



Labour party consultation documents:
<https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/npf-consultation-2023>

Summary by LabourList:
<https://labourlist.org/2023/05/labour-manifesto-2024-election-what-policies-npf-party/>

Labour's Policy Programme:
<https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/news/npf-agrees-policy-programme>



Ofqual's Consultation on Resilience:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ensuring-the-resilience-of-the-qualifications-system>

Ofqual's Qualifications Price Statistics report:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifications-price-statistics-2023/qualifications-price-statistics-2023>



FAB article:
<https://awarding.org.uk/fab-announces-appointment-of-interim-ceo/>

Looking towards the future:

Labour's Stance on Apprenticeships

As the frontrunners for the next general election, Labour's potential victory raises questions about the future of education, particularly with regards to apprenticeships and EPAs. If Labour comes into power, what changes can be expected in the apprenticeship landscape? Will there be any impact on the roles of AOs and EPAOs?

Of course, it's still too early to answer these questions, but Labour's direction of travel has been outlined in a series of six policy consultation documents – and the respected reporters at *LabourList* have provided a useful [summary](#) of the resulting policy handbook which could influence the Labour manifesto.

It indicates that Labour will aim to “boost apprenticeship opportunities” and “reform the Conservatives' apprenticeships levy into a 'growth and skills levy' that works across all nations and regions”. Whilst there is precious little detail at this stage, it is at least heartening to note that Labour will continue with apprenticeships and the levy, in principle, rather than axing them. This tallies with reports from other sources.

There is no news on vocational qualifications which is hopefully good news, ie that change might be minimal. Watch this space ...

Resilience Is The Word

August saw the close of Ofqual's consultation on “Ensuring The Resilience Of The Qualifications System”, with findings expected to be published in the next few months. Ofqual is interested in resilience in many areas: technology, cyber security, financial, operational – or even if we have another large-scale event like the covid-19 pandemic. Quite rightly, Ofqual states that it is good policy to have contingency provisions, even for extremely unlikely scenarios and that AOs should have resilience arrangements in place for their qualifications.

The outcome of this consultation is likely to lead to changes to the conditions of recognition, which will affect the compliance reporting of all AOs and EPAOs. Resilience is likely to remain a key topic in the coming months and years – forewarned is forearmed!

Have you increased registration fees? Are you planning to?

In recent years, the cost of obtaining qualifications in the UK has been rising rapidly as many educational institutions have been forced to increase their prices due to budget cuts and other financial constraints. As a result of covid-19, many institutions have had to adapt their teaching methods and find new ways to deliver courses remotely. These changes have come at a cost, with many institutions having to invest in new technology and resources to support online learning.

In addition, many institutions have also experienced significant drops in revenue due to lower student numbers or cancelled courses, forcing them to look for ways to cut costs or increase their income. Unfortunately, one way that some organisations have chosen to do this is by raising their prices for qualifications.

Ofqual has recently released their [Qualifications Price Statistics](#) report which shows that qualification registration fees have risen for both GQs and VTQs – by 6.5% and 4.7% respectively. However, the report is based on data to February 2023 and it suggests that subsequently prices may have risen even more ...

And finally ... a new FAB CEO who is an old friend ...

It was interesting to hear that John McNamara is once more at the helm of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, albeit temporarily while they search for a permanent Chief Executive. John is pragmatic, sensible, efficient – and amusing! – and is the epitome of a safe hand on the tiller. He has spoken at the AO-Forum on a number of occasions in the past and was one of our most entertaining and knowledgeable presenters.

Congratulations on the appointment, John. If only it was permanent!!