

## Post Compulsory Education and Training Consultation: A single regulatory and funding body for FE and HE?

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On Tuesday 20 June 2017 the Cabinet Secretary for Education, [Kirsty Williams, will make a statement on Post Compulsory Education and Training Consultation](#). This is likely to be the announcement of the consultation on the Welsh Government's plans to implement its response to Professor Ellen Hazelkorn's report, [Towards 2030: A framework for building a world-class post-compulsory education system for Wales](#).

A consultation on the report's findings was one of Kirsty William's ten education priorities, [as set out in an exchange of letters with the First Minister](#) prior to her joining the Welsh Government. Plans to consult on the proposals were [set out in a statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Education on 31 January 2017](#).

Towards 2030: A framework for building a world-class post-compulsory education system for Wales (The Hazelkorn Report)

The [Welsh Government announced in July 2015](#) it was commissioning Professor Ellen Hazelkorn, Policy Adviser to the Higher Education Authority and Director of the Higher Education Research Unit, Dublin Institute of Technology, to undertake a Review of the Oversight and Regulation of Post-Compulsory Education and Training in Wales.



The current [Cabinet Secretary for Education has stated](#) that:

The previous administration **commissioned the review because of concerns about the growing complexity of the post-compulsory education and training system.** This includes further education, higher education, work-based learning and adult community education. The various sectors and providers are regulated and funded in different ways by different bodies and the result can be **unhelpful competition between education and training providers, duplication or gaps in provision and confusion for learners.**

Professor Hazelkorn's report, **Towards 2030: A framework for building a world-class post-compulsory education system for Wales**, was published in March 2016. The report contained six high-level recommendations. These were:

01. Develop an overarching vision for the post-compulsory education system for Wales based upon stronger links between education policy, providers and provision, and social and economic goals to ensure the needs of Wales are future-proofed as far as is practicable.
02. Establish a single new authority – to be called the Tertiary Education Authority (TEA) – as the single regulatory, oversight and co-ordinating authority for the post-compulsory sector.
03. Place the needs of learners at the centre of the educational system, by establishing clear and flexible learning and career pathways.
04. Civic engagement should be embedded as a core mission and become an institution wide-commitment for all post-compulsory institutions.
05. Create a better balance between supply-led and demand-led education and research provision, shifting away from a market-demand driven system to a mix of regulation and competition-based funding.
06. Create the appropriate policies, processes and practices to encourage better long-term and joined-up thinking about the educational needs and requirements for Wales, now and into the future.

For more detail on the report and its reception by stakeholders, [please see our earlier blog on the topic in January 2017.](#)



The then Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis, issued [a statement on 10 March 2016](#) when Professor Hazelkorn's report was published. The then Minister said he was publishing the report 'in order for stakeholders and other interested parties to have the earliest opportunity to consider the report, its analysis, findings and recommendations' before the Assembly election. **Huw Lewis also said he would 'make no comment on the report** at this stage; it [would] be for the new Government ... to consider and determine its response'.

## Welsh Government Proposals

On 31 January 2017, the [Cabinet Secretary for Education made a statement](#) during Plenary. This statement constituted **the Welsh Government's response to Professor Hazelkorn's Report**. In it, the Cabinet Secretary highlighted that **she broadly agrees with, and supports, the findings** of Professor Hazelkorn.

In particular, Kirsty Williams felt that **the recommendation to establish a single strategic authority**, responsible for overseeing all aspects of post-compulsory education and training, 'is **tried and tested in successful systems**' and that she wants 'Wales to enjoy those same advantages'. Consequently, **the Welsh Government's intentions are** to give this new body:

...responsibility for planning, funding, contracting, ensuring quality, financial monitoring, audit and performance, and be the lead funder of research. In line with Professor Hazelkorn's recommendations, the current functions of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales [HEFCW] would be transferred to the new authority, which would operate at arm's length from the Welsh Government.

It is **intended that this new authority**, provisionally named the Tertiary Education Authority (TEA) by Professor Hazelkorn, **will place**:

...**the needs of learners at the heart of the education system** by establishing a clear and flexible learning and career pathway; ...[supporting] parity of esteem between vocational and academic pathways and connections between qualifications and the labour market.



In the January 2017 statement Cabinet Secretary announced that **the Welsh Government planned ‘to consult**, later on this year, on proposals for establishing a single strategic authority’, noting that

**It is critical that we hear from learners, leaders and practitioners** on how post-compulsory education and training meets their needs and can be an even greater force for the social mobility and national prosperity.

It is likely that the statement on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017 will be announcing further detail of the anticipated consultation.

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