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Guidance note: Study Programmes

March 2015

This guidance note is aimed largely at first-term governors. It signposts fuller sources of background material and good practice guidance for more experienced governors and clerks.

“The aim of Study Programmes is to maximise the potential of young people (16-19) to progress onto higher education and/or skilled employment by ensuring that vocational routes to higher education and employment are seen as high quality and a genuine alternative to academic routes.”

Department for Education, January 2013 (based on Alison Wolf's 2011 Review of Vocational Education)

- What is a study programme?
- Do governors know what makes up a study programme in their college?
- How do governors ensure that study programmes stretch and enhance the core curriculum?
- What do your students say about their study programmes?

Introduction

The introduction of study programmes started in September 2013. They came out of the Wolf report of 2011 and were seen as the answer to eliminating poor adult literacy and numeracy and a general lack of work readiness by young people.

The idea behind them is to increase the quality of education for young people so that they are well prepared for further education, higher education and work. Through these programmes, all young people should have the tools and opportunities to fulfil their potential and develop relevant skills, regardless of their circumstances.

Ofsted focus on the quality and breadth of study programmes as part of an inspection. Study programmes consist of a substantial qualification, English, maths, tutorial and non-qualification activity including for example work experience. They place a requirement on all learners to achieve a certain level of English and maths. Guidelines require learners to work towards achieving a GCSE Grade C or above in both English and maths.

What is a study programme?

16-19 study programmes include:

- A substantial qualification (which can be A-levels or larger vocational qualifications) or, where appropriate;
- Work experience;
- English and maths, where students have not yet achieved a GCSE grade A*- C in these subjects by age 16; (where these grades have been achieved students should still be contextually developing their skills in these subjects or in some cases be encouraged to improve their grade);
- non-qualification activity, such as tutorials, work experience and work-related learning, relevant to the programme goals.

These four elements of the programme should combine to provide stretch and challenge for the learner, to prepare them for employment or further study.

A welcome feature of the new study programmes is the freedom to offer non-qualification activities; work experience and learning to develop personal, employability and study skills.

English and maths

As a part of 16 –19 study programmes, all students who have not achieved a C grade in GCSE maths and English by the end of Key Stage 4 must continue to study those subjects. Almost 50 percent of all students fail to achieve a grade C at age 16 in these two subjects

NB. The implementation of English and maths is a condition of the funding for 16-18 year olds, including full-time students with grade Ds in these subjects who will be expected to resit GCSEs.

Questions for governors

- What makes up a study programme in your college?
- How do you ensure that study programmes stretch and enhance the core curriculum?
- What do your learners say about their study programmes?

More detailed information can be found in the Department for Education guidance note:

[16 to 19 study programmes](#): *Departmental advice for senior leadership teams, curriculum planners, teachers, trainers and co-ordinators on the planning or delivery of 16 to 19 study programmes*