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EDITION 255

REVEALED: DFE FIRST INVESTIGATION INTO 3AAA

Exclusive

BILLY CAMDEN BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

- › Investigation into crisis-hit provider first launched by ESFA in 2016
- › Auditors KPMG detail dozens of overclaims and inflated success rates
- › Provider agreed to substantial six-figure funding claw back
- › No evidence of deliberate circumvention of funding rules found
- › ESFA in Halfon's firing line for rewarding 3aaa with £7m rise



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MEET THE TEAM

FEWeek.co.uk

**Nick Linford**
EDITOR@NICKLINFORD
NICK@LSECT.COM**Shane Mann**
MANAGING DIRECTOR@SHANERMANN
SHANE@LSECT.COM

Please inform the FE Week editor of any errors or issues of concern regarding this publication.

**Cath Murray**
COMMISSIONING
EDITOR@CATHMURRAY_
CATH@FEWEEK.CO.UK**Billy Camden**
CHIEF REPORTER@BILLYCAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK**Jude Burke**
SENIOR REPORTER@JUDEBURKE77
JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK**Pippa Allen-Kinross**
SENIOR REPORTER@PIPPA_AK
PIPPA@FEWEEK.CO.UK**Simon Kay**
DESIGNER

SIMON@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The team

Head designer:	Nicky Phillips
Designer:	Simon Kay
Sub Editor:	Karen Shook
Photographer:	Ellis O'Brien
Financials:	Helen Neilly
Sales Team Leader:	Bridget Stockdale
Administration:	Georgina Heath
PA to managing director:	Victoria Boyle

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Learning & Skills Events,
Consultancy and Training Ltd161-165 Greenwich High Road
London SE10 8JA
T: 020 8123 4778
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Employers 'not getting message' on apprenticeships — IfA boss

JUDE BURKE

JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The boss of the Institute for Apprenticeships has admitted it has a "hard job to do" to educate employers, as new Ofqual research reveals many have little understanding of key elements of the government's reforms.

Its perceptions survey, published on Wednesday, covered vocational and technical qualifications, and included the views of more than 3,000 employers, training providers and learners.

It revealed worryingly low knowledge of apprenticeships and end-point assessments among employers.

Only one in five of those surveyed answered yes to the question: "Do you understand the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and new apprenticeship standards?"

And only 18 per cent said they had a "very or quite good understanding" of end-point assessment.

Sir Gerry Berragan, chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships, admitted that it still had a "hard job to do to get the message out" about apprenticeships.

He told *FE Week* he was "often surprised" when talking to employers "at the level of knowledge about

the transition from frameworks to standards".

"Is there still a job to do to educate, to communicate, to inform? Absolutely there is. And I'm absolutely clear that's one of our roles," he said.

Ofqual's survey was carried out between October last year and February this year, when very few EPAs had taken place – which the exams regulator said should be taken into account when considering its findings.

More than 2,000 employers were asked for their views on EPAs, and other technical and vocational qualification, along with more than 500 training providers and 600 learners.

Training providers tended to have more negative views towards EPA than employers, although they also reported much higher levels of understanding.

Fourteen per cent of training providers surveyed disagreed with the statement "we value end-point assessments", while just a third agreed with it.

In comparison, just five per cent of employers and three per cent of learners said the same.

Almost a fifth of training providers disagreed with the statement: "I am confident that end-point assessments measure the skills and knowledge that employers want them to."

In contrast, just two per cent of employers disagreed with the statement.

Around two-thirds of employers agreed with the statement that "people passing end-point assessments have the vocational and technical skills needed by my organisation".

Among large organisations this rose to 70 per cent, while just 59 per cent of micro-businesses agreed, while a small proportion, around five per cent, disagreed with the statement.

Other findings from the survey included 91 per cent of employers saying they valued vocational and technical qualifications such as NVQs and BTEC, and 83 per cent saying they believed these qualifications prepared learners well for the workplace.

The survey was Ofqual's first such research into vocational and technical qualifications.

It will allow the exams regulator to "measure changes in levels of understanding and perceived value over time" amid ongoing reforms, according to Phil Beach, Ofqual's executive director for vocational and technical qualifications.

"It will help us, and others involved in reform, to make sure that new qualifications deliver the changes necessary for employers and learners," he said.

Anxious wait over Budget spending plans

The FE sector is waiting anxiously to hear its fate after the date of the next Budget was announced.

Chancellor Philip Hammond said he will set out the government's approach to spending for the next year on Monday, October 29.

Mr Hammond tweeted: "I'll set out how our balanced approach is getting debt falling

while supporting our vital public services, and how we are building a stronger, more prosperous economy."

Mr Hammond reportedly told ministries without protected budgets to find savings last month. Although the government has committed to protecting schools budgets, FE funding can still be cut

'Give apprentices national minimum wage'

The apprentice minimum wage should be scrapped, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers has urged.

Instead, the association believes apprentices should receive the national minimum wage.

The pay increase – which could see some apprentices doubling their wages – would be "appropriate" and also benefit employers, AELP boss

Mark Dawe told *FE Week*.

"Given that apprentices are employees and they're working a substantial amount of the time, they should be paid the same rate as every other worker," he said.

The apprentice minimum wage was introduced in 2010 to both protect apprentices from exploitation and encourage employers to take on apprentices.

'Wrench' for retiring college principal

Dr Alison Birkinshaw is retiring from her role as principal of York College.

In a statement, Dr Birkinshaw said she had been "very privileged" to have led the college for over 10 years, and worked in FE for more than 34 years, and it would be a "wrench" to leave.

The date of her final day at the college has not yet been announced. Shirley Collier, York College's chair of governors, said they were in the process of finding her successor.

Dr Birkinshaw plans to spend her retirement volunteering, travelling and spending more time with family and friends.

Red-faced Ofsted's 'wrong kind of inspection'

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

PIPPA@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

Ofsted has been left red-faced after carrying out the wrong kind of monitoring visit and incorrectly publishing a report, before quickly deleting it.

Inspectors visited Wiltshire Council's adult and community learning service on July 7 this year, after the provision was given a grade three rating by Ofsted in December 2017. A letter detailing the outcome of the visit was published on August 8.

Despite being written about online by this newspaper and by Wiltshire Council, the report has now vanished entirely from Ofsted's website. When questioned by *FE Week*, the inspectorate admitted that both the visit and the published report were "undertaken in error".

A spokesperson said: "In line with Ofsted's current policy, a further visit

will now be arranged after which we will publish a letter. We have apologised to the provider for our error."

Previously, when an FE provider was rated 'requires improvement' inspectors would arrange a 'support and challenge' visit before the next inspection.

These visits could include meetings with governors, visits for senior leaders to another provider or joint observations of particular lessons, after which the principal or chief executive would receive a reporting letter outlining actions to be taken and timescales agreed. Crucially, these letters were never published online.

However, at the end of last year Ofsted ran a consultation into scrapping the support and challenge visits and replacing them with monitoring visits, which would include a published report and judgements on how the provider was progressing with improvements.

This was approved, meaning that any FE provider which has been inspected by Ofsted since November 10, 2017, and receive a grade 3 rating will now receive

a published monitoring visit.

Wiltshire Council was given a 'requires improvement' rating after a full inspection between December 5 and December 7, 2017. But despite changes to the rules, inspectors carried out a support and challenge visit on July 7. Curiously, a reporting letter was subsequently published online on August 8, even though this is never supposed to happen for support and challenge visits.

Although the report no longer exists online, it was picked up in Ofsted Watch, *FE Week's* weekly round-up of published inspections, when it was first published.

FE Week reported then that the council was found to be making "good progress".

"Tutors have received appropriate training and are now taking a qualification to equip them to provide advice and guidance more effectively to learners before they start their courses and to prepare them for their next steps," inspectors said.

"Managers now routinely and



Wiltshire Council tweeted about the now-deleted report

regularly undertake formal and informal observations of teaching and learning."

A week after the report's publication, an article on Wiltshire Council's website said Ofsted had found it was making "good progress" in all areas.

At the time Laura Mayes, the council's cabinet member for education, said the report "positions us very well for our next inspection, anticipated in the autumn".

Wiltshire council will now have to go

through another monitoring visit before the next full inspection. A spokesperson said plans were in progress for the next visit, and added that all visits from Ofsted "are a great opportunity to reflect and showcase the important work the team carries out in our communities."

Since the November 10 cut off point, 48 FE providers have been rated 'requires improvement'. Wiltshire Council's shortlived report is the only one to have been published so far.

News

3aaa given £7m EXTRA apprenticeship cash in 2016 despite investigation that found 'overclaims'

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

From front

Exclusive

Crisis-hit Aspire Achieve Advance was given a £7 million apprenticeships contract increase two years ago despite an investigation that found dozens of funding and success rate "overclaims", *FE Week* can reveal.

In recent weeks the apprenticeship giant has come under heavy scrutiny after its co-founders resigned and the Education and Skills Funding Agency suspended it from recruiting apprentices in the midst of a government investigation.

Now, *FE Week* has discovered that the training provider, better known as 3aaa, was subject to a separate investigation by the ESFA in 2016 – which is understood to have resulted in the company paying back a substantial six figure sum.

Auditing firm KPMG was called in following claims by a whistleblower about non-compliance with funding rules.

'Project vanilla', as it was code named, was treated with "high confidentiality" and is only known by a select few people at 3aaa and the Department for

Education.

The report has now been leaked to *FE Week*.

The whistleblower claims included: incorrect start dates resulting in failure to reach minimum duration; incorrect use of "break in learning" status which is inflating success rates; apprentices with long periods without learning activity.

The probe found dozens of "errors which support the allegations or which have an impact on funding of success rates".

All monthly payments to 3aaa were stopped during the investigation, but resumed when it was concluded, at which point the provider was then rewarded with a £7 million increase to its in-year allocation.

MP Robert Halfon, a former skills minister and current chair of the education select committee, expressed concern after *FE Week* showed him the findings.

"Clearly 3aaa was allowed to expand their apprenticeship provision very quickly and the funding investigation in 2016 raises significant questions," he said.

"Apparently a further £7 million was passed over to 3aaa after the investigation highlighted concerns.

"In light of the

Learndirect 'too big to fail' debacle, this raises further questions whether too much money is going to larger providers.

"I will be calling for reassurances that the DfE/ESFA acts swiftly and in the interest of protecting public funds and particularly in safeguarding apprentices."

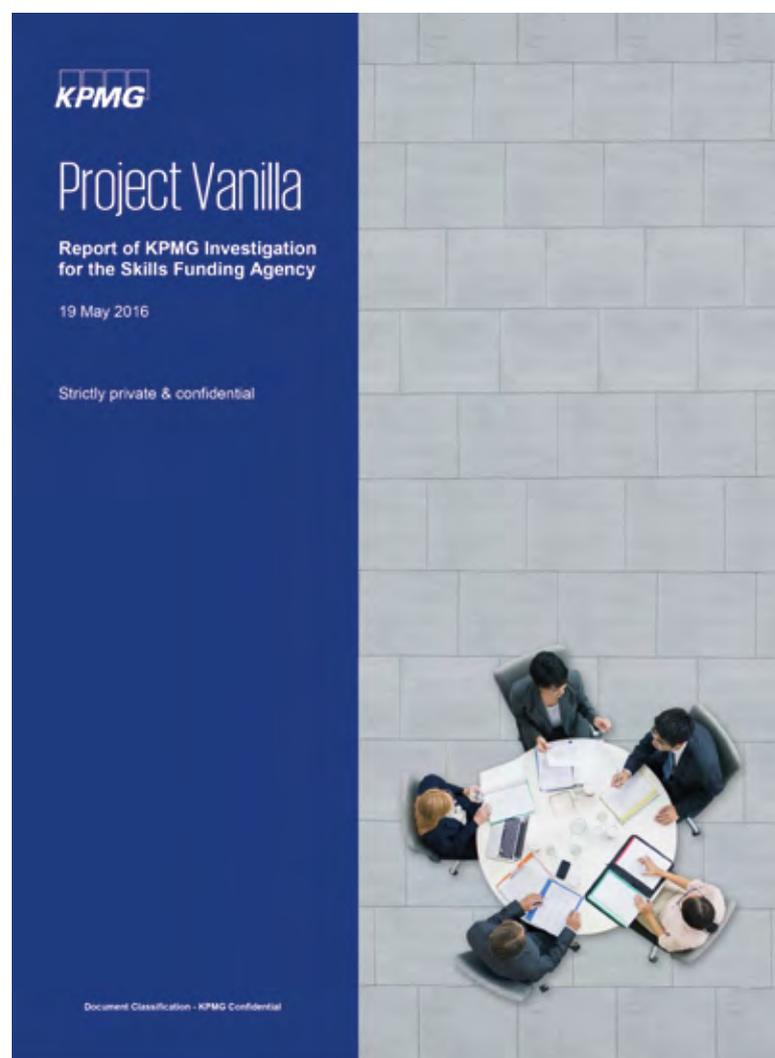
KPMG "primarily" held discussions with 3aaa owners Peter Marples and Di McEvoy-Robinson as well as the provider's resources director at the time, Lee Marples, during the investigation.

They sampled 663 apprentice records. The findings included apprentices not completing their minimum duration of 366 days; recorded as being on a "break in learning" when they should have been withdrawn; and where there was no evidence of learning for more than six months.

Instances were also found where "documents such as individual learning plans, enrolment/ applications forms, and apprenticeship and learning agreements were incomplete", including dates and signatures missing.

Investigators also found some documents, "mainly the enrolment forms", were missing from the learner files and for 87 apprentices their signature was dated an average of 108 days after the start date in the data.

The investigation report also detailed where the "provider confirmed that funding had been over-claimed", such as for recording



withdrawals in the wrong period and for functional skills qualifications that had been "deleted" from the data "as the provider was informed that the learner was no longer required to complete these learning aims".

The report states that the ESFA should consider the "funding and success rate impact".

The investigation report does not quantify the value of any over or under-claims, but *FE Week* understands 3aaa had a substantial six figure sum deducted from subsequent payments.

"We have not identified any evidence of deliberate circumvention of funding rules by the provider," the investigators said.

A spokesperson for 3aaa said the provider could not comment on the report, due to confidentiality agreements.

The DfE said: "We do not comment on any investigations, ongoing or otherwise."

The ESFA's current investigation into 3aaa was sparked earlier this year when a whistleblower approached the agency with new claims about its business.

Owing to this, Ofsted declared its latest inspection of the provider, which was expected to result in another "outstanding" rating, as incomplete in June.

Mr Marples and Ms McEvoy-Robinson, who set up 3aaa in 2008, resigned from their roles as the company's chief executive and main director respectively last week.

The provider was then suspended from recruiting apprentices, but *FE Week* later revealed that senior employees had been "instructed" to tell its staff to not date any paperwork for "planned enrolments".

3aaa had the largest allocation for non-levy apprenticeships last year at nearly £22 million. Its overall ESFA allocations totalled more than £31 million.



Peter Marples & Di McEvoy-Robinson

Whistle blower allegations	Red (support allegation or impact on funding or success rates)	Amber (identified errors which require further action)	Green (No errors, or minor errors not relating to allegations)	Total sample
1. Incorrect start dates resulting in failure to reach minimum duration	89 (13%)	384 (58%)	190 (29%)	663
2. Incorrect use of 'break in learning' status which is inflating success rates	58 (34%)	29 (17%)	84 (49%)	171
3. Apprentices with long periods without learning activity	32 (5%)	53 (8%)	578 (87%)	663

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News

Mystery after departure of Bmet principal

JUDE BURKE

JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The highly-paid principal of a double grade three college resigned with immediate effect this week, ahead of an impending Ofsted visit.

Andrew Cleaves' departure from Birmingham Metropolitan College, which he has led since 2014, was confirmed by the college on Tuesday (September 25), following local news reports.

No reason has been given for his departure and the college's statement about Mr Cleaves was brief, offering no words of praise about his tenure.

Chair of governors Steve Hollis said: "In accepting Andrew's resignation, the corporation respects his decision and acknowledges that he feels the time is right to step down."

FE Week attempted to contact Mr Cleaves directly, but he hung up the phone.

The BMet position was Mr Cleaves' first in the sector, following previous senior roles at National Express and Tube Lines, a subsidiary of Transport for London.

The college is one of the largest in the country, with an income of £61.3 million in 2016/17 and over 16,000 learners. However, it has struggled with financial difficulties and quality issues in recent years.

Ofsted inspected the college twice during Mr Cleaves' time in charge, both of which resulted in a "requires improvement" rating – down from its previous grade two rating.

Poor achievement rates were among the issues in the first of these visits, in May 2015. Leaders' progress in "tackling areas of weakness" was found to be "inconsistent", according to the subsequent report.

Following the second inspection, in February 2017, the college leadership was criticised for having "not addressed in full the key recommendations from the previous inspection".

According to the college's board minutes, it has been expecting a re-inspection since earlier this year.

Minutes from the board's March 22 meeting reveal that Mr Hollis told governors that "this might be the last meeting of the corporation prior to an Ofsted inspection".

The same minutes indicate that the college had self-assessed itself to be "good" in all the main inspection themes, except for outcomes for learners.

"Although this was still graded as a three there was reasonable in-year information to show to inspectors to support a grade two," the minutes said.

Minutes from the board's July 12 meeting reveal that the college's forecast apprenticeship achievement



Andrew Cleaves

rate for 2017/18 was 72 per cent – a rise of 1.3 per cent on the previous year – although "at 57 per cent timely completions were forecast at 2.4 per cent below the national rate".

However, "the corporation were advised that improvements in A-level performance were not progressing at the required rate".

Both the college and Ofsted confirmed no inspection had been carried out yet this year.

"It will be inspected again in line with our further education and skills inspection handbook," an Ofsted spokesperson said.

This states that a college rated "requires improvement" will be re-inspected within 12 to 24 months.

Mr Cleaves' salary of £266,000 made him the second most highly-paid college principal in England in 2016/17,

according to the Education and Skills Funding Agency accounts.

This was despite the college owing almost £14 million in exceptional financial support – more than any other college.

According to its own published accounts, the money owing to the ESFA stemmed from a £16 million bailout loan provided by the ESFA in August 2015 as part of a recovery plan.

The funding agency "reinforced its support" by "providing an interest-free £16 million loan to the college in 2015/16".

"£1.5 million was repaid during 2015/16 and a further £0.7 million in 2016/17, leaving an outstanding amount of £13.8 million," the accounts said.

The loan was due to have been repaid by December 2017, "however a variety of operational issues have meant this is unlikely".

It had agreed an "extension to the current loan arrangements" until May 2018, as part of which it "committed to

disposing of a number of unoccupied college sites over the course of the next year to repay the majority of the loan".

The college's total debt was £23.4 million, and it broke the covenant on its loans with two banks, according to the accounts.

It's still rated "inadequate" for financial health, and has held a notice of concern for financial health since July 2015, when it also received a visit from the then FE commissioner Sir David Collins. His subsequent report, dated August 2015, noted it was "quite clear that until early 2015 the standard of financial management and control in the college was not acceptable".

Cliff Hall has been appointed interim principal until a permanent replacement is found, a college spokesperson said. Mr Hall, who will take up his post on Monday, previously stepped in as interim principal at Nescot following the departure of Sunaina Mann in mid-2016, and led the college until early 2017.

We can confirm that Andrew Cleaves has resigned from his position as Principal and CEO of BMet.

Steve Hollis, Chair of Governors at BMet, said: 'In accepting Andrew's resignation, the Corporation respects his decision and acknowledges that he feels the time is right to step down'.

The Governors have appointed Cliff Hall as interim Principal to lead BMet over the next few months whilst we start the process of appointing a permanent Principal and CEO. Cliff Hall brings over 40 years of experience in further education including time as a Principal and CEO.



BMet's Matthew Boulton campus

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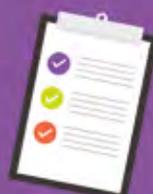
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News

Apprenticeship institute reaches 11th-hour deal with Open Awards

JUDE BURKE
JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

The Institute for Apprenticeships has reached a last-minute deal with the organisation that delivers external quality assurance on its behalf.

It has agreed to extend its existing contract with Open Awards for a further six months, just days before the contract was due to expire.

A tender to find a longer-term solution will be launched in the coming months.

Open Awards, a small organisation with a turnover of £1.5 million and around 30 members of staff, was first awarded the contract following an open tender process in 2017.

Its initial contract ran from August 1 until March 31, 2018, but this was subsequently extended to September 30.

FE Week reported on Tuesday that a deal had yet to be reached, just days before the existing contract was due to run out.

However, late on Wednesday the IfA announced that the deadlock had been broken, and it had “extended the

current contract in place with Open Awards to deliver external quality assurance on our behalf until March 2019”.

“We intend to run a procurement exercise for a longer term contract to deliver EQA from April 2019 in the next few months,” a spokesperson said.

Further information on the procurement of the new contract will be published “shortly”, she said.

Simon Ashworth, chief policy officer at the Association of Employment and Learning Provider, said the contract extension “buys the IfA more time to seriously consider how the EQA model needs to operate moving forward”.

“The IfA was always meant to be the ‘backstop’ option, but now, along with Ofqual, they are clearly dominating the majority of standards in regards the nominated organisations for EQA,” he said.

A sticking point in the negotiations between the IfA and Open Awards was likely to have been the size of the contract.

Open Awards’ initial contract was valued at £160,000 for eight months.

At the time, the IfA’s share of the EQA market stood at just 19 per cent, but since then it has more than doubled.

According to the latest Education and Skills Funding Agency figures, the IfA is named as the EQA provider on 44 per cent fully-approved standards, or 150 out of 342.

These include the popular level three team leader/supervisor standard, responsible for more than 12,000 starts in the first nine months of 2017/18, which currently has 22 different organisation listed as being able to deliver to the end point assessment.

“We will continue to review our model for delivering EQA and the resource behind this as end-point assessment numbers continue to grow,” the IfA spokesperson said.

“We are in regular dialogue with Open Awards to ensure that they have the resources in place to deliver a high quality EQA service.”

The latest announcement follows multiple requests from FE Week for an update on the IfA’s EQA arrangement.

In July an IfA spokesperson told us it expected to set out its plans for its EQA provision “in the coming weeks”, after we asked if it had decided on its EQA provider for 2018/19.

When we asked again in early September, we were told the institute was “not in a position to say anything



Sir Gerry Berragan

externally on this as yet”.

EQA is the process that ensures apprenticeship assessments are consistent and reliable, and that they deliver the right outcomes.

The IfA is one of four options from which employer groups can choose to provide this service. The other three are Ofqual, or the Quality

Assurance Agency for degree-level apprenticeships; an employer-led model; or a professional body.

According to the Department for Education’s strategic guidance, published in April 2017, the IfA was originally intended to be chosen “only in instances where alternatives are not viable”.

Re-levelling of first aid course boosts L3 qualification

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
PIPPA@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

An extra 400,000 people taking level three qualifications this year, and a corresponding fall at level two, can be largely attributed to the decision to ‘re-level’ a popular first aid course.

The Emergency First Aid at Work qualification has been reclassified from level two after a “review” of the qualification from the First Aid Awarding Organisations Forum (FAAOF).

Chris Young, chair of the forum and chair of the board of directions at awarding organisation FutureQuals, said the group felt the qualification would be “more appropriately levelled” as a level three. The skills required to complete the course have not changed,

in line with requirements from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and nor has the price.

Figures published by Ofqual earlier this month show the QA level three award in Emergency First Aid at Work had the highest number of certificates during the second quarter of this year (April to June).

It was also the most popular qualification in the first quarter, with another first aid qualification – the FAA level three award in Emergency First Aid at Work – coming in third. The same qualifications also came in first and third in the last quarter of 2017.

Accompanying notes to the statistics added: “A number of qualifications have high numbers of certificates this quarter, including new level three qualifications, which were not available to certificate in the same quarter in the previous year. Many of these are first aid qualifications.

“This is due to the FAAOF review of the Emergency First Aid at Work qualification and that these should be re-levelled from level two to level three in England.”

Approximately 400,000 people take the Emergency First Aid at Work qualification each year. If the trend continues this year, the number of people with a level three certificate will grow 33 per cent (1.2 million to 1.6 million), and level two certificates will drop 17 per cent (from 2.4 million to 2 million). FAAOF does not have any website or online presence.

Mr Young said: “Emergency First Aid has been around for a long time, and it’s just a natural progression. We did some work on the Paediatric First Aid course a couple of years ago and it just led to a natural review, from a validity point of view, that we needed to look again at the Emergency First Aid.

“The autonomy and the requirements



to carry out that role unsupervised suggested it should be level three rather than level two. It’s more appropriately levelled, based on the autonomy and the responsibility associated with the qualification.”

For first aid in the workplace, the HSE only requires a suitable course which meets its guidance. There is no requirement for the course to be regulated by an awarding body, or what level – if any – it should be.

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Week

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In pursuit of parity: degree apprenticeships

JUDE BURKE
JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Although seen by some as controversial, degree apprenticeships are central to the government's plans to put technical education on a par with academic education. The Department for Education has repeatedly referred to the number of Russell Group universities signed up to the register of apprenticeship training providers as a sign that it's succeeding. But are they actually delivering apprenticeships? *FE Week* spoke to some of them to find out.

When the University of Cambridge secured a place on the register of apprenticeship training providers in February this year, the mainstream press finally took notice – with both the BBC and *The Times* reporting that the university was set to offer apprenticeship training.

But while those plans have yet to come to fruition, earning while you learn is an option at an increasing number of Cambridge's fellow Russell Group universities.

Of the 17 on the Education and Skills Funding Agency's register, eight are already running at least one programme.

A further four are set to introduce degree-level apprenticeships next year, and the remaining five are in the early stages of development.

Numbers are low at the moment – the eight have combined starts of about 500 so far in 2018-19. In comparison, there were more than 8,000 starts on level six and seven standards across all institutions in the first nine months of 2017-18.

But these are set to increase, with all the universities *FE Week* spoke to

planning to expand their offer in the years to come.

"Those with no plans must stop dragging their feet"

The former skills minister and now chair of the education select committee Robert Halfon has long championed degree apprenticeships, calling them "a crucial step on the road to delivering social justice and boosting Britain's productivity".

He told *FE Week* it was "encouraging" to hear the findings of our investigation, but said all 17 universities "need to redouble their efforts to open up more of these opportunities, including to the most disadvantaged".

"This has taken time to understand and develop"

Mr Halfon also urged the government and the Institute for Apprenticeships to do more to encourage universities to offer degree apprenticeships.

"Those with no plans, such as Oxford, must stop dragging their feet and get on with providing degree apprenticeships which can do so much to help people to climb the ladder of opportunity," he said.

"We were best placed to address skills shortages"

In 2015 Queen Mary University London was the first Russell Group university to offer degree apprenticeships.

The university "jumped in" with



the level six digital and technology solutions professional standard, according to Jamie Hilder, the university's degree apprenticeships manager.

"We've already got a dialogue with employers in those sectors and identified a skills need, so our rich experience in the field and ideal location can help them to address those skills shortages," Mr Hilder said.

Many of the newer programmes are prompted by the introduction of the apprenticeship levy.

Three of the four new degree apprenticeship programmes being launched by Russell Group universities this academic year are run in partnership with the professional services firm PwC.

All three are in digital and technology – areas in which the company had identified as having a skills gap, according to Louise Farrar, PwC's head of student recruitment.

"We've got a great opportunity with our levy money. Wouldn't it be great if we can use that money to direct into areas where we need to build to meet future skills gaps?" she said.

The University of York is planning to enter the degree apprenticeships market in 2019.

The university already works with local employers to offer part-time master's degrees for people in work, and so its level seven apprenticeships will be an "extension" to that, said Amanda Selvaratnam, the university's head of enterprise services.

Russell Group universities: the overall picture

Currently offering	8
Starting in 2019	4
Early stages of planning	5
Total	17

"For many companies, it makes more economic sense to use their levy for that sort of provision than to be paying out of their HR budget," she said.

"You've got to be on your toes"

Developing a degree apprenticeship programme requires much greater collaboration between universities and employers than a traditional degree.

But for many of the universities *FE Week* spoke to, this hasn't proved to be the greatest challenge.

The University of Nottingham, which is starting to offer the level seven advanced clinical practitioner standard this year, said "administrative complexities" was the biggest hurdle to overcome, "particularly meshing the sorts of reporting that is going to be required into current university systems".

A number said they were having to change their ways of working – from recruiting students to how lectures are delivered.

The "vocational bent" of the

programmes at Queen Mary meant they were placing more weight on "professional experience, maturity and application of knowledge to real-life scenarios" than purely academic achievements, Mr Hilder said.

Professor Tim Quine, deputy vice-chancellor for education at the University of Exeter, said it had "sought to innovate around delivery models" for its degree apprenticeships, using "blended and e-learning, reflective practice and block residential".

"All of this has taken time to understand and develop, and investment to support," he said.

Some of the challenges faced by the universities will be familiar to many providers already delivering apprenticeships, with a number complaining about the non-levy procurement process, the Institute for Apprenticeships' "aggressive funding policy" and the constant "iterations and revisions" to standards.

But while the FE sector is used to dealing with these difficulties,

OXBRIDGE DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS – WILL THEY EVER HAPPEN?

The ability to "earn while you learn" at Cambridge or Oxford is seen by some as the pinnacle of parity of esteem between vocational and academic education.

Unfortunately, it doesn't look likely to happen anytime soon – at least not at undergraduate level.

Cambridge successfully applied to be on the register of apprenticeship training providers earlier this year, and said at the time it planned to focus its initial offer at postgraduate level through its Institute of

Continuing Education (ICE).

A spokesperson told *FE Week* that planning was still underway, with the aim of introducing the first programmes in 2019 at the earliest.

A "number of interested parties internally" are in discussions with the ICE about mapping "already established courses into apprenticeships", he said.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the University of Oxford said it currently did not "have any plans to offer degree or degree-level apprenticeships".

Apprenticeships expand into the Russell Group



King's College, University of Cambridge

universities “traditionally haven’t been as adaptable”, said Louise Cowling, head of degree apprenticeships at the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre at the University of Sheffield.

The university began offering degree apprenticeships in manufacturing and engineering in 2017-18, and has just started offering level five nursing associate courses in 2018-19.

“You’ve got to be on your toes. Universities are learning that they need

to respond much quickly than they have done in the past,” she said.

“Employers want a strong technical degree”

All the universities FE Week spoke to were keen to stress that their degree apprenticeships had the same level of academic rigour as their traditional degree programmes.

Prof Quine said that Exeter’s degree apprenticeships allowed it to

WHAT ABOUT ALL THE OTHER UNIVERSITIES?

The first degree apprenticeships were launched in 2015 with the aim of offering students the chance to study for a degree while working as an apprentice.

Just a few institutions were on board at the start, including Queen Mary University London, Sheffield Hallam University and Manchester Metropolitan University.

Fast forward three years and there are now 111 universities or university colleges on the register of apprenticeship training providers, although not all of them will be offering degree apprenticeship programmes.

According to the latest available Department for Education figures, there were 8,560 starts on level six or seven apprenticeships, which correspond to degree and master’s apprenticeships, in the first nine months of 2017-18.

A large number of these starts are likely to have been at modern universities or colleges offering degree-level provision, many of which received funding through the Degree Apprenticeships Development Fund to establish their programmes.

A total of £10 million was on offer from the fund, which was managed by the now-defunct Higher Education Funding Council for England.

It was awarded in two phases, with 25 HE institutes and 20 colleges receiving a combined total of £4.5 million for 18 projects in the first phase, announced in November 2016.

A further 27 projects, involving about 60 universities and colleges, received £4.9 million between them in the second phase, announced in October 2017.

They were expected to result in nearly 10,000 new apprenticeship opportunities by this September.

“extend the high-quality educational experience that we pride ourselves on” to “talented individuals” who’ve chosen not to study for a full-time on-campus degree.

And Ms Farrar said that the chance to study for a “top degree at a great institution” was one of the attractions of PwC’s programmes.

Employers also appear to appreciate the calibre of learning on offer from these institutions.

Mr Hilder said that “anecdotally we’ve been told that the depth of the course is different” at Queen Mary, with employers rating it “more substantial” than other degree apprenticeship programmes.

Ms Cowling said that being a

“research-focused university” was seen as one of Sheffield’s strengths.

“Employers have come to us and said they want a strong technical degree, using modern technology.”

Students on the AMRC’s programmes are able to draw on the centre’s research, and then apply that to their work environment.

“We’ve had students who’ve worked for large employers, and the students have been able to recommend changes to manufacturing processes and procedures within their organisation,” she said.

“Degree apprentices are better in terms of diversity”

While full social demographic data on

the new degree apprentices isn’t yet available, there are already signs that they’re widening participation.

While the average proportion of women on tech degrees is about 16 per cent nationally, PwC has “recruited 30 per cent”, Ms Farrar said. “We’re really pleased with that one.”

Likewise, Queen Mary’s cohort of degree apprentices are “better in terms of diversity” than its other undergraduate students – thanks in large part to the university “going into areas of high deprivation and low rates of participation in higher education, people who don’t typically apply to university, and saying ‘do you know degree apprenticeships are an option?’” Mr Hilder said.

Degree apprenticeships currently offered at Russell Group universities

University	Year started	Standards running	2018/19 starts so far
Queen Mary University London	2015-16	Level 6 Digital and technology solutions professional	31
University of Exeter	2016-17	Level 6 Digital technology solutions professional; Level 6 Civil engineering; Level 6 Chartered manager; Level 7 Senior leader	260
University of Sheffield	2017-18	Level 5 Nursing associate; Level 6 Manufacturing engineer; Level 6 Control/ technical support engineer; Level 7 Postgraduate engineer	93
University of Warwick	2017-18	Level 6 Civil engineer; Level 6 Embedded electronic systems design and development engineer; Level 6 Manufacturing engineer; Level 7 Postgraduate engineer; Level 7 Senior leader; Level 7 Systems engineering	100
University of Birmingham	2018-19	Level 6 Digital and technology solutions professional	39
University of Leeds	2018-19	Level 6 Digital and technology solutions professional	38
University of Nottingham	2018-19	Level 7 Advanced clinical practitioner	8
University of Edinburgh	2018-19	Level 6 Data scientist	11
Total			580

News

Team UK competing for glory

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A team of Britain's most talented young tradespeople headed to Budapest this week to take on Europe's best in vocational skills.

Waving the flag for the UK are 22 individuals.

They kicked off EuroSkills 2018 by attending a breathtaking opening ceremony where a Hungarian theatre group that will be familiar to the British public mesmerised spectators.

Thousands packed inside the Papp László Budapest Sports arena for the night where Attraction shadow theatre starred.

The group rose to fame following a performance at the Hungary Olympic oath ceremony for the London 2012 Olympics before winning Britain's Got Talent in 2013.

They performed a rendition of many of the skills that will be on show throughout the competition.

Following the performance was three speeches from László Parragh, President of the Hungarian Chamber of

Commerce and Industry, Dita Traidas, President of WorldSkills Europe, and Hungarian prime minister Victor Orbán.

The prime minister told the EuroSkills competitors they were "part of a greater challenge".

"We're aiming to keep up that pace we set in Gothenburg"

"Europe faces a serious competitive disadvantage and the only way to overcome it is by training the best-skilled workers of the world," he said.

A parade of nations followed where each of the 28 competing countries took to the stage with the teams waving their flag.

The competitor and expert oaths were then read to declare the EuroSkills 2018 competition officially open.

EuroSkills is put on for European countries in the build-up to WorldSkills – which is dubbed the Olympics of Skills.

Thirty five different skills, ranging from landscape gardening and mechatronics to

Beauty therapist competitor Holly-Mae Cotterall



Team UK take to the stage at the EuroSkills opening ceremony led by flag-bearer Elizabeth Newcombe

hairdressing and restaurant services, will be in action.

This year's competition is taking place from September 26 to 28 in Budapest, with FE Week reporting on-location.

"WorldSkills and EuroSkills is all about driving up young people's mind-set as well as their skillset to compete and I think that is vital as we as a country look to focus on boosting productivity and economic performance," said Dr Neil Bentley, chief executive of WorldSkills UK, the organisation that oversees the selection process for Team UK.

"What competitors really talk about

in terms of benefits is their confidence and leadership skills and resilience."

Up for grabs are gold, silver and bronze medals, as well as medallions of excellence, which are achieved whenever a team member reaches the international standard in their discipline.

At the last EuroSkills in Gothenburg 2016, Team UK finished ninth after bringing home two golds, one silver, two bronzes and eight medallions of excellence.

And it is that kind of position, in the top 10, that this team is aiming for.

"We're aiming to keep up that pace that we set in Gothenburg," said Dr

Bentley.

"But it is getting harder because lots of other countries are investing more. We obviously always keep an eye on the French and Germans but the Russians are investing a lot because they're hosting next year's WorldSkills in Kazan and the Austrians and the Swiss have been upping their game as well."

Team UK travelled a distance of nearly 1,000 miles from Luton airport to Budapest, but their journey to EuroSkills 2018 started over a year ago.

Thousands of apprentices and learners were whittled down during regional heats to around 500 who could appear at the national finals at the Skills

MEET THE TEAM

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Beauty Therapy
Holly-Mae Cotterall, 20

Employer: Reds Hair Company
Provider: Reds Hair Company
Trainer: Jenna Wrathall Bailey MBE, Jenna Bailey MBE Training and Consultancy



Cabinet Making
Thomas Pennicott, 19

Employer: n/a
Provider: Chichester College
Trainer: Christian Notley, MBE, Chichester College



CNC Milling
Elliott Dawson, 20

Employer: Fort Vale
Provider: Training 2000 Limited
Trainer: Mike Watson, GKN Aerospace



Heavy Truck Maintenance
Kieran Leyland, 21

Employer: Ryder Ltd
Provider: Ryder Ltd
Trainer: Christopher Carter, Stephenson College



IT Network Administration
Cameron Barr, 20

Employer: n/a
Provider: Nescot
Trainer: Kevin Large, Remote Training Solutions Limited



IT Network Administration
Shane Carpenter, 22

Employer: BAE Systems
Provider: Nescot
Trainer: Kevin Large, Remote Training Solutions Limited



Mechatronics
Danny Slater, 24

Employer: Toyota Manufacturing Ltd
Provider: Toyota Manufacturing Ltd
Trainer: Calum Knott, Festo Didactic Services Ltd



Painting and Decorating
Callum Bonner, 20

Employer: Clackmannanshire Council
Provider: Forth Valley College
Trainer: Peter Walters, Stoke-on-Trent College



Plumbing and Heating
Matthew Barton, 20

Employer: WE Barton
Provider: Kendal College
Trainer: Paul Dodds MBE Skills, Educational Training (SET) Ltd



Mechatronics
Jack Dakin, 23

Employer: Toyota Manufacturing Ltd
Provider: Toyota Manufacturing Ltd
Trainer: Calum Knott, Festo Didactic Services Ltd

Team UK in EuroSkills Budapest



Hairdressing competitor Gavin Jon Kyte

Show, now known as WorldSkills UK LIVE, in 2017.

Standout individuals were then put into a squad of around 80 competitors, from which 22 were chosen to represent their country at EuroSkills.

Since team selection in May, Team UK members have taken part in an intensive training programme, supported by their trainers, employers and training providers.

The UK finals operate at a level three standard, while EuroSkills jumps them up to level four.

A send-off event was held in parliament on September 4th where they were bade farewell by family

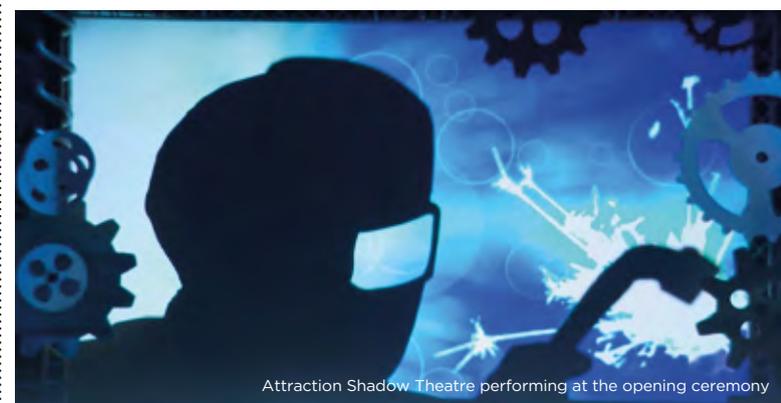
and given messages of good luck from government officials.

This included Anne Milton, the minister for apprenticeships and skills, who said the competitors were “the future” as life today is “no longer about what you know, it is about what skills you have got as well”.

FE Week spoke to some competitors when they landed in Budapest to get a feel for how things were going in the camp.

Elizabeth Newcombe, floristry, said she and her teammates were “super excited” and couldn’t “wait to get into the competition”.

After the Euros, the competitors will go back into Squad UK to compete for a place at WorldSkills Kazan 2019. At last year’s WorldSkills, the UK team retained its top-10 position after competitors bagged one gold, three silvers, three bronzes and 13 medallions of excellence in Abu Dhabi.



Attraction Shadow Theatre performing at the opening ceremony



Cooking
Nicole Finnie, 20

Employer: Andrew Fairlie at Gleneagles
Provider: City of Glasgow College
Trainer: Sean Owens, SOFOOD Consultancy



Electrical Installation
Thomas Lewis, 21

Employer: Blues Electrical
Provider: Cardiff and the Vale College
Trainer: Gareth Jones, Coleg Gwent



Floristry
Elizabeth Newcombe, 21

Employer: Rhubarb and Bramley
Provider: Guildford College
Trainer: Laura Leong



Hairdressing
Gavin Jon Kyte, 19

Employer: Reds Hair Company
Provider: Reds Hair Company
Trainer: Linzi Weare, Reds Hair Company



Joinery
Christopher Caine, 20

Employer: DH Carpentry & Joinery
Provider: Pembrokeshire College
Trainer: Andrew Pengelly



Landscape Gardening
Shea McFerran, 19

Employer: n/a
Provider: CAFRE
Trainer: Simon Abbott, Simon Abbott Landscapes



Landscape Gardening
Sam Taylor, 18

Employer: Garden TLC
Provider: n/a
Trainer: Simon Abbott, Simon Abbott Landscapes



Mechanical Engineering: CAD
Ross Megahy, 21

Employer: n/a
Provider: New College Lanarkshire
Trainer: Barry Skea, New College Lanarkshire



Restaurant Services
Collette Gorvett, 19

Employer: The Grill House
Provider: Gower College, Swansea
Trainer: Dr Shyam Patiar MBE



Wall and Floor Tiling
Mark Scott, 20

Employer: McGoldrick & Sons
Provider: City of Glasgow College
Trainer: Paul Doran, Southern Regional College



Web Design
Lewis Newton, 18

Employer: n/a
Provider: Highbury College, Portsmouth
Trainer: Mike David, Coleg Sir Gar



Welding
Scott Kerr, 21

Employer: PFS
Provider: Coleg Menai
Trainer: Clive Bell, Lakes College

News

What Labour plans for further education could mean for colleges

JUDE BURKE
JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The shadow skills minister has refused to rule out bringing colleges back under local authority control, as part of Labour's plans for a national education service.

But, speaking to *FE Week* on the third day of the Labour party conference this week, Gordon Marsden hit back at criticism that his party lacked FE and skills policy – calling such comments “nonsense”.

Mr Marsden said that, under plans set out for the NES, local communities would be “collectively responsible” for the education institutions within it, including colleges, and would be “empowered, via appropriate democratic means, to influence change where it is needed”.

The “appropriate democratic authority” would “set, monitor and allocate resources” ensuring that

they “meet the rights, roles and responsibilities of individuals and institutions”.

When asked if this meant bringing colleges back under local authority control, Mr Marsden simply said: “It means what it says”.

He did not rule out such a proposal even when asked directly if he would do so.

The position he outlined, which was set out in Labour's charter for the NES, “represents the party's current and settled position on the basis of the consultation and responses received in it”, he said.

Mr Marsden's remarks follow comments made by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn in an interview with *FE Week* at last year's Association of Colleges conference in November.

“We feel there's a danger with the independent model of college education that they get too far away from local communities and local education authorities,” he said.

“And what we're looking to is a model

that will bring them closer to that, but not removing the important connection with local industry,” Mr Corbyn continued.

“You're not going to get masses of detail in a seven minute speech”

Labour faced criticism this week for failing to shine a light on its plans for FE, after shadow education secretary Angela Rayner's speech to conference on Monday stopped short of going into any detail.

She spoke about the formation of a commission for lifelong learning, which would be led by Mr Marsden, but this was not new, having previously been announced in the party's 2017 election

manifesto.

The lack of detail prompted criticism from the Confederation of British Industry, among others.

Its head of education and skills, John Cope, said businesses wanted to hear more about what the NES “means for the issues that matter” which included improving “often woeful careers advice” and “technical education through apprenticeships and T-levels”.

Such criticism was “nonsense”, Mr Marsden said.

“You're not going to get masses of detail in a seven-minute speech,” he said.

“If people want a 60-second soundbite on everything then they would have been disappointed. But there were clear indications of the direction of travel and who was taking them forward,” he added.

There were “a lot of things out there already” on Labour's policy on T-levels and apprenticeships, through the “large number of short-term critiques that we are making”.

These needed to be distinguished

from “our vision for the medium term and the longer term” which is being set out in its commission for lifelong learning.

The commission would “straddle both HE and FE, and existing methods of lifelong learning and future ones”.

It would focus on issues such as barriers to access, including the “damage that has been done particularly for older learners with the non-take up of advanced learner loans” and the “under-funded, under-represented” English for Speakers of Other Languages.

The “long-term aim” is to “integrate HE and FE in lifelong learning and give parity of esteem”, Mr Marsden said, and the commission would look at “systems of credit transfer” between the two.

It would also look at the role of institutions in delivering lifelong learning, “not just the colleges and training providers, but also looking at the potential for initiatives being done under devolution with local authorities, and the role of local enterprise partnerships,” he said.



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The Closing date for applications is **Sunday 14th October 2018**.

An assessment centre for shortlisted candidates will be held at the College, Aylesbury Campus, on **31st October 2018**.

To apply for the role please complete the online application form at www.buckcollegegroup.ac.uk/latest-vacancies. Further information on the role, including the full job description, is available on the above link.

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Evidence of contribution to academic development projects in the FE Sector.

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If you are tenacious, with a degree and formal qualifications in project management and software development and are interested in living in Cornwall, working on a unique set of projects, get in touch.

Salary: competitive

For an informal conversation please contact Michael Collins, Finance Director on 01209 616 459.

For an information pack and application form please visit www.cornwall.ac.uk

Closing date: 21st October 2018

The Cornwall College Group is a disability confident employer Charity by statute

City & Guilds Vacancies - Technical Qualifications



We currently have some exciting vacancies for Principal Moderator, Moderator, Assessment Development Consultant and Examiner roles for our Technical qualifications.

This is an excellent CPD opportunity, giving you the chance to learn about the City & Guilds Technicals, gain an in-depth knowledge of requirements and the moderation process and really get to grips with the marking of the synoptic practical assessment.

We would like to hear from you if you are interested in applying for the following roles:

Principal Moderator

Professional Cookery - Qualification No: **6100**

Moderator

Professional Cookery - Qualification No: **6100**
Food Preparation & Service - Qualification No: **7178**
Food & Beverage Service - Qualification No: **6103**
Cookery and Service for the Hospitality Industry - Qualification No: **6106**
Theatrical & Media Makeup - Qualification No: **6010**
Land & Wildlife - Qualification No: **0173**
Constructing the Built Environment - Qualification No: **6720**
Project - Qualification No: **2935**

Assessment Development Consultant and Examiner

Hospitality & Catering - Qualification Nos: **6100, 7178, 6103**
Construction - Qualification Nos: **6720, 7905, 7906, 7907, 7908**
Building Services Engineering - Qualification Nos: **8202**
Land Based Services - Qualification Nos: **0170, 0171, 0172, 0173, 0174, 0175, 7863**

How to apply

If you are interested in the Principal Moderator or Moderator role, please visit the below website for application details: <https://www.cityandguilds.com/techbac/technical-qualifications/moderator-vacancies>

If you are interested in the Assessment Development Consultant or Examiner role, please visit the below website for application details: <https://www.cityandguilds.com/delivering-our-qualifications/exams-and-admin/examiner-vacancies>



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOUNDATION LEARNING AND SKILLS £55,000

City of Bristol College is seeking to appoint an Assistant Director – Foundation Skills and Learning.

The post-holder is accountable for the design, development and implementation of a foundation curriculum and product strategy for 16-18 transition and adult further education programmes.

You will take a leading role in the development and growth of an inclusive curriculum for young people and adults working closely with key stakeholders to create opportunities for students to gain independence, progress onto further study within employment, or into sustainable employment.

This is a college-wide senior leadership role with a key responsibility for improvement in the quality of the

transition curriculum outcomes for 16-18 and adult learners, so as to ensure enhanced progression into positive destinations, alongside income and enrolments growth of the College's adult provision.

We are looking for someone with experience of improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in further education and who is confident in working in a fast paced environment, with changing priorities.

City of Bristol College offers a generous holiday entitlement of 30 days, plus additional 8 Bank Holidays and 8 College Closure Days. In addition, we offer membership to the Teacher's Pension Scheme, as well as a range of other benefits including health and beauty discounts, cycle to work scheme and shopping discounts.

Closing date: Sunday 7 October 2018

Interview date: Thursday 18 October 2018

To apply and for further details, please visit www.cityofbristol.ac.uk



NCG

Principal, Southwark College Principal, Lewisham College

Competitive salaries

We are delighted to present these career defining roles to lead two of London's most important centres of further education and skills. Working to the CEO of NCG, the college principals will have a significant role in shaping, building and delivering excellent professional and technical education for the students and employers of London.

For more information on the roles see: <https://ncgleadership.fea.co.uk>

We have retained the services of FE Associates to support us with these crucial appointments. Contact Samantha Bunn on 01454 617707 for an initial discussion.

Closing date for applications: Wednesday 31st October 2018 at noon.

Interview dates: Thursday 15th & Friday 16th November 2018.



Barnsley College is rated outstanding by Ofsted and has over 8,000 students across a wide range of Vocational, Part-time and Higher Education courses as well as A-Levels and Apprenticeships.

We are looking for three exceptional people to join our high performing management team to help us continue to deliver an outstanding experience for our students in the following key roles:

Head of Department – C-Stem (Construction and Engineering) - £48,114 pa

Head of Department – Childcare and Health - £48,114 pa

**Head of Department – Essential Skills (including English and Maths) –
Spot pointed in the range £40,310-£45,348 pa**



The successful applicants will provide inspirational leadership to ensure outstanding teaching and learning, develop innovative curriculum design and delivery, and to deliver operational plans across their respective areas.

At Barnsley College, Heads of Department enjoy autonomy to deliver outcomes in their areas. The ability to initiate and manage change effectively and plan for growth and continuous improvement are essential requirements. Applicants should be able to clearly demonstrate how they would successfully manage departmental quality and budgets as well as establishing high levels of student and staff satisfaction.

Candidates for all posts will be, or have the potential to be, outstanding leaders with a thorough understanding of the key issues and opportunities facing the sector and their respective curriculum area.

Key benefits include 47 days' annual leave entitlement (including public and directed holidays), access to the Teachers' Pension Scheme and a commitment to support job related training and development.

For further information and to apply for any of the above positions please visit our website <http://www.barnsley.ac.uk/about-us/vacancies/>

Closing date for all posts is Monday 8 October 2018.

Interviews for the posts will take place between 15 and 26 October 2018.

Barnsley College is committed to creating a dynamic and diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all candidates regardless of their gender, disability, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or faith. Disabled applicants who meet the minimum essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS.



Careers Event - Teaching Opportunities

Location: Milton Keynes
Reference: SEP20186543

Salary: £18,015.00 - £32,232.00 Per Annum
Benefits: Excellent Benefits

Milton Keynes College are looking for professionals within the following curriculum areas - Care Professions, Business, Higher Education and Digital Technologies. We have exciting opportunities for lecturers as we see these schools developing and would love to be able to show you why Milton Keynes College should be the career choice for you. We are welcoming candidates that are interested in both flexible working hours and full time hours as we will have a range of temporary and permanent opportunities.

You will have a background in Care Professions such as; Care, Nursing, Health, Childcare. Digital Technologies such as; Computer Science, Cloud Computing, Cyber Security and Internet of Things (IoT) Digital & Technology. Business such as; Retail & Logistics, AAT, Customer service and Business Administration. We also welcome candidates with degrees in Higher Education across all subject areas to support within our Access to Higher Education courses.

We are holding an open event to give you the chance to learn more about working for Milton Keynes College and how you can be a part of the students learning experience. This will be a 2 hour event where you will hear more about each curriculum area, have the opportunity to have a tour around the campus and spend time networking with other attendees and staff from the college.

Event details: Friday 16th
November 2018 to be held at
our Chaffron Way Campus

For more information, please visit
[https://www.mkcollege.ac.uk/
jobs/our-vacancies](https://www.mkcollege.ac.uk/jobs/our-vacancies)

Closing date: Friday 2nd
November 2018

Should this event be suitable for
you we will go on to send further
information nearer the date.



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12 MONTHS UNLIMITED FEATURED LISTINGS £5,000 +35% off recruitment adverts in Schools Week & FE Week

Ensure your advert stands out! Unlimited featured online listings for your organisation. Featured listings include: enhanced visibility on our website, posts via our social media accounts, inclusion within our weekly jobs email sent to over 30,000 education professionals and all the features of a basic listing: your company logo, unlimited text, attachments and emails to relevant job seekers.

EDITORIAL

Time for FE to shine ahead of crucial Budget

**EuroSkills**

Almost seven years ago the world descended upon London's Excel arena for the 41st WorldSkills competition - my first experience. At the time it was hailed as the largest ever skills competition, and the first single event to fully occupy the Excel centre. Transport for London even used the event as a drill for the upcoming Olympic Games.

In the months following the event we worked with the National Apprenticeship Service, which was then operating skills coemptions in the UK, to improve the profile of WorldSkills in the UK.

As a sector we often reflect on the lack of media attention FE receives. The work of WorldSkills UK and the successes of Team UK is something we should be extremely proud of, not just as a sector, but as a nation.

We took the decision to accept an offer of becoming media partner later

that year - a role which would embed us with Team UK and follow their journeys as they prepared to compete on the international stage.

At the time I was wee lad and about the same age as the competitors, in fact some were older. For two years I worked alongside Team UK and observed our world class education system in operation as the team got set to compete at WorldSkills Leipzig.

As my hairline has receded, other members of the *FE Week* team have had the opportunity to report and be inspired. My whole organisation is fully committed to investing in WorldSkills UK to ensure an increasing number of people are able to learn about their work and successes.

We have now renewed our media partnership with WorldSkills UK for a further two years.

In recent years the national media

has finally shown more of an interest in WorldSkills, from the BBC to daily newspapers. It's great to see, and provides a great representation to the public of what our sector achieves.

Team UK's successes are only possible thanks to the infrastructure provided by colleges, providers and employers across the country.

What the FE sector now needs to do is shout about it more. More than ever before. Get on social media over the coming few days and wish the team good luck, using the hashtag #TEAMUK. Share the news articles on our website with your colleagues and stake-holders.

It's great to see more of the sector engaging with WorldSkills UK than ever before, but it's not nearly enough! There is so much more we could do.

WorldSkills UK and Team UK are some of the best ambassadors for the FE sector we have. They and the

sector deserve to be celebrated and recognised!

Colleges Week

Keeping with the theme of championing the sector, we have also this week thrown our weight behind the "Colleges Week" campaign, led by AoC. You might have noticed we've added the campaign logo to our masthead, both on our website and this newspaper.

The week provides a focused opportunity to showcase and celebrate the inspiring work colleges provide their local communities and beyond, alongside this highlighting the government's underinvestment in colleges.

We at *FE Week* fully support the mission of Colleges Week and hope it is a great success, with impact.

We would encourage all in the sector to support the campaign and hope that it has a positive impact

for all providers. On the eve of the Chancellor's autumn statement, we need a united voice arguing for an increase in the rates paid to ensure the entire sector can continue to provide a world class education for learners.

Next week we will undoubtedly be showered with platitudes from Damian Hinds, when he speaks at his party conference, about the great work the sector does and its importance. Don't let him and the Chancellor get away with their being no substance. This is a long overdue opportunity for them to put their money where their mouth is and cough-up.

But they will need a nudge.

Shane Mann,
Publisher - *FE Week*
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



EMAIL



TWITTER



FACEBOOK



WEBSITE

Lewisham Southwark College to become two separate colleges

This. Inevitable consequence of merger and de-merger and it's not branding it is re-branding. Utter waste of public money caused by systematic Tory cutting and pointless structural reform. Governance dubious too mind. Altogether POOR

Steve Bennett @properjob57

"This decision will allow the newly-established colleges to develop curriculum programmes that better meet the needs of the communities they serve, and to work more closely with key stakeholders, including crucially the local authorities of Lewisham and Southwark,"

Or to put it another way:

"As a merged college we didn't have the ability/capacity/will to offer a curriculum that met the needs of the communities we served, nor did we work closely with key stakeholders or local authorities"

(p.s. "and although we both

remain part of NCG, we don't see that getting in the way one little bit")

More funding to FE please and this type of farce can be avoided.

Doug

DfE given just 48 hours to rescue high-profile college from cash crisis

Given the hoops most colleges have had to jump through to get anything like this kind of support (endless meetings; threats to not pay up; statements that a lead in time of months is needed for this sort of payment etc etc), it seems that there are double standards in operation. Quelle surprise eh? ESFA in hypocrisy shocker!!!

Iron.pyrites

EuroSkills 2018: Team UK arrive in Budapest

Everyone @MKCollege wishes #TeamUK taking part #Euroskills2018 @worldskillsuk the very best of luck! It's wonderful to think that British

students will be flying the flag not only for the country but for the FE sector. #LoveFE

Dr Julie Mills @CEOMKCollege

Good luck to all Team UK at EuroSkills. Know you will us proud

Nicola Codd

Wishing you all the best, all of you are winners and shining examples of what make the UK great.

Steve Whitehead

Well done Team UK. You should each be justifiably proud of your achievements. Wishing you the very best at the competition and what ever the results; You are all winners!

Richard Jenkins

Good luck to all Team UK competitors. Hard Work Wins! Be proud of what you have achieved

Kevin Lewis

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Lewisham Southwark College to become two separate colleges

Lewisham Southwark College also deserves recognition for the dramatic quality improvement seen recently - with results last year's results some of the best of any college in London. The Boroughs' quoted views make no acknowledgement of this - in spite of both having had ongoing close involvement in curriculum planning - with council appointed governors on the board throughout this time.

I do hope that NCG is able to make sufficient investment, beyond additional top management, to enable the sort of growth and focussed provision everyone wants. We've already seen GLA plans to divert devolved cash to pay for a new cadre of administrators but it's frontline staff and students where it's desperately needed.

Matt

Experts

DAME RUTH SILVER

President, Further Education Trust for Leadership



The complexity of FE is not a weakness – it's a strength

We shouldn't be ashamed of the complexity of FE – we must embrace it and start explaining it to people in power, says Ruth Silver

Analysis from the Institute for Fiscal Studies demonstrates the extent of the cuts further education has had to endure over the past two decades. Its 2018 annual report on education spending in England found that spending per student aged 16-18 in further education had fallen by 8 per cent in real terms since 2010, while 19+ spending on adult education and apprenticeships had collapsed by 45 per cent since 2009 because of a dramatic drop in student numbers.

These appalling figures are an indictment not only of the chronic short-termism that afflicts public policy on education, and on further education in particular, but also of the failure of politicians and policymakers to grasp the value of further education

or even, in many cases, to understand what it does. The same point might also be made of the mainstream media, which only rarely reports on FE (with a few honourable exceptions) and understands it just as poorly.

The chief executive of the Association of Colleges, David Hughes, suggests that the failure of colleges to develop a "national brand" has made it easier for government to overlook their needs and "under-invest in their potential". Certainly, the level of understanding of FE and its mission within the corridors of Whitehall is ludicrously low. For the most part, they have little personal stake in it. Most politicians and civil servants have no direct experience of the sector and new ministers usually face a steep learning curve in coming to terms with a sector that does so much so well and yet is so utterly overshadowed by the schools and universities systems.

This has to change and sector leaders

have a highly important role in making this happen. We should not wait to have a collective identity imposed on us from outside. The mission we project must be created by the sector if we

"We need people who can be relied on to start banging on doors when funding is cut"

are to take ownership of and lead it. It must be true to what we do while also presenting a narrative that can engage outsiders and win their support.

Commentators often point to the

daunting complexity of the college sector as an obstacle to communicating effectively what we do. This is true to an extent – further education offers everything from foundational skills programmes through to higher apprenticeships and degree courses – but I think the issue is more to do with how we talk about this complexity than with the complexity itself.

Further education as a whole needs to be confident about what it does but also comfortable with it. We do great work and we should be unapologetic about it. Most fundamentally, we are leaders of learning, something that can get lost in the competing pressures to lead organisations, businesses and budgets. But we do not lead just any learning. We provide learning that is importantly local, not just in the sense of serving the communities in which we are based, but also in operating at the interface between the world of learning and the wider world of work

and social and cultural life. The story we tell in our strategic plans is the story of what we will become as a result of the coming together of changing national, community, learner and employer needs.

I often describe FE as the "adaptive layer" of the education system. I mean this not as a criticism but as a compliment. It is in our DNA to change because we operate at the nexus of important civic, political social and economic change. We live and lead in service. There is a great story to be told about that and we need to be better at telling it. That means leaders talking more clearly and comprehensively about what they do, to more and different people, particularly the ones who can be relied on to start banging on doors when funding is cut. But it also means being comfortable about our complexity and taking ownership of it. It is, after all, our story, and we cannot expect anyone else to tell it for us.

JOE DROMEY

Senior research fellow, Institute for Public Policy Research



National Education Service: what will it mean for skills?

Labour has taken two years to flesh out its National Education Service plans – so what do they mean for FE? Joe Dromey shares his thoughts on what was shared at party conference

In the Labour leadership election of 2015, Jeremy Corbyn set out a vision for a National Education Service. Evoking the founding tenets of the NHS, he pledged education that was free at the point of use, from cradle to grave.

Over the past two years, Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, has been putting the meat on the bones, and setting out what a National Education Service might look like.

There is relative consensus on technical education and apprenticeships. Labour supports T-levels, though the party has called for additional capital investment to deliver the ambitious reform. On apprenticeships, Labour has pledged to retain the levy, but has focused more on quality than quantity.

Beyond these areas, it is on

further and higher education that Labour's vision differs most from the government's. Central to this is Labour's pledge to scrap fees for further and higher education.

Tuition fees – introduced by the previous Labour government and tripled by the coalition – are capped at £9,250 a year. This has helped protect universities from the austerity that has hit other public services, and it doesn't appear to have put off people; participation has continued to inch up. However, shifting the cost from taxpayer to students has led to soaring student debt; the average graduate emerges with debt of over £50,000, with poorer students facing greater debt. Just one in four students will pay off the full amount.

The coalition introduced a similar system – advanced learner loans – for further education. While debt may not have deterred many from going to university, fees have had a huge impact in FE. Participation in FE fell by nearly a third after the introduction of advanced

learner loans.

At the heart of this debate is an ideological divide about what education is for. For the government, education is primarily about advancing individual opportunity. So, as the individual benefits, it is reasonable for the

"For Corbyn's Labour, education is not seen as a commodity but a human right"

individual to pay. While the government has commissioned a review of education funding, it has baked in this principle; insisting recommendations must "maintain the principle that students should contribute to the cost

of their studies". For Corbyn's Labour, education is seen not as a commodity, but as a human right and a social good. Because everyone benefits from a higher skilled society – the party argues – it is reasonable for everyone to contribute.

Labour's pledges do not come cheap. In the party's costings of its 2017 manifesto commitments, scrapping tuition fees and restoring maintenance grants came to £11.2 billion; nearly a quarter of all additional spending pledges, and four times more expensive than scrapping FE fees, equalising 16-19 funding and restoring EMA put together. Scrapping fees would be regressive – in narrow distributional terms – as young people from wealthier families are more likely to go to university.

On the distributional impact, Labour would argue that if this was paid for by progressive taxation, the overall impact would be progressive. On the cost, many in Labour would say that what matters is not the headline cost, but the

long-term economic and social impact. Corbyn argued in 2015, when he set out his vision for the National Education Service, "the extra tax revenues brought by a high skill, high productivity and high pay economy will fund further expansion". But in the short term, with a dire need for additional investment in other areas – from health and care to prisons and policing and social security – there is a real question about whether this is the highest priority for constrained resources.

Beyond the false binary of learner vs public funding, there are other options. Labour could deliver education that is free at the point of use by – for example – introducing a graduate tax, as Melissa Benn has outlined in her recent book *Life Lessons*. These options would be worth exploring.

National Health Service founder Nye Bevan once said that "the language of priorities is the religion of socialism". In fleshing out its plans for the National Education Service, Labour should bear this in mind.

TOM BEWICK

Chief executive, Federation of Awarding Bodies



Our 'employer-led' skills system is a total fallacy

If employers are to be given the driving seat in workforce development, they have to be given the keys to the car, says Tom Bewick

The mantra coming out of Whitehall is that our country operates a skills and apprenticeship system owned and "driven by employers". In fact, just about every government white paper since the 1960s has promised to address Britain's historic weakness in technical education and work-based learning by giving employers a far greater say over how workforce development is executed.

This ideology reached its apotheosis in November 2011 when the then prime minister, David Cameron, announced the employer ownership pilots (EOP). The design of this wheeze to get more firms training was incredibly simple. By giving employers direct access to £350 million of public money it was thought that all ministers had to do was sit back and watch the skills revolution

unfold. After all, employers were now designing, as well as purchasing, the training they actually needed.

Unfortunately, independent evaluation of the pilots over five years has concluded: "There is no evidence to suggest that EOP has changed attitudes towards training or that it led to subsequent increases in the number of staff trained." In other words, the Treasury would have achieved just as much success if it had simply taken a helicopter stuffed full of £50 notes and dropped them somewhere over an out-of-town industrial estate. The EOP was an abject failure because massive deadweight costs occurred from the fact the employers selected to take part would have done the training anyway.

It seems we never learn. The apprenticeship levy, reformed standards and now T-level route panels are trumpeted as great examples of "employers in the driving seat". Of course, they are nothing of the sort.

At best employers are travelling in the back seat of a bureaucratic machine that decides for them the journey they will be taking.

A more accurate description of England's current skills model is that it is "technocrat-led". Like puppet

"Employers are in the back seat of a bureaucratic machine"

masters, parents play this kind of trick on their offspring all the time. The education secretary, who recently struggled to tell FE Week a single employer that supported the Institute for Apprenticeships, in fact highlights a much wider problem. We've allowed

bright and extremely well meaning, but nevertheless unaccountable bureaucrats, to take over the running of our whole skills delivery model. Civil servants devise policy; they decide funding and procurement exercises; they regulate and enforce sanctions on anyone that steps out of line. Seriously, where are the recognisable and accountable employers in this model?

In Germany, which Damian Hinds visited recently, it is the mandatory membership of chambers of commerce that means employers are directly accountable for the decisions they make. Quality assurance is handled by industry bodies and the equivalent of the institute, BIBB, plays the supporting more technocratic role. So, it is worth asking policymakers, where is the meaningful involvement of employers in the English system? If the standards are wrong, or the assessment plans difficult to test (in theory all of these were developed by industry groups),

how are these employers held to account when things don't quite work out as planned?

People retain mixed views about the performance of sector skills councils that were introduced in the early Noughties. But at least the public had someone to blame and there can be no doubt the secretary of state knew exactly who the employer chairs were, because regular meetings would take place between them.

Ironically, countries around the world want to emulate sector skills bodies or something like the German chambers of commerce. Why? Because putting employers in the driving seat is about handing over the keys to the car, owned and funded, by the very firms that rely on and use the skills system. Handing out taxpayer funds and labelling it employer ownership or sticking ten worthy employees on a T-level route panel, is not an employer-led skills model. It's a fallacy.

NOT TO BE MISSED

UPCOMING EVENTS

ESSENTIAL UPDATE –
APPRENTICESHIP FUNDING FOR 2018/19

NEWCASTLE

3 OCTOBER 2018

BRISTOL

10 OCTOBER 2018

LIVERPOOL

17 OCTOBER 2018

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Bulletin



Annette Allmark

**Head of apprenticeships, BCS –
The Chartered Institute for IT**

Start date September 24 2018

Previous job

Director of strategic policy, People 1st

Interesting fact

Annette's planned career as a chef actually led her into the world of skills and training, where she's stayed for 21 years



David Reeve

**Interim director of finance,
Bradford College**

Start date September 2018

Previous job

Running his own consultancy and interim management business

Interesting fact

David is a keen runner and has completed multiple marathons in places as far afield as New York, Chicago, Las Vegas, Philadelphia, Florence and London

Movers & Shakers

...

Your weekly guide to who's
new and who's leaving



Sara Russell

Principal, Peter Symonds College

Start date August 2018

Previous job

Principal, Alton College

Interesting fact

Inspired by her grandfather, who was in the parachute regiment, Sara has completed a tandem skydive from 15,000 feet



Chris Harrison

Direction of operations, Seetec

Start date July 2018

Previous job

Business development director, Serco

Interesting fact

Chris is chair of Genius Within, which supports people with neurodiversity and disabilities, and trustee of ADD-vance, an ADHD and autism charity

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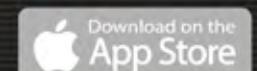
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FEWEEK

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The themes of this year's conference are:

- » Employer Voice of Apprenticeship Reforms
- » The Next Stage of the Apprenticeship Reforms
- » Fair Assessment of Apprentices
- » Quality Assurance for Apprenticeships
- » Devolution
- » Review of Post-18 Education and Funding
- » Employers on Meeting Skills Challenges
- » National Retraining Scheme
- » International Opportunities for Vocational Providers

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www.aelpautumnconference.org.uk

☎ 0117 947 2097 ✉ events@aelp.org.uk 🌐 www.aelpautumnconference.org.uk 🐦 #AELPAC18

FE Week Sudoku challenge

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

		6		9		5		8
	1		7	5	8			
		7	3					9
5	6						9	
		9				2		
	2						8	5
6					2	8		
			4	8	9		5	
3	5		1	9				

Difficulty: Easy

			3	6		7	4	
3	7	1				6		
5				8				
6		5		3			1	
			4	2				
	9			6		4		3
			7					2
		7				9	6	5
2	5		6	1				

Difficulty: Medium

Solutions: See right

Spot the difference To WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. **First correct entry wins an FE Week mug.** Email your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to: news@feweek.co.uk.



Last Edition's winner: Julie Coverley

Solutions

Turn the paper around to check if your answers match - but no cheating!

Difficulty: Easy

3	8	5	6	1	7	9	4	2
2	7	1	4	8	9	3	5	6
6	9	4	5	3	2	8	1	7
1	2	3	9	7	4	6	8	5
7	4	9	8	6	5	2	3	1
5	6	8	1	2	3	7	9	4
8	5	7	3	4	6	1	2	9
9	1	2	7	5	8	4	6	3
4	3	6	2	9	1	5	7	8

Difficulty: Medium

2	5	9	6	4	1	8	3	7
4	1	7	2	8	3	9	6	5
8	3	6	7	5	9	1	4	2
7	9	2	1	6	5	4	8	3
1	8	3	4	9	2	7	5	6
6	4	5	8	3	7	2	1	9
5	6	4	9	7	8	3	2	1
3	7	1	5	2	4	6	9	8
9	2	8	3	1	6	5	7	4