving vocational education. Following an independent review, the *Wolf Report*³², completed on 3 March 2011, the Government is keen to take forward the following recommendations: to enable Further Education lecturers to teach in schools on the same basis as teachers; to clarify the rules relating to other professionals teaching vocational subjects in schools; to remove the requirement for vocational qualifications for 14-19 year-olds to fit within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF); and for the Secretary of State for Education to temporarily approve a small number of key qualifications which have lost their accreditation due to the introduction of the QCF. The Strategy aspires to ensure that vocational education serves the purpose of creating and maintaining opportunities for all young people. The Government will issue a formal response in late spring detailing how it will be taking the recommendations forward. The Government currently supports a network of University Technical Colleges (UTCs) which offer full time courses for students aged 14 to 19 that combine practical and academic studies. The UTCs are sponsored by a university, which allows colleges to use specialist facilities and teaching from university staff, but also prepares students for higher education. Employers also play a major part in the UTCs, providing work placements and ensuring that qualifications that students gain reflect local labour market needs. The Government announced at Budget 2011 that it would expand the University Technical Colleges programme to establish at least 24 new colleges by 2014.

The Government will not set national targets in education in response to the headline targets agreed by the European Council in June 2010. Instead, the NRP refers to relevant impact indicators set out in the Department's business plan - attainment at age 16 and attainment at age 19. This approach is in line with the overall approach we are taking across Government to the Europe 2020 strategy and targets.

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING (approx. 3 PAGES)

QUESTION 2

What measures has your country taken to reduce early school leaving?

2.1 Measures to analyse current situation and monitor developments in early school leaving (e.g. data collection, surveys and research):

In **England**, we publish comprehensive data on the number and proportion of 16-18 year olds participating in education and training and those not in education, employment or training (NEET) in an annual Statistical First Release. We also produce a quarterly brief that draws together relevant data on the proportion of 16-24 year olds NEET, including data drawn from the Labour Force Survey.

Local authorities in England maintain a Client Caseload Information System database which they use to monitor young people's participation, helping them to target support on those young people who are at risk of not participating.

There is also a wealth of current and ongoing research on this policy area in England, including the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE), which provides helpful information on the risk factors and outcomes associated with young people becoming NEET. The latest bulletin is available at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000937/index.shtml>

In **Scotland**, we analyse the current situation and monitor developments through national data (School Leaver Destination Report and Labour Force Survey); and through the improved systems and processes established in local authority-led partnerships to track and monitor individual young people and their post-16 learning choices.

In addition, Skills Development Scotland (our national skills agency) is developing a 16+ Learning Choices Data Hub which will articulate a wide range of information on young people and their learning pathways to inform the delivery of support and opportunities to help them stay in learning after age 16.

2.2 Please indicate the areas of priority areas your country is focusing on (e.g. target groups, educational sectors):

In **England**, we want to focus strongly on prevention measures to stop potential problems from developing into barriers to participation that cause young people to disengage from education. Research shows that attainment at age 16 is the best predictor of later participation and attainment and our ambitious reforms to schools and to early education will help to raise standards.

We are focusing resources on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds from the earliest years, as we know that this group is less likely to attain and to participate. For instance, we are extending 15 hours of early education to the 20% most disadvantaged 2 year olds, whilst the Pupil Premium will provide schools with extra funding to raise the attainment of disadvantaged students.

Parents, head teachers and teachers know best how to support young people and we want to give them the freedom and flexibility to do this. That is why we are increasing the number of Academies and introducing new Free Schools which grant parents, head teachers and teachers more freedom and flexibility.

In **Scotland**, the curriculum reform underway through Curriculum for Excellence promotes a broad general education followed by opportunities to develop the skills for learning, life and work in a wide range of contexts and settings. A review of the post-16 education and vocational training system is also currently underway; it aims to develop a single, coherent system.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Department of Education (DE) has set ambitious targets to increase the proportion of school leavers achieving Level 2 qualifications, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Good progress is being made, with the proportion achieving at this level (i.e. 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and Maths) increasing from 53% of school leavers in 2006 to 59% in 2009, but it is recognised that much remains to be done to achieve a target of 70% by 2020 and in particular to raise the achievement of school leavers from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

To achieve these targets, DE is putting in place a range of inter-connected policies:

- *Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement*² introduced from April 2009, stresses the importance of having high expectations for all our young people and focuses on promoting the characteristics that make for a good school (identified as child-centred provision, high quality teaching and learning, effective leadership and a school connected to its community)..
- The introduction (between 2007-2010) of a **revised curriculum** designed to ensure a focus on literacy and numeracy (and ICT) but also includes a focus on developing the skills, attitudes and dispositions for learning and employment (such as creativity, problem solving and team-working) and a specific area of Personal Development & Mutual Understanding/Learning for Life and Work, which covers personal development, citizenship, employability and Home Economics.
- A recently published **literacy and numeracy strategy** (*Count, read: succeed*).
- The **Entitlement Framework** (see 2.3) which counter-balances reduced core of the revised curriculum after the age of 14 with vocational courses.
- A range of programmes aimed at **tackling the barriers to learning** that may lead to poor attendance and achievement. These include policies on special educational needs and inclusion, an early years (0-6) strategy, extended and full service schools programmes, a Pupils' Emotional Health and Well-being Programme, and support targeted at specific groups of pupils such as school age mothers, Traveller children, Newcomer children, looked after children and young carers.

2.3 Measures to prevent early school leaving. Please mention the most effective measures taken at system level, at school level and in support of individual pupils/learners:

The most important factor in influencing young people's participation post-16 is good attainment at 16, so our preventative approach focuses first and foremost on raising attainment in schools.

In **England**, the Government published a White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, which set out a clear programme of reform to help raise standards for all children. Some of the key measures set out in this were:

- Funding primary schools to support the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics as the best way to help children make rapid progress in reading;
- Ensuring that children benefit from a broad education and a firm grip on the basics by creating the English Baccalaureate – good GCSEs in English, maths, two science subjects, history or geography and a language.
- Devolving power to heads and teachers, who know best how to raise standards, increasing the number of Academies and introducing new Free Schools.
- Providing schools with extra funding to spend specifically on interventions that can support the attainment of disadvantaged pupils through the Pupil Premium.

² For further information, see http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/03-schools_impvt_prog_pg.htm.

We are also freeing up local authorities to invest in a preventative approach. A key element of this is the creation of a new Early Intervention Grant (EIG) for local authorities in England. This substantial new funding stream replaces a number of disparate centrally-driven grants and will not be ring-fenced, providing significant extra flexibility and freedom at a local level.

In **Scotland**, the Government has rolled out 16+ Learning Choices as the national post-16 transition planning model to help all young people stay in learning after age 16; this aims to ensure an offer of appropriate post-16 learning for every young person who wants it. There are no plans in Scotland for raising the school leaving age, as in England.

Moreover, in Scotland, there is the More Choices, More Chances strategy which focuses specifically on groups at increased risk; and, although 16+ Learning Choices is a universal model, it gives systematic priority to those most at risk of moving into a negative post-16 destination. In addition, the More Choices, More Chances strategy focuses a number of key policies on improving school leaver destinations and progression into employment. This is driving a multi-agency partnership approach led by individual local authorities which takes account of the needs of individual young people as well as local circumstances.

In **Northern Ireland**, since 2004, the Department for Employment & Learning and the Department of Education have been working closely on collaboration between mainstream schools and FE Colleges for age group 14-19, initially through the Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP) and more recently through the pilots for the Entitlement Framework.

The Entitlement Framework will mean that at least one third of the curriculum offered in post primary schools will be professional and technical (vocational) in nature, although individual pupils can decide not to take up this offer and follow an exclusively academic route instead.

2.4 Measures to compensate early school leaving. Please mention the most effective measures taken:

In **England**, the Government has announced that it is committed to raise the participation age to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015 so that all 16-17 year olds participate in education or training, building the skills and qualifications they need for higher education and sustainable employment.

We have also set out specific measures that will help disadvantaged young people participate in education and training, including increasing the proportion of funding in the national formula which addresses deprivation, the first step towards a more transparent approach to reflecting deprivation in 16-19 funding in the longer term.

We will continue to fully fund training for young people without a first full level 2 or 3 qualification up to age 24 and are committed to improving and expanding Apprenticeships. We will reshape the programme so that Advanced Level Apprenticeships (Level 3) become the level to which learners and employers aspire and funding will increase to over £1,400 million in the 2011-12 financial year, sufficient to support up to 360,000 Apprenticeships.

Unemployed 18-24 year olds will have priority entry, at 9 months of their claim, to our groundbreaking Work Programme, launching this summer. Disadvantaged young people, such as care leavers, will be eligible after 3 months. We are also taking a number of other measures to Get Britain Working, including an enhanced offer of work experience for first time jobseekers and supporting Work Clubs where people can exchange skills and experiences.

In **Scotland**, the Government's Skills Strategy; the robust More Choices, More Chances Strategy (for reducing the proportion of 16-19 year olds NEET) and the Adult Literacies Strategy take full account of the need for 'second chances'.

TERTIARY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT (approx. 3 PAGES)

QUESTION 3

What measures has your country taken to increase tertiary (or equivalent) education attainment?

3.1 Measures to increase entry rates to higher education, including widening access to under-represented groups:

The demand for higher education places has been increasing. In response to this demand, the Government announced in May 2010 that it was enabling universities **in England** to recruit an additional 10,000 students in the academic year 2010/11. In December 2010, the Government announced that it would retain these 10,000 extra places for the academic year 2011/12.

Higher Education Institutions in England will now be able to charge students up to £9,000 a year for their education. The Government believes that any university that wishes to charge over £6,000 has a responsibility to take action to widen participation. Institutions will be required to focus more sharply on the outcomes of outreach and other activities. In particular the government believes that much more determined action now needs to be taken. Therefore, universities and colleges that want to charge above £6,000 for any of their courses will first have to commit to tough access agreements with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA).

Access agreements will include a requirement for universities to invest some of their additional tuition charge income in access. They will have to show progress against appropriate benchmarks to demonstrate that they are taking their obligations to widening participation seriously. Participation in the new National Scholarship Programme (NSP) is mandatory for universities wishing to charge over £6,000.

Available for students entering higher education from autumn 2012, the NSP is designed to help students from families with low incomes (below £25,000 a year). It will, however, be for HE institutions to decide who to help from this broad group according to their own priorities. HE institutions will also be responsible for making individual awards to students and will publicise their NSP awards schemes on their websites. The Government will contribute £50m to the NSP in the financial year 2012-13, with a £100m contribution in 2013-14, and £150m in 2014-15. Institutions charging above £6,000 will have to match fund any Government contribution at a rate of at least 1:1. Those charging less than £6,000 will match fund at a minimum of 50% of this level. In the first year, we have agreed that the Director of Fair

Access can apply discretion in the level of match funding required where the match funding pressures would be very high and the effect would be that the institution would be unable to invest effectively in outreach activities.

In **Scotland**, access to higher education continues to be free. The Scottish Government meets the cost of the tuition fees for all eligible, full-time students who are ordinarily resident in Scotland, or other parts of the EU (outwith the UK).

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is refocusing four regional schools programmes into the new Schools for Higher Education programme. With more focused funding for academic years 2011-12 and 2012-13, the programme supports regional collaboration between schools, colleges and universities to increase progression to higher education.

This new programme focuses activity on school pupils in upper secondary school. Activity is aimed at pupils at risk of not achieving their full potential and is targeted at schools identified in each region, based on a 5 year average, as having less than 22% average progression to HE. It will establish baselines against which future performance can be measured and track, with the support of Skills Development Scotland, the progression of pupils.

3.2 Measures to improve completion rates of students in higher education:

In **England**, the Government has increased the focus on retention as part of the development of access agreements. The Government has asked the Director for Fair Access to consider the role of student retention when developing access agreements and benchmarks. The UK has a good performance on retention – we are ranked third in OECD’s list of how countries perform. But performance across the sector varies widely. How well an institution performs on retention can be an indicator of how well they perform on access issues more generally. So the Government is very keen to those universities that do least well improve.

In **Scotland**, between 2007 and 2010, funding known as the Widening Access Retention Premium (WARP), was allocated to HEIs with two aims: to support institutions in improving the experience of learners with potential from disadvantaged backgrounds and to develop and apply appropriate strategies for improving retention in general.

A review of this period of funding has recently taken place. While there has been an improvement in retention overall, the evidence suggests a need for a more targeted allocation of funding that better responds to the specific challenges different institutions face. The retargeting means that all institutions will continue to receive funding aimed at improving retention. However, those institutions which recruit large numbers of students from the most deprived neighbourhoods will receive additional funding and will be asked to complete outcome agreements, showing how they intend to use the funding and the retention outcomes they would anticipate that the funding will then achieve.

MOBILITY (approx. 2.5 PAGES)

QUESTION 4

What measures has your country taken to promote learning mobility?

4.1 Measures to promote outgoing/incoming learning mobility of students in different education sectors (schools, VET, higher education, adults):

Schools

Schools are also encouraged to make full use of the available technology to effect 'virtual' mobility, both through the Comenius programme and other UK international programmes. The international programmes are currently being revised due to budgetary constraints and their continuation will be decided later in 2011.

The Education Department in England has a Memorandum of Understanding with the French Education Ministry to promote links and exchanges between schools at all levels.

VET and Adults

The UK has an established National Europass Centre (NEC), a National Contact Point for Professional Qualifications (NCP), a National Co-ordinator for European Credit for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), as well as four National Contact Points for ECVET in each of the devolved administrations. Each of these bodies is concerned with mobility for either a specific educational sector or across several sectors.

The NEC also engages with the individual national agencies primarily concerned with mobility, in particular Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius and Youth in Action. This work results in the joint promotion events and wider dissemination of the opportunities for mobility.

The NCP responds to the directive 2005/36 focussed on professional recognition in the EU and mobility of professionals. It works closely with the national Co-ordinator to ensure the views of the competent authorities are presented at network meetings, highlighting any recognition issues as they arise and provide guidance on the Code of Conduct or clarity on specific areas of the directive as required.

The National Contact Points for ECVET are currently coordinating various pilot projects being carried out in the UK to test the various approaches to the application of credit to UK VET.

HE

The second phase of the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI2), which came to an end in March 2011, encouraged collaborative links between UK HEIs and the rest of the world. 339 HE partnerships have been created: Small scale outgoing mobility projects have been established as part of the partnerships strand; and there was a target to recruit 70,000 incoming mobile students.

The UK government has initiated and funded a highly successful and very oversubscribed series of China Summer/Easter study schools. Six such programmes have been held since the summer of 2007, allowing over 1400 UK students in total to spend 3 weeks in China and develop business, cultural and language skills. 125 Chinese graduates will also come to work in the UK in 2010/11

The government also initiated the UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI), which funds the Study India programme. Study India sends 200 UK students to India each year for a period of 3 weeks to learn about Indian culture, and the language.

New bilateral programmes with India and China will commence in 2011 and run for 5 years. These are a new phase of UKIERI and the UK China Partners in Education (UKCIPE) initiative. Two-way mobility is a key feature of both of these new initiatives.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government has provided three years worth of funding to an NUS Scotland led project “*Students Without Borders*” to promote outward mobility of Scottish students. In addition to this the Government provides funding to the IAESTE – International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience – to allow Scottish students to undertake technical placements of a few months duration in 60 other countries worldwide. Further to this, the Government’s funding of the Fulbright Commission has provided resources to enable an academic to carry out research relating to Scottish Studies, and develop institutional links with the US.

4.2 Measures to promote outgoing/incoming learning mobility of teachers and other education professionals in different education sectors (schools, VET, higher education, adults)?

Schools, VET and Adults

The UK runs a Comenius programme focused on Qualified Teacher exchange, enabling teaching professionals to spend a week or two in another European country school. This enables the Teachers to exchange different experiential perspectives highlighting areas of best practice.

The Comenius Primary Teacher Project provides one week’s work shadowing in another country for primary teachers who are planning to teach languages. The Department for Education in England and the Welsh Government provide additional funding to schools as part of the project. This funding provides staff cover for the teachers who are undertaking placements.

In England we are currently developing a range of opportunities for teacher mobility with countries that hold a strategic importance – eg France and the USA. The Anglo-French Memorandum of Understanding promotes the exchange of language assistants between the two countries in early years; primary and secondary schools.

The Transversal Programme is also available in the UK and is managed by ECORYS, this is primarily for experienced educational professionals from all education sectors. Educational experts are invited from various countries and are taken to different institutions or situations within that country, and are asked to report back in an evaluative context, highlighting areas of good practice and if appropriate areas of concern.

HE

The UK participates in the Erasmus academic exchange strand which saw 1,173 academic staff undertake a mobility period in Europe in 2009/10.

4.3 Steps to identify and reduce the obstacles to learning mobility?

VET and Adults

The Department for Business Innovation and Skills manages all the agencies and instruments mentioned above. They focus on ensuring that enough work is being done to promote mobility across all sectors of the population, and where there is little representation of a certain sectors of society work closely with the individual national agencies to ensure this is addressed and to assist the agencies of ways forward. It is also the responsibility of the individual agencies to flag up areas of difficulty relating to the engagement of individuals to the individual programmes and establish ways around this.

HE

Financial obstacles to credit mobility:

There is financial support for Erasmus students which the Government has traditionally made available. Students who spend a full academic year abroad on Erasmus do not have to pay a tuition fee for that year. Institutions are compensated for the loss of fee income from the Government the block grant. Students also remain entitled to maintenance grants and other loans which they would be entitled to in the UK.

An income assessed grant is available for students who have to attend an overseas institution for at least half of an academic quarter (i.e. a term) as part of their course. In 2009/10 the grant is equal to the amount a student reasonably has to pay for travel expenses – less the first £303. The grant can also be used to cover the costs of medical insurance, visas and vaccinations.

The UK and US Governments jointly fund the Fulbright Commission. This is an organisation which specifically funds scholarships and, through the Education USA network, helps students apply for studies in the USA.

The UK Government funds several scholarship schemes to attract bright students from around the world to study at UK universities. This includes the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Chevening Scholarships programme. The programme operates in over 150 countries and funds more than 2,300 students to study in the UK each year.

Academic recognition as an obstacle:

Credit transfer and recognition between EU member states has been facilitated, so that UK Erasmus students receive academic recognition for their study or work abroad. Students may be awarded a second qualification in recognition of their Erasmus placement, and credits can be transferred. An Erasmus placement does not add to the duration of a student's course and is formally acknowledged on degree transcripts.

NEW SKILLS AND JOBS (approx. 2.5 PAGES)

QUESTION 5

What measures has your country taken to improve the assessment of future skills requirements matching since 2009?

5.1 Recent measure to improve skills forecasting (in addition to information provided through Eurydice in June 2010):

In **England**, the Government published in November 2010 its strategy for skills, ‘*Skills for Sustainable Growth Strategy*’³, which sets out a vision for radical reform of the Further Education and Skills system to deliver skills for sustainable growth, based on the Coalition principles of fairness, responsibility and freedom.

The key points from the strategy, in relation to skills forecasting are as follows:

- We need employers to get involved, to shape the system and utilise the skills of their workforce, so that they get the most from their investment. We will support employers in implementing proposals they make for raising their game on skills.
- To enable colleges and training organisations to respond to the needs of business and learners, we will free them from bureaucratic control and radically simplify the adult funding system.
- We will support employers in addressing their skills needs through a new growth and innovation fund, including inviting proposals around new professional standards to drive industry competitiveness.

In **Scotland**, the refreshed skills strategy “*Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth*” sets out a clear ambition for a flexible, responsive skills system driven by what the labour market most needs. The provision of skills and training opportunities will continue to be aligned to demand and opportunities identified by the Sector Skills Councils and Industry Advisory Groups. As part of this a new Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) framework will be established which sets out a clear strategy for improving LMI provision and access in the future and the organisations responsible for implementation. Skills Development Scotland, working with Industry Advisory Groups, has also developed a model of Skills Investment Plans for key and core sectors in the economy. This approach attempts to provide a detailed projection of short, medium and long term employment demand across sectors, articulate strategic skills needs and identify how the skills, education and careers guidance systems will work together to address them. The most notable progress has been in the energy sector, where the Energy Skills Investment Plan is now making an impact on skills and training provision for energy across the lifelong learning system.

5.2 Recent measures to take the results on board in education and training planning processes, information and guidance:

In **England**, the Skills Strategy also outlined developments to education and training systems as follows:

³ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Skills for Sustainable Growth – strategy document, November 2010: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf>

- Learners will be able to select training and qualifications designed and valued by business, and which are offered by a broad range of autonomous colleges and training organisations.
- By 2014-15, we will expand the numbers of adult Apprenticeships available by up to 75,000, leading to in excess of 200,000 starts a year.
- We will ensure those who have left school without basic skills in literacy and numeracy have access to free training, and we will make that training more effective.
- We will provide a state subsidy for targeted provision for people who are actively seeking work and on Jobseekers' Allowance and Employment Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group) to help them obtain work.
- We will provide financial support to small and medium sized companies to co-fund the costs of training at Level 2 (5 GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent).

In **Scotland**, the refreshed Skills for Scotland strategy and Budget for 2011-12 makes clear the commitment to prioritise investment in education and skills:

- For 2011-12 the higher education sector has agreed that core university student places will be maintained while, in addition to maintaining core places at 10-11 levels, investment of £8m will help support 1,200 extra college places
- Following 20,000 starts in each of the past two years, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) will provide a record 25,000 Modern Apprenticeships in 2011-12 – the highest ever number in Scotland - and 14,500 opportunities for the unemployed.
- Co-commissioning of pre-employment support has been designed to ensure that interventions are aligned to local labour market need.
- In response to employer demand for shorter, sharper training SDS will also provide an extra 2,000 flexible training opportunities to support smaller businesses seeking to invest in training, taking the total to 7,000.
- Investment of £2.5 million will increase Small Business Employment Support, providing financial subsidies to small businesses that face particular challenges in meeting the miscellaneous cost of recruiting additional staff.
- In response to constrained labour market conditions a new £10m Community Jobs Scotland fund will see the Scottish Government work with the third sector to provide 2,000 work and training opportunities for young people across Scotland
- In March 2011 the Scottish Government published *Career Information Advice and Guidance in Scotland: A Framework for Service Redesign and Improvement*⁴, making clear this the commitment to all-age, universal Career IAG as a central feature of the Scottish skills system.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Education Minister is a member of the Executive's sub-group on the Economy. The sub-group is taking forward work to develop a new economic strategy (issued for consultation from January to February 2011), which has highlighted the central role of education in shaping the workforce of the future, in particular by raising aspirations and standards (see 2.2) and

⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/11110615/0>

giving priority to the fundamentals of literacy, numeracy and ICT and improving the uptake of STEM subjects to meet economic needs.

EDUCATION BUDGETS (approx. 2 PAGES)

QUESTION 6

How has the economic and financial crisis affected education and training budgets in your country (please refer to developments in particular education sectors, if appropriate)?

Schools and Early Years

Within the tight spending limits currently in place, the Government has prioritised areas which support long term growth including schools, early years provision, and apprenticeships.

Although the education and training budget has been relatively protected in comparison to other policy areas, resources are still much more constrained than in previous years. This has meant difficult trade-offs within our budget, with resources prioritised towards core universal frontline services and services which protect the most disadvantaged children and young people:

- The schools budget will allow for a £2.5 billion pupil premium to support attainment of the most disadvantaged and provide incentives for good schools to take on pupils from poorer backgrounds;
- 3 and 4 year olds will continue to receive 15 hours free early years education which is going to be expanded to all disadvantaged 2 year olds;
- A national network of Sure Start Children's Centres will continue to offer universal services for all families and targeted services focused on the neediest families.;
- To allow schools and colleges to manage the rise in young people wanting a place in learning – which has been propelled by record youth unemployment – 16-19 provision will be expanded in line with the commitment to raise the participation age to 18 by 2015.

Prioritisation of resources consistent with Value for Money considerations has also meant reducing the department's administrative budget by one-third by 2014-15 and expecting schools and other frontline services to make further efficiencies.

The Government is making more fundamental reforms to *how* resources are spent to transform the education system – for example through:

- Opening up markets and encouraging a diversity of providers, including greater access for the voluntary and community sector;
- Giving schools and local authorities greater flexibility over their budgets.

Further Education

Funding will be prioritised on supporting Further Education and Skills where it has greatest impact. This means supporting learners with very low levels of skills, unemployed people,

adult apprenticeships, and giving a second chance to 19 up to 24 year olds without a secondary level qualification.

Those on Job Seekers Allowance will be able to access a flexible skills offer consisting of full qualifications and units that will help them enter employment. Full funding is being focussed on these benefit recipients because they are already close to the labour market and are more likely to enter employment than people on other types of benefits.

There will be an expectation that learners and employers will co-invest alongside Government in meeting the costs of intermediate and higher level training courses from which they will derive private benefits. The introduction of new FE loans from the 2013/14 academic year for learners aged 24 years or more on courses above secondary level 3 and above will mean that those who benefit most will make a greater contribution to the costs of their courses, but will only be expected to do so when they themselves are realising those benefits in the form of a good salary.

The abolition, merger and transfer out to either the FE or private sector of over 15 organisations will ensure that public funds are diverted from funding bureaucracy to the delivery of training and skills.

Higher Education

In **England** the Government aims to make more investment available for higher education, as the current system puts a limit on the level of funding available. Reforms being introduced are intended to introduce more investment in higher education.

From autumn 2012, universities in England will be able to charge up to £9,000 a year for courses, but will need to meet much tougher conditions on widening participation. The Government is committed to fairness within its higher education funding reforms, therefore no undergraduate student will be expected to pay these charges up front, as subsidised loans will cover these costs. Repayment of student loans will only commence when students have completed their learning and are earning a salary of £21,000 or more (increased annually in line with earnings from 2016) and any outstanding repayments will be written off after 30 years.

The Government is also putting in place a more progressive maintenance package, with an increased Maintenance Grant worth £3,250 for all those from households with an income up to £25,000 and increased loans for living costs of up to £5,500 (or up to £7,675 for students living away from home and studying in London).

In Scotland, despite the university budget having been reduced for academic year 2011-12, the Scottish Government has agreed with the sector that the core number of student places will be maintained in 2011-12. To identify a sustainable approach to funding Scottish higher education over the longer-term, the Scottish Government started a dialogue with the sector last March. This process culminated in the launch of a green paper on 16 December 2010. A copy of this paper can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/12/15125728/0> and the responses to it at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/16095224/0>. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning made an initial response to the green paper on 16 March

2011. Scottish Ministers will consider how best to take this process forward, after the next elections to the Scottish Parliament which take place on 5 May 2011.

LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES (approx. 2 PAGES)

QUESTION 7

What progress has your country made in the development and implementation of a coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategy?

7.1 Does your country have such a strategy (please indicate where it is laid down):

In **England**, we will offer every adult a Lifelong Learning Account bringing together information about available grant funding and learning opportunities as well as access to new government-backed loans

Lifelong Learning Accounts will be the single gateway to information on all forms of financial support for learning from Government. Using the Next Step web portal, a wide range of information and support will be available to account holders and when Further Education loans become available they will be recorded on the account statement. This will provide a single personalised access point for an individual's data on all forms of financial and non-financial support.

We will establish an all-age careers service providing high quality, professional careers guidance to young people and adults, with intensive support available for those with greatest need.

Funding for adult and community learning will be protected through the Spending Review as the Government recognises that learning for its own sake supports personal development, stronger families, inclusive communities and social justice. To ensure that this funding is targeted effectively on the most disadvantaged communities and properly audited, the Government is working with the sector to develop a new model that will reform and reinvigorate this area of learning.

In **Scotland**, *Skills for Scotland – A lifelong Skills Strategy* was published in 2007 and refreshed in 2010⁵ to reflect the more challenging economic environment that Scotland faces. The refreshed skills strategy sets out a flexible, responsive, partnership approach to meeting Scotland's skills needs at a crucial point in our economic recovery.

Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) in Scotland continue to provide a key demand-focused source of funding for workforce development and lifelong learning. A new system of full Personal Learning Accounts is also being considered within the Review of Post 16 Education and Vocational Training, due to report to Scottish Ministers in May 2011.

⁵ www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/skills-strategy

The Scottish Government has also developed an Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) Curriculum Framework, a new professional qualification to up-skill the workforce and drive up quality, as well as developing a range of resources to help improve provision.

The Budget for 2011-12 continued to prioritise investment in education and training opportunities for people of all ages, with around 100,000 new training opportunities available over the year.

7.2 Please briefly refer to the main measures addressing the principles of shared responsibility, effective financial mechanisms, flexible pathways and quality initial and targeted continuing training:

In **England**, the Government is committed to a timetable that will simplify funding arrangements for publicly funded Further Education and skills provision, covering the period from the academic year 2010/11 to 2013/14. These measures will free colleges and training organisations from central control and centrally determined targets and give them the flexibility so that they are better able to respond to and be accountable for the needs of the learners, employers and communities they serve.

The Government has already given colleges and training organisations and, with the exception of those with poor performance, the freedom to move funding between their adult and employer responsive budgets. In the 2011/12 academic year, this will be followed up by the introduction of a single Adult Skills Budget, with the Skills Funding Agency setting out a minimum expectation of Apprenticeship delivery. Further funding simplification measures such as routing the payments for provision for learners aged 16-18 through the Skills Funding Agency will also be introduced.

In **Scotland**, the simplification of the skills system is a priority theme in the refreshed skills strategy. An integrated employment and skills (IES) service, led jointly by Skills Development Scotland and Jobcentre Plus, has now been rolled out across the whole of Scotland. The service aims to make it much quicker and easier for those seeking work to access relevant professional advice on career development and skills. Other initiatives include the development of a Career Information Advice and Guidance Strategy and the development of Skills Investment Plans and Skills Gateways for the key sectors of the Scottish economy.

The Scottish Government has also taken steps to ensure skills and training opportunities can be targeted to match the differentiated needs of residents and employers in local areas. SDS has been working with Community Planning Partnerships and Local Authorities to develop Service Delivery Agreements which reflect consideration of how SDS activities can be best aligned to contribute to local priorities.

New innovative models of co-investment in training are also being promoted, including the Flexible Training Opportunities scheme for SMEs which has been expanded to 7,000 training opportunities for 2011-12.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT REFORMS IN THE PRIORITY AREAS (approx. 2 PAGES)

QUESTION 8

What progress has your country made in making reforms in the priority areas not directly addressed in questions 2 – 7? (Please indicate relevant priority area and give a short description)

In **England**, the Government has consulted widely on educational reforms. In November 2010, the Government published its White Paper *The Importance of Teaching*⁶, and its Skills Strategy *Skills for Sustainable Growth Strategy*⁷. *The Importance of Teaching* sets out a radical reform programme for the English schools system, with schools freed from the constraints of central Government direction and teachers placed firmly at the heart of school improvement. *The Skills for Sustainable Growth Strategy* sets out a vision for radical reform of the Further Education and Skills system to deliver skills for sustainable growth, based on the Coalition principles of fairness, responsibility and freedom.

The White Paper on schools sets out changes, which include:

- teaching and leadership – with changes to teacher training and continuing professional development, led by National Teaching Schools. **[Link to ET 2020 strategic framework. Section 2.2 Professional development of teachers and trainers.]**
- curriculum, assessment and qualifications – with reviews of the curriculum, Key Stage 2 testing and vocational education, more support for phonics and a simple check of reading at age six, and the new English Baccalaureate **[Link to ET 2020 strategic framework. Section 2.1 Language learning – review of curriculum will cover language learning and 2.4 Basic skills in reading, mathematics and science]**
- funding – with a fairer system and more resources targeted at the most deprived pupils through the new Pupil Premium and a consultation on whether and how to introduce a fair and transparent national funding formula **[Link to ET 2020 strategic framework. Section 2.3 Governance and funding.]**

The Skills Strategy sets out changes, which include:

- We will ensure those who have left school without basic skills in literacy and numeracy have access to free training, and we will make that training more effective **[Link to ET 2020 Strategic Framework. 2.4 Basic skills in reading, mathematics and science]**

⁶ Department for Education, *The Importance of Teaching – White Paper*, November 2010: <http://www.education.gov.uk/b0068570/the-importance-of-teaching>

⁷ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, *Skills for Sustainable Growth – strategy document*, November 2010: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf>

- We will support employers in addressing their skills needs through a new growth and innovation fund, including inviting proposals around new professional standards to drive industry competitiveness. We will provide financial support to small and medium sized companies to co-fund the costs of training at Level 2. **[Link to ET 2020 Strategic Framework. Section 4.3 Partnership]**
- We will introduce government-backed loans from the 2013/14 academic year to help people finance intermediate and higher-level qualifications. We will simplify systems and processes with a much simpler funding system and greater alignment across pre- and post-19 systems. **[Link to ET 2020 strategic framework. Section 2.3 Governance and funding.]**

The Government is also committed to improving vocational education. **[Link to ET 2020 strategic framework. Section 2.3 Governance and funding – quality assurance framework for VET]**

- Following an independent review of vocational education, carried out by Professor Alison Wolf (and which concluded on March 3rd), the Government is keen to act on the following recommendations, including:
 - to clarify the rules relating to other professionals teaching vocational subjects in schools
 - to remove the requirement for vocational qualifications for 14-19 year-olds to fit within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

In **Scotland** key policy changes on vocational training include the introduction of employer incentives, co-commissioning of pre-employment training with Community Planning Partnerships and strategic use of European Social Funds to support the development of a cohesive employability and skills pipeline of support designed to move people toward closer to sustainable employment as a result of each intervention.

Willy Roe, the chair of Skills Development Scotland is currently carrying out a review of Post 16 Education and Vocational Training in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. This review is due to report in May 2011 and will likely focus on improving the relevance of provision to employers; ensuring funding is more closely aligned to the needs of learners and local labour markets and is less tied to the financial stability of providers; improving information to learners on labour market opportunities; and on improving the work experience element of vocational education and training provision

[Link to ET 2020 strategic framework. Section 2.3 Governance and funding.]

[Link to ET 2020 Strategic Framework. 2.4 Basic skills in reading, mathematics and science]

[Link to ET 2020 Strategic Framework. Section 4.3 Partnership]

PROPOSALS FOR THE PRIORITY AREAS OF THE SUBSEQUENT PERIOD (APPROX. 1 PAGE)

QUESTION 9

Under the 4 broad strategic objectives, described below, the Council also defined mid-term priority areas for the period 2009-11. Which mid-term priority areas would your country wish to cooperate on during the next cycle (please indicate order of priority – high, medium, low)?

9.1 Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality:

- Med – EQF validation/ learning outcomes
- Med - Lifelong learning strategies
- Med – Expanding learning mobility

9.2 Improving quality and efficiency of education and training:

- High – HE modernisation
- High – New skills and jobs
- Med – Evidence based policy and practice
- Med – Basic skills (reading, maths and science)
- Med – Language competences
- Med – Professional development of teachers and trainers
- Low – Vet quality assurance

9.3 Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship:

- Med - Early school leaving
- Low – Pre-primary education
- Low – migrant children
- Low – Learners with special needs

9.4 Enhancing innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training:

- Med – Innovation friendly institutions
- Med – Partnership

- Low – Transversal key competences

9.5 Other comments:

The UK Government is in favour of pursuing European cooperation through exchange of good practice, and the Open Method of Coordination.

Considering Member State subsidiarity for Education, we need to be cautious about the scope of future Council instruments to ensure that they fully respect this principle. We will consider future texts on a case by case basis in this light. Also, at a time of decreasing resources for international and European work, we are keen to see fewer EU policy initiatives.

In addition, due to the pressure on resources, we would urge the Commission not to time future national reporting under ET 2020 so that it coincides with Member States production of Europe 2020 NRPs.