



## **Department for Education and Employment**

# **News**

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### **NEW VOCATIONAL GCSEs TO RAISE STANDARDS: BLUNKETT**

Education and Employment Secretary David Blunkett today confirmed that new vocational GCSEs will be introduced in 2002 to replace Foundation, Intermediate and Part One GNVQs as the new vocational alternative for 14 to 16 year-olds. Vocational GCSEs will be available in subjects including manufacturing, information technology, health care and engineering and will enable young people to move on to apprenticeships and into jobs. They will also help in the drive to tackle truancy among disaffected young people.

This will put in place a further rung in the coherent ladder of vocational learning, rooted in school and moving through Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships into Foundation Degrees and work-based qualifications.

Mr Blunkett said:

"Vocational GCSEs mark an important milestone in our continuing commitment to ensuring that young people have access to high standard vocational qualifications. The vocational GCSE will make it easier for young people to get good jobs or to go on to college or university. They will offer a powerful new tool for motivating young people and raising standards.

"Together with our decision to introduce vocational A levels from this September these changes will greatly increase the ability of students to study and achieve in areas which meet their career goals.

"A recent survey carried out for the Skills Task Force found that 40% of all skills shortages are in craft and technician-type jobs, requiring high-level skills gained through substantial job-specific, work-based training. In manufacturing, with the needs of new technologies and different work practices, although overall demand for technicians and craft workers is falling, the need for these workers to have more and higher level skills is increasing. Vocational GCSEs will be a crucial rung in the vocational ladder we are introducing to tackle these skills shortages."

He added:

"It is crucial for schools, colleges and others affected by the change to be given

sufficient time to introduce them. That is why I am asking the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to consult with schools and colleges on the range of subjects on offer and on the technical aspects of bringing them on to the same grading scales as GCSEs.

"Traditional routes have failed to motivate and engage many bright and gifted youngsters. We need to think imaginatively now about using their talent and creativity in meeting the craft skills needs of the future. We also need to match the status and commitment to vocational education and lifelong learning that exists in other developed countries."

Mr Blunkett was speaking at the first major Skills Show in Birmingham. The Show, supported by the Department for Education and Employment, brings together major national skills competitions under one roof.

Mr Blunkett said:

"Many of the winners of the competitions here will go on to represent the UK at the 36<sup>th</sup> World Skills Competitions in Seoul in 2001. This skills show should become a regular feature and be the place where the UK team for the Skills Olympics is chosen. It puts skills and excellence in the spotlight in a very effective way. I am very pleased to announce that Manchester will host the next Show in 2002."

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Ministers expect that the new vocational GCSE will be taken not only by 14 to 16 year-olds as part of their key stage 4 studies but also by 16 to 19 year-olds in college who want to study a vocational course below advance level. Like the current foundation and intermediate GNVQs, vocational GCSEs will give an introduction to a broad range of vocational subject areas, such as Art & Design, Business, and Health & Social Care. Further details about the announcement to rename Advanced GNVQs Vocational A Levels is in PN 65/00 "Blunkett announces major expansion and reform of vocational learning" (16 February 2000).

The Skills Show is the highlight of The Manpower National Skills Festival 2000 - an initiative developed in partnership with UK SKILLS and The Prince's Trust and is part of the Millennium Experience National Programme. The Department for Education and Employment is supporting the Show by funding the Show website and promotion, the "Have a Go" activities and the video compilation which will record highlights of the competitions, celebrities and events. For further information please contact Sarah Harper or Devina Zaveri at the Skills Show Press Office on 0121 780 3577/3578/3579 or email them at [theskillsshow@hotmail.com](mailto:theskillsshow@hotmail.com)

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