

Post-16 qualifications boosted to help more people to progress

Thousands of qualifications are set to be transformed so that more people can gain the skills employers need and progress into work.

A consultation has been launched today seeking views on plans to reform post-16 qualifications at Level 2 and below so everyone has access to high-quality options that will lead to good outcomes whether that is going on to further study or into a job.

Qualifications will be streamlined and strengthened so that young people and adults have a clearer choice of options available to them and can be confident that they will set them on a path to a rewarding career.

Employers will play a key role by setting standards that will define the core knowledge, skills and behaviours expected for all technical qualifications at Level 2, so they deliver the skilled workforce businesses and the economy need to thrive.

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs or disabilities, who are more likely to take these qualifications, will also benefit from higher-quality courses that provide the support they need to fulfil their potential, and help open the door to opportunities to progress.

Minister for Skills Alex Burghart said:

We are delivering qualifications designed with employers that give students the skills the economy needs. The consultation we are launching today is the next step in making that change a reality.

We are already rolling out T Levels and reviewing thousands of technical qualifications to make sure they are fit for purpose. We want to make sure all qualifications are high-quality and help people progress in life and work.

Thousands of young people and adults study for a Level 2, Level 1 and entry level qualification every year in subjects such as construction, healthcare and hair and beauty – often as a bridge to higher level study or to prepare them to enter the workplace.

The current qualifications landscape is confusing with around 8,000 qualifications available at these levels, many of which cover the same or similar subjects. For example, there are more than 650 building and construction qualifications at these levels, and nearly 560 in health and social care. This can make it difficult for people to identify the right qualifications that will help them to achieve their goals.

Both the [Wolf Review](#) and [Sainsbury Review of Technical Education](#) also underlined that many students entering the world of work lack the technical knowledge, transferable skills and behaviours required and expected by employers to perform successfully in occupations, despite holding a technical qualification. The plans announced today will ensure all qualifications meet a high bar before being approved for any public funding, and provide the skills employers and individuals need to get ahead.

David Hughes, chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said:

Qualifications at Level 2 and below are vitally important for both young people and adults, so it is good that the DfE is reviewing how effectively they support people to progress in learning, in confidence, into work and as citizens.

Getting this level of learning right is doubly important because these qualifications also form the bedrock of all other higher levels of learning and need to encourage, enable and inspire learners to progress where they want to. We will be working with college leaders throughout the consultation to ensure their voice and that of teachers and students is heard.

Mark Reynolds, chief executive of Mace, said:

Demand for construction training remains largely concentrated on Level 1 and 2 qualifications. It is essential that these qualifications continue to be part of clear employer supported pathways that provide the knowledge, skills, and behaviours for learners to gain an apprenticeship or job in the construction industry.

The post-16 Level 2 and below review presents an opportunity to improve employment outcomes for learners who want to join construction. I'd encourage employers of all sizes to engage in the consultation process.

The move marks the next step in the government's transformation of technical education and the post-16 qualifications landscape, which has already seen action taken to streamline and boost the quality of the qualifications available at level 3 (A level equivalent) including rolling out new [T Levels](#), working with employers to boost apprenticeship opportunities and establishing 21 [Institutes of Technology](#) across the country.

As a first step towards streamlining the post-16 qualifications system, in [August 2021](#) the government confirmed that it would remove funding for more than 5,000 qualifications at Level 3 and below, including over 3,000 at Level 2 and below, that had no or low enrolments. Public funding for these qualifications will be removed later this year, making it easier for students to find a high-quality course.

UK introduces new sanctions against Russia including ban on ships and fresh financial measures

- Russian ships banned from UK ports, following fresh wave of sanctions
- further UK individuals and entities are restricted from undertaking financial transactions with the Russian Central Bank
- Russia's state-owned sovereign wealth fund and its chief executive have been sanctioned

Russian ships have been banned from UK ports, following a fresh raft of UK sanctions against Russia today.

The ban includes any vessels owned or operated by anyone connected to Russia and authorities will also gain new powers to detain Russian vessels.

Additional economic measures, introduced by the Foreign Secretary today, including against the Russian Central Bank and the state's sovereign wealth fund, also mean the majority of Russia's financial system is now covered by UK sanctions.

The new measures prohibit UK individuals and entities from providing financial services to the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, as well as the Ministry of Finance and National Wealth Fund.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

We said Putin and those around him would pay the price for their unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine, and we are being true to our word.

The ban on Russian ships from UK ports, and new economic sanctions against key Russian financial institutions including its central bank, in close coordination with our allies, will degrade Russia's economy and help make sure Putin loses.

We stand with Ukraine, its people and its democracy, and will continue to support them diplomatically, economically, politically and defensively.

Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps said:

Putin and his allies must feel the full consequences of their vicious and illegal invasion of Ukraine.

That's why from today, I'm instructing all UK ports to turn away any vessel that is flagged, registered, owned, or operated by Russia.

By banning Russian ships from our ports, we are further isolating Russia and crushing its economic capabilities, starving Putin's war machine.

The UK has worked in close partnership with the United States and European Union on the sanctions introduced today to prevent the Russian Central Bank from using its foreign reserves in ways that allow it to lessen the financial impact.

In addition, Sberbank, Russia's largest bank, which accounts for 35% of the financial sector, has been prohibited from clearing sterling payments through the UK's financial system. The [UK has already sanctioned Russia's second largest bank, VTB](#), as well as 8 other financial institutions.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund – the country's sovereign wealth fund – and its chief executive, Kirill Dmitriev, have also been sanctioned today, with their assets frozen and a travel ban in place for Dmitriev. RDIF funds projects of strategic significance to Russia. This sanction will stop UK individuals or companies dealing with RDIF.

[PM meeting with President Karis of Estonia: 1 March 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met Estonian President Karis today.



The Prime Minister met Estonian President Karis in Tallinn today.

The leaders condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and their brutal attacks

on innocent civilians, which they agreed had the hallmarks of a dark past which the European continent thought was forgotten.

The Prime Minister and President Karis agreed that the world must come together to denounce Russia's action and support the people of Ukraine.

The Prime Minister updated President Karis on the steps the UK has taken to fortify NATO's defences, including doubling our troop presence in Estonia. President Karis thanked the Prime Minister for the UK's leadership on this.

Published 1 March 2022

[Ukraine: UK pledges another £80million in aid to help Ukraine deal with humanitarian crisis](#)

- New funding brings total UK support during current Ukraine crisis to £220 million, which includes £120 million of humanitarian aid
- PM announced fresh help during visit to Poland today
- New funding will help provide aid, including medical supplies, to Ukraine and wider region.

The UK is committing another £80 million in aid to Ukraine to save lives, protect vulnerable people inside the country and in the wider region and to tackle the growing humanitarian crisis.

The funding brings the total UK humanitarian aid package for Ukraine to £120 million after £40 million was announced last weekend to help aid agencies respond to the deteriorating situation, creating a lifeline for Ukrainians with access to basic necessities and medical supplies.

It takes the UK's overall aid support for Ukraine during the current crisis to £220 million, after a £100 million economic package for Ukraine was announced earlier this month.

Violent and barbaric acts from the Russian military against civilians are creating an increasingly catastrophic environment, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to flee into neighbouring countries.

The Prime Minister said:

With every hour, the passionate desire of the people of Ukraine to defend their country has become more apparent and millions of people around the world have been stirred and moved by their

courage.

The reality is that whatever happens in the coming days or weeks, the Ukrainian people have shown already that their spirit will not be broken, and they will not be subdued. We as the international community have a responsibility to do everything we can to help the Ukrainians.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

We have a moral duty to support Ukrainians affected by Putin's unprovoked aggression. Britain is at the forefront of efforts to supply life-saving humanitarian aid, as well as political, economic and defensive support.

Our message to the Ukrainian people is simple: we will help you and stand with you in the fight for the freedom and sovereignty of Ukraine.

The £220 million referenced by the PM is made up of £120 million of humanitarian aid and the £100 million of Official Development Assistance funding announced earlier this month to bolster the Ukrainian economy and reduce Ukraine's reliance on Russian gas imports.

This latest round of support comes as the Red Cross Movement launched appeals for global support to deal with the unfolding humanitarian emergency that could see up to 7 million people displaced as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The United Nations has also launched a Ukraine appeal today, with the Foreign Secretary in Geneva meeting with the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, and High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

[UK imposes sanctions on Belarus for its role in the Russian invasion of Ukraine](#)

- First tranche of sanctions implemented against Belarus for its role supporting Russia's military invasion.
- Belarusian Chief of the General Staff and three other deputy defence ministers sanctioned.
- Two military enterprises sanctioned.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss has today (Tuesday 1 March) launched a first tranche of sanctions against Belarusian individuals and organisations in response to the role the country is playing in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including facilitating the invasion from within its borders.

Four senior defence officials and two military enterprises have been sanctioned with immediate effect under the UK's Russia sanctions regime.

Those sanctioned include the Belarus Chief of the General Staff and First Deputy Minister of Defence, Major General Victor Gulevich. Gulevich is responsible for directing the actions of the Belarusian armed forces, which have supported and enabled the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He has directed joint military exercises with Russia, and consented to the deployment of Russian troops along the border of Belarus with Ukraine, which has directly contributed to Russia's ability to attack Ukraine, including from positions in Belarus.

The other sanctioned individuals are Major General Andrei Burdyko, Deputy Minister of Defence for Logistics and Chief of Logistics of the Belarusian Armed Forces; Deputy Minister of Defence for Armament and Chief of Armament of the Belarusian Armed Forces, Major General Sergei Simonenko; and Deputy Minister of Defence, Major General Andrey Zhuk.

Also sanctioned are state enterprises JSC 558 Aircraft Repair Plant and JSC Integral, a military semi-conductor manufacturer. JSC 558 provides maintenance and servicing to military aircraft at Baranovichi air base, from which Russian aircraft operated as part of the invasion.

Individuals will be unable to travel to the UK and any UK-based assets will be frozen.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

We are inflicting economic pain on Putin and those closest to him. We will not rest until Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is restored.

The Lukashenko regime actively aids and abets Russia's illegal invasion and will be made to feel the economic consequences for its support for Putin.

There will be nowhere to hide. Nothing – and no one – is off the table.

These sanctions follow two pieces of legislation laid by the Foreign Secretary yesterday (Monday 28 February) to prevent designated Russian banks from being able to transact any payments in sterling and have correspondent banking relationships with UK-based banks, and to ban a range of exports critical to the maintenance and development of Russia's military-industrial complex and strategic interests.

The first will be used immediately to designate Russia's biggest bank, Sberbank, in effect cutting the bank out of the UK's financial markets. The second, which is being enacted in close alignment with the US, EU and other partners, will collectively cut off much of Russia's high-tech imports, constraining Russia's military-industrial and technological capabilities for years to come.

ENDS

1. The individuals and entities have been designated under the UK's Russia sanctions regime for their role in destabilising Ukraine and undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.
2. The UK has already imposed sanctions on more than 100 people and organisations in response to the fraudulent elections in Belarus and the litany of abhorrent acts and human rights violations that the Lukashenko regime continues to commit.