

Response submitted online

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find below our consultation response on the Education Inspection Framework.

Consultation: 'Education inspection framework 2019: inspecting the substance of education'

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION FOR UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (EAUC):

Response on behalf of our Members (United Kingdom and Ireland)

About the EAUC

EAUC is the alliance for sustainability leadership in education. Our passion is to create a world with sustainability at its heart. That's our vision. We exist to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to make sustainability 'just good business'.

The membership of the EAUC comprises higher and further educational institutions, with a combined budget of some £25 billion, responsible for educating over 2 million students supported by half a million staff.

We have regional and country chapters, with member institutions connected deeply with business, industry, health and civic bodies at local levels, with reach internationally via their research, innovation and student mobility.

We believe

- That UK and Irish education should be a global leader in sustainability
- That educational institutions have a responsibility as anchors in their communities to be agents of change
- That education has a unique opportunity to transform lives and communities
- That education is at the heart of global sustainability
- That every student should have access to sustainability education
- That education should reflect best practice in operational sustainability
- In being flexible and adaptable to find solutions for a resilient future
- In the value of international collaboration

Our values

- Pioneering - driving sustainability through innovation
- Independence - our own unique voice
- Collaboration - together we go further
- Role Model - leading by example
- Empowering - supporting and inspiring our members

Response to the consultation:

We have outlined our responses to the questions relevant below based on collated feedback from our FE members.

Proposal 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce a ‘quality of education’ judgement?

AGREE

In theory, this would be a good idea. Looking at the quality of education in a more holistic way will ensure the qualitative and innovative side of learning is better captured.

Particular focus should be placed on building the skillsets of young people, in addition to knowledge. The purpose of education is to prepare young people for mature life. Their mature life is going to look very different to the generations that went before them. They will face unprecedented climate and related environmental disasters, and huge emphasis should be placed on equipping young people with the skills to be resilient, adaptable and able to balance the requirements of the environment, the economy and society.

More information is needed on how judgements will be made. What guiding principles will be used? Evaluation criterion should include behaviour, cultural and values especially to be a change agent towards a sustainable world. We also seek clarification on the additional training inspectors will receive to ensure they are able to carry out this new style of assessment. This will be a necessity.

Proposal 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed separation of inspection judgements about learners’ personal development and learners’ behaviour and attitudes?

STRONGLY AGREE

We agree that these should be separated. We think the criteria listed under the proposed ‘Personal Development’ category are good, but we are very disappointed that the word ‘sustainability’ is not explicitly mentioned. The focus is also far too UK-centric. Young people need to be good global citizens, not just British citizens.

There is a clear bullet point missing that outlines how learners will be equipped through learning for sustainability to prepare them for their life as a global citizen on a planet requiring urgent and unprecedented behaviour change to ensure the future of the human race and other species, developing not just the knowledge but also the skills and values to acknowledge and contribute to addressing these challenges. Learners need an understanding of cause and effect, and how systems and societies can be adapted to ensure sustainable futures by safeguarding environmental, social and economic wellbeing. The Government has a real focus on this, and it should transfer across into education. We would suggest this bullet point might require providers to ensure learners are ‘sustainability literate’. Of course, alongside this, there would be a requirement for all staff to undertake, both as part of initial training and Continued Professional Development, training that explains how to incorporate sustainable development and global learning into their teaching. This should be built into staff training cycles and staff should not be expected to do this as an ‘add on’ in their own time.

Additionally, there is a strong link with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) here. The UK has committed to these, and young people are at a disadvantage if they are not learning about them now. They would be an excellent framework for this category and give providers an outline of what personal development should be contributing towards.

The word 'community' is another element that is missing here. How are learners contributing to their community as part of personal development, and becoming active, engaged citizens?.

Proposal 9

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal to reduce the types of provision we grade and specifically report on will make our inspection reports more coherent and inclusive?

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

To have a stronger opinion on this, we would need more information. It is not clear precisely what the change leaves out. More information on this should be provided.

We would encourage Ofsted to apply the same logic here as that outlined in Proposal 2, which was to view providers in the context of their locality.

Proposal 10

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed model for short inspections?

AGREE

We would like to see the results of the pilot – but providing the feedback was positive, we think this would be a good idea so long as it does not turn into a 'one size fits all' activity.

In addition to the proposed pilot areas, we would like to see a requirement for:
Has the provider implemented 'sustainability literacy' measures to ensure learners have the knowledge and skills to be resilient and adaptable global citizens with a good understanding of global social and environmental challenges?

Proposal 11

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the timescale within which providers that are judged to require improvement receive their next full inspection should be extended from '12 to 24 months' to '12 to 30' months'?

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

We did not receive a strong consensus from members on this topic. However, we would suggest that extending inspection time does provide a more realistic timescale to ensure providers can make the changes required.

Please use this box to record any additional comments in relation to the detail set out in the further education and skills draft inspection handbook.

The EAUC is the alliance for sustainability leadership in education – we have 200 members that are either universities or colleges. In the FE sector there is much interest in sustainability, but there are a few barriers that mean it is not prioritised. Firstly, there is a lack of funding, many colleges do not have the resources to implement sustainability measures across their campuses nor integrate it into their curriculum. Even though, in the long-term, these measures would save them money and enhance learning opportunities. Secondly, there is a lack of knowledge and commitment from senior leaders in colleges when it comes to sustainability. They do not realise that integrating sustainability has cost-saving potential and could provide an edge when it comes to student recruitment, as well as providing essential enhancement to the learning experience.



This means learners in an FE setting, particularly those in post-16 education, are at a disadvantage coming into the world of work, as their HE competitors are much more likely to have acquired sustainability skills and knowledge. Sustainability awareness is required in all job roles, and ensures that individuals are resilient and adaptable to a world on course for huge rates of negative environmental, social and financial change. The lack of sustainability literacy within schools and FE seems very unfair – and we would like to see Ofsted address this at its roots. Providers should be required to ensure their learners are equipped to deal with the future.

We would encourage Ofsted to reach out and discuss these matters with us further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Iain A Patton'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'I'.

Iain Patton, CEO, EAUC