Cinderella is at the ball – but where was the fairy godmother?

Contextualising HE in FE in the UK
Britain also needs stronger and better-quality vocational education, coupled with new business models that make better use of workforce skills and enable companies to move up the value chain. This will require employers to engage in a more meaningful way in vocational education and skills development. Without action in these areas, our economy will not be equipped to compete successfully on the global stage.

- IPPR

Higher apprenticeships at level 5 result in greater lifetime earnings than undergraduate degrees from non-Russell Group universities, according to the latest modeling by the Boston Consulting Group.

- The Sutton Trust

We therefore need, as a matter of urgency, to start thinking about post-19 funding and provision in a far more integrated way.

- Alison Wolf

The debate about higher vocational education raises important questions. Who are our universities for? What do young people need and want? What does the UK economy need? What do employers need if industry is to compete around the globe.

- Burnett & Thrift

We think a proportion of the government grant to universities should be reallocated towards offering more students higher level technical qualifications at further education institutions, and the student loan system should be expanded so that young people have access to finance to support their higher level study whichever route they choose.

- Policy Exchange
Overall Enrolment in UK FE is Large

Number of FECs, HE Students in FE and Overall Enrolment in FE, by Nation, 2015/16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FECs</th>
<th>HE students</th>
<th>Total enrolments</th>
<th>Studying full-time</th>
<th>Studying part-time</th>
<th>Work based learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>159,000</td>
<td>2.9M</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6,340</td>
<td>197,500</td>
<td>48,400</td>
<td>132,600</td>
<td>16,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>157,000</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>121,300</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33,257</td>
<td>119,676</td>
<td>50,924</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number of FECs correct at 2015/16 but enrolment data are approximate
There is Turbulence at FE/HE boundary

- Fewer, larger, FEIs (in all four UK nations)
- Expansion of Apprenticeships (in all four UK nations)
  - ‘Earn while you learn’
  - Sub degree HE qualifications
  - Greater role for employers as purchasers and commissioners
  - Enhanced focus on employability
- Integration of FEIs into HEIs
  - In Wales especially
  - Area reviews in England may lead to similar institutional developments
- Overarching structural and funding body change
  - Joint funding council already exists in Scotland
  - Both HE and FE funded from DEL in NI
  - Review of post-compulsory funding and regulatory arrangements in Wales (taking in HEFCW)
  - Possible closer alignment between HEFCE and SFA in England?
- Employer levy
  - £2bn p.a.
  - Unknowns regarding UK coverage or just England
  - The only significant new money into FE/HE for foreseeable future?
Fall off in HE in FE part time provision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEFCE Recognised PT HE FPEs</th>
<th>Large 12/13</th>
<th>Medium 12/13</th>
<th>Small 12/13</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notable Decline (-250 or more)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline (-50 to -249)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable (-49 to +49)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (50 to 249)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notable Increase (250 or more)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Change based on difference between HEFCE recognised PT FPEs studying HE in FEcs in 08/09 and 12/13
*Includes 20 colleges with 0 students in 12/13 but had at least 1 student in the 5 year period
*Stable category includes 4 colleges that had 0 change as they had 0 students in 08/09 and 12/13 but have been included as they had had at least 1 student during the 5 year period.

Source: Continuum, 2014
Alternative Provision – HE in FE

Source: Gareth Parry, 2015
UK: The long tail

Source: Gareth Parry 2015
So why the decline?

The forces of privilege, hierarchy and condescension have [...] been too strong.

Colleges are the key to the delivery of distributed higher education in many cities and regions, as providers of certificate, diploma, foundation and non-degree professional courses, which many universities are now too proud (or nervous) to offer. But, once again, commercialisation has been the enemy of lifelong learning.

Those post-1992 universities that have tried hardest to remain true to their roots have suffered most in esteem. Even established institutions with nothing to apologise for, such as the Open University and Birkbeck, have been forced to re-invent themselves along more conventional lines.

The result is a mass system that is [...] monolithic, although riven by snobbish hierarchies.

(Peter Scott, 2015)
“the biggest lesson I have learned is that the most powerful driver of public sector reform is to let new providers into the system. They do things differently in ways none can predict” (David Willets, 2011)

We will remove the regulatory barriers that are preventing a level playing field for higher education providers of all types, including further education colleges and other alternative providers. This will further improve student choice by supporting a more diverse sector, with more opportunities for part-time or accelerated courses, sandwich courses, distance learning and higher-level vocational study…

We will make it easier for new providers to enter the sector. We will simplify the regime for obtaining and renewing degree-awarding powers so that it is proportionate in all cases. We will review the use of the title ‘university’ so there are no artificial barriers against smaller institutions. It used to be possible to set up a new teaching institution teaching to an external degree. Similarly, it was possible to set exams for a degree without teaching for it as well. We will 5 6 Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System once more decouple degree-awarding powers from teaching in order to facilitate externally-assessed degrees by trusted awarding bodies.

(White Paper, 2011)
HE in FE and the 2016 White Paper

- Only 3 mentions of FE in the paper.

- Key points:
  - The growth in FE colleges and alternative providers offering higher education has significantly changed the marketplace and how students study.
  - DAPs in the current system are all or nothing — designed around traditional large, established, multifaculty providers. This system is both outdated and insufficiently flexible, so we will create a suite of options for those wishing to award their own degrees in the future. We will allow providers who meet our demanding quality standards to secure full degree awarding powers more quickly, after three years of operation.
  - “High quality providers will also be able to award foundation or taught degrees on a probationary basis when they first start operating, subject to some restrictions on scope.”
HE in FE and the TEF

- In our green paper, we proposed that only providers with 50 per cent of their students on higher education courses would be eligible for teaching excellence framework (TEF).

- Many stakeholders made a compelling case against what they saw as an arbitrary ban on other providers operating in the higher education sector.

- FE colleges, for example, may individually only have a minority of their learners on higher education courses, but collectively deliver a significant amount of higher education provision.

- We have decided to expand eligibility for TEF year one to all providers that deliver undergraduate provision.
Leaked report plan exposes stark choice at 16
> 15 new ‘professional and technical’ routes with apprenticeship or substantial work experience

The first skills white paper in a decade will bring an end to mixed provision and make 16-year-olds choose between academic courses leading to university or a new technical professional education (TPE) route into work, *FE Week* can exclusively reveal