

Summary on a Page: November 2009

Skills for Growth: the National Skills Strategy



What is it?

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has published the government's strategy for skills, setting out new ambitious targets for improving skills to drive productivity and economic growth.

What does it say?

The strategy emphasises the importance of skills for positive individual and collective outcomes, and highlights the progress that has already been made in this area: since 2001, 2.8m adults have achieved a national qualification. Skills targets should not be just about qualifications, but improving and broadening skills outcomes. The strategy details new priorities and proposals in six key areas.




1. A new target for three quarters of people to participate in higher education, complete an advanced apprenticeship or an equivalent technician level course by the age of 30. Success will be measured according to the match of supply and demand of skills, value of skills to employment, improving employability and progress towards World Class Skills.
2. An aim to develop a new technician class by expanding the apprenticeship system, with up to 35,000 new advanced and higher level apprenticeships beginning over the next two years; as well as improving the pathways from apprenticeships to higher education. University Technical Colleges will offer new opportunities for 14-19 year olds.
3. Targeting skills investment from a new Skills Funding Agency according to current and future employment needs. Work to understand future trends will be carried out with Regional Development Agencies (with a skills strategy remit) and Sector Skills Councils. Encouraging employer investment, and a new match fund is introduced to boost skills in priority sectors.
4. Improving adult skills progress by establishing Individual Skills Accounts, improving awareness of training entitlements and assistance, facilitating individual choice, and expanding provider options. Clear 'traffic light' indicators for courses will be used, and where appropriate training will be offered that combines a particular trade with business startup information.
5. Encouraging businesses to value workforce development, with policies to look at existing skills that could be used better, implementing legislation around time to train, and investing in management skills. Public sector procurement will encourage investment in skills.
6. Simplifying the skills system including provider monitoring and funding arrangements, reducing the number of public funded agencies working in this area, and targeting funding to core aims.

Any implications?

Investors in People UK will cease to operate independently, and a streamlining of the 25 Sector Skills Councils will be carried out. There will no longer be separate Regional Skills Partnerships, as this regional skills agendas will be taken on by Regional Development Agencies.

Some funding for current skills work will be cut, including repeat qualifications under Train to Gain, with a shift to medium and long term skills priorities for Level 2 and 3. The flexibilities for small and medium sized enterprises to access fully funded unit and short qualifications will also be withdrawn.

Key links:

-  Read the full strategy on the BIS website: [Skills for Growth](#)
-  Read more about world class skills and the [response to the Leitch report](#)
-  Find out more about the new roles around skills for the [Regional Development Agencies](#)