

**The Vocational-Higher Education Interface; a view from England**  
**Paper for the L H Martin Institute Conference on**  
**Charting New Terrain: Creating and maintaining a diversified tertiary education**  
**sector in Australia**  
**The Langham Hotel, Melbourne; 27-28 November 2008**

**Robin Shreeve**

**Principal and Chief Executive, City of Westminster College, London, England**

**Formerly**

**Deputy Director-General TAFE and Community Education, NSW Department of  
Education and Training, Sydney Australia; and**

**Director, North Coast Institute of TAFE, Port Macquarie, New South Wales,  
Australia**



## Introduction

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you here today.

I have been very fortunate in my professional life to have had the opportunity to work as a senior VET sector bureaucrat in Australia and as the Chief Executive of a Further Education Institutions in both England and Australia. For colleagues in Higher Education that may not be so unusual, it is often said that university people see themselves as part of an international academy. So when the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Employment Education and Workplace Relations, Julia Gillard, recently visited London on a fact finding mission she met with a number of Australians who were currently working as the Chief Executives of English post compulsory institutions. The invitation list included four University Vice-Chancellors, most of who had been Vice Chancellors or Deputy Vice Chancellors in Australia. Representing the VET sector were just Ken Boston, the CEO of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority and I.

So I suppose I can bring a somewhat unique perspective – but this means my observations maybe very personal and idiosyncratic and cannot be easily “triangulated” (to use a phrase beloved by our Office for Standards in Education College or OFSTED Inspectors) against other opinions.

### Generic differences between England Australia

A theme of this paper is that my experience leads me to believe that though they may look superficially very similar, the English and Australian systems of vocational education and training are quite different – despite our common language and culture. Perhaps this is not a surprising conclusion as Gavin Moodie in his recent book on the relationship between vocational and higher education suggests that there is no universally accepted definition of vocational education. Vocational education tends to defined on entirely pragmatic grounds – vocational education is whatever vocational institutions happen to deliver in a particular country (Moodie 2008, p165). These differences clearly impact on cross-sectoral relationships in general and the relationship between vocational and higher education in particular. My views of the particular differences are:

1. In England the principal providers of vocational programs are the 400 odd Further Education (FE) Colleges. Their course offer in terms of both the range and proportion of vocational, general education, higher education and occupational or work-based learning programmes is significantly different to the wholly vocational course offer of an Australian TAFE institute.
2. One reason for this different profile is that in England many students leave school at 16 to take full time “sixth form studies” at an FE College. These students are following both vocational and general education pathways with the primary intention of going to university rather than preparing for a job. In Australian TAFE institutes, university entrance is not the main priority for the majority of students.
3. English FE Colleges are separately funded for their Higher Education (HE) work, teach HE courses under HE rules and are quality assured for HE by the HE Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) rather than by OFSTED, the agency that inspects their FE provision. Around 160 English colleges receive funding directly from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and over 100 more receive HEFCE funding indirectly through franchise agreements with universities (Association of Colleges [AoC], 2008, p1). As all these FE Colleges

receive funding for their FE work from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) you could argue that these Colleges are cross-sectoral institutions. When I was in NSW no TAFE Institute received any HE funding, directly or indirectly. Their Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas, which had HE equivalents, were all run under VET regulations and quality assurance systems using VET funding.

4. Unlike Australian TAFE Institutes, English FE Colleges basically teach other people's courses; that is general education A Level programmes developed by awarding bodies like OCR; vocational and occupational courses developed by awarding bodies such as City and Guilds; and in the Higher Education sphere Degrees accredited by local universities. It is only in the last two years that individual Colleges have been able to apply to be awarding bodies for vocational qualifications and to date few have done so. Similarly there is a new legislation that enables individual Colleges to apply to the Privy Council to award their own two year Foundation Degrees. This latter initiative is very contentious with some in the university sector.
5. What is meant by "vocational education and training" in Australia is often closer to what the English call either the "occupational pathway" or more commonly "Work Based Learning". Some of what is classified as "vocational" in England would be considered more general than vocational in Australia.
6. The structure of vocational education in England is excessively complex and bureaucratic. This is not just my opinion but also the view of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) who published in October 2008 their strategy for simplification of skills in England.
7. Private providers are generally less visible than in Australia. Though they can access public funds, the largest are primarily involved in work-based learning, especially apprenticeships and "on the job" "Train to Gain" programmes.
8. Despite a "softer" view of vocational courses the English tend to use the term "Skills Sector" rather than "Vocational Education and Training or VET Sector".
9. In England there are currently separate qualification and credit frameworks for vocational and University Higher Education unlike the unified Australian Qualifications Framework. This makes credit transfer between the sectors more "difficult".
10. Until the Leitch (2006) and Foster (2005) Reports the expansion of Further and Higher Education was justified more in terms of improving "social mobility for individuals" than increasing human capital and the national stock of skills to compete in a competitive global economy.

So though the buildings, classrooms, laboratories and workshops of the Paddington Basin Campus of City of Westminster College may look very similar to those at the Meadowbank Campus of Northern Sydney Institute, at Paddington Basin far more students (or learners as we call them in England) are primarily there to obtain a qualification to get them into University rather than at Meadowbank where far more students are there to get a qualification directly relevant to their existing or future job. Similarly though the Cosway Street Campus of City of Westminster College may look somewhat similar to the Crows Nest Campus of Northern Sydney Institute, nearly all the learners at Cosway Street are studying for a Bachelors Degree where at Crows Nest they are nearly all aiming to achieve a competency based, vocational qualification.

## **Dominant relationships between FE Colleges and Universities**

In England, students from General FE Colleges are the single largest source of applicants for first degrees at Universities through the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). They represent 28.8% of all applications compared with 28.3% from comprehensive schools, 8.4% from independent schools, 6.8% from Public Grammar Schools and 10.8% from Sixth Form Colleges (UCAS, 2008). If you combine UCAS applications from General Further Education Colleges with UCAS applications from Sixth Form Colleges and add in mature age FE students who apply direct, the combined total is according to the Association of Colleges 48% (AoC 2008, p1) of all entrants to higher education. In Australia TAFE students represent 9% of all university applicants according to Universities Australia website.

In England 10% of all “prescribed” publicly funded Higher Education is delivered by FE Colleges, though degrees delivered by FE Colleges are all currently (but maybe not in the future) accredited by partner Universities. This 10% of HE is delivered by over 250 FE institutions, conversely the 2% of FE delivered by HE Institutions is confined to a very select group of less than 50 Institutions of whom less than 10 have anything approaching large scale FE provision (HEFCE 2004, p1).

Thus in England two of the dominant relationships between Further Education Colleges and Higher Education Institutions are those of the FE College being a:

- Supplier of first degree students; and
- “Franchise deliverer” of university degrees, particularly two year “Foundation Degrees”.

## **Widening participation and social mobility**

Ever since the Dearing Report in 1997 talked about the “special mission” of Further Education Colleges in the expansion of sub-degree Higher Education, the policy imperative behind the growth of HE in FE has been widening participation. Sir Howard Newby, CEO of HEFCE, pointed out that the ability of FE Colleges to attract “non traditional students” and teach them at a lower cost than Universities meant that they should play a key role in helping to achieve the Government’s target to involve 50 per cent of the 18-30 age range in higher education by 2010 (HEFCE, 2003b, p1). HEFCE have supported this policy imperative by funding a number of major national initiatives to improve participation including “Action on Access”, “AimHigher” and the “Life Long Learning Networks”. All of these initiatives have as major strategies the encouragement of applications from students on vocational courses.

However research funded by the Sutton Trust (2008) found that in the UK social mobility had actually declined over the past twenty years. An OECD Report (2007, p 33) suggests that intergenerational social mobility based on parental earnings is over four times greater in Australia than the UK. The principal beneficiaries of improved access to Higher Education in England have been the middle classes. Sutton Trust research also found that access to “elite” Russell Group Universities was dominated by a limited number of private and selective schools. The key factor in getting access to these elite universities was whether the student had studied “A” Levels – the academic not the vocational route.

In practice we may thus have a new “binary system” in England. Stereotypically it seems students from more modest social and economic backgrounds take a vocationally related qualification at an FE College and then progress to a vocationally related degree at one of the post 1992 “recruiting universities”. Students from selective state and private schools take “A” levels and progress onto a degree at one of the more prestigious “selecting” universities. It is students from these universities who get the most prestigious jobs in the professions, the Civil Service and the Corporate Sector.

Newby once memorably summed this situation up by saying, “The English have a genius for making hierarchy out of diversity”. (Woodward 2002)

Given this divide in Higher Education you also now have some influential groups such as the “Edge Foundation” arguing strongly that there are other ways to success than the traditional academic route.

### **Change – Leitch, Foster and investment in skills to compete in a global economy**

Things are changing. It could be argued that the two recent seminal reports on Further Education and Skills in England by Sir Andrew Foster and Lord Sandy Leitch are trying to make the English system more like that of Australia - that is a “hard” vocational education and training system with a focus on employment related skills. They both emphasise the need to build human capital to compete in the global economy arguing that the UK’s stock of skills is below that of comparable countries.

### **Collaboration – University and College Networks**

In London my local “recruiting universities” currently view me far more as a collaborator than a competitor. As a medium size College of 8,000 students I have not got the resources to develop and accredit my own courses, either FE or Foundation Degrees. In a very competitive Higher Education Market universities want my students. The universities are happy for me to pay to teach their degrees through franchise and “fee for service” accreditation agreements. To cement these relationships two of my local universities, the Universities of Westminster and Middlesex, have made my College, along with some other local FE Colleges, an “Associate College of the University”. This allows us such privileges as using the university logos on the College’s publicity materials and gives staff access to some university staff development programmes. From the Universities’ perspective the Associate College Networks are an attempt at loose consortia working to widen participation via increased collaboration. There are other, harder cross-sectoral collaborative networks in the regions such as the Combined Universities of Cornwall (CUC). This is an unincorporated association of regional higher and further education providers promoting a “university presence” in an isolated county without its own university. It is strongly supported by the Regional Development Agency. CUC acts as a universal “portal” for the combined services of the partner institutions as well as facilitating collaborative programmes for the county delivered locally.

HEFCE has also taken the lead with the LSC and the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) in funding a group of Lifelong Learning Networks whose job it is to widen participation in Higher Education by promoting pathways

from vocational to Higher Education. The network I am associated with, the Linking London Lifelong Learning Network, has been instrumental in mapping curriculum pathways, promoting FE College to University access agreements as well as trying to improve credit transfers. Being based in central London this particular network is concentrating on provision to support public sector employers and employees. The Lifelong Learning Networks are complimentary to the HEFCE funded AimHigher Programme whose purpose is to encourage applications to university from individuals who might not consider university to be an option. They do this through outreach activities such as master classes and summer schools and make an effort to include students on vocational pathways.

### **Ethnic Diversity in London**

There would also be one other difference in the learners at City of Westminster College compared to many Australian TAFE Institutes, which does have an impact on the system. When I was Director of the North Coast Institute 6% of our students were Aboriginal but over 90% were of “white European” origin. At City of Westminster College less than 30% of our learners are white, 73% are what we call “BME” or Black Minority Ethnic. Our largest ethnic groups are Black African, Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Arabic. Though such an ethnic mix is not typical of all FE Colleges in England it is not an uncommon profile for a London College. However these statistics reflects the social and economic status of central London FE students as much as their ethnic origin. Like TAFE in Australia, FE in the UK tends to recruit students from poorer economic backgrounds (AoC, 2008).

But before delineating these technical differences and the comparative nature of the vocational-higher education interface in more detail I want to say something about the context in which these systems have developed.

### **The size of public sector administration**

The economic, social and cultural environments we operate in naturally cause some of these systemic differences. The United Kingdom’s economy is very different to that of Australia. For example, the resources and mining sector is very small in England and the financial services sector very large – though it has been on something of a crash diet since the current crisis. The number of people employed in public sector administration in England, as opposed to public sector service delivery, is large. The number of people employed in the administration of VET in England, as opposed to VET delivery, is no exception to this rule with the LSC alone employing 3,741 in 2007, though this is down from 4,451 the year before (LSC, 2007, p57). These numbers obviously exclude people working on the administration of VET in the central government agencies, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, or the seventeen other agencies with a monitoring, inspecting or improvement role for FE Colleges identified by Sir Andrew Foster (2005, p27) in his review of the future role of FE Colleges. I can only speculate on whether the large number of people employed in the public administration of VET is the cause of or the effect of the incredibly complex and bureaucratic systems the English have in place to manage their VET system.

### **Complexity and Bureaucracy**

Since coming back to England I can only describe myself as staggered by the size and complexity of the bureaucracy. The Australian system looks as if it has been

through a radical business process re-engineering compared to England. Whole layers of management, organisations and processes that we have in England simply do not exist in Australia such as external awarding bodies and Inspectorates.

My view of the size of the bureaucracy and the complexity of the UK VET system is not just that of a cynical College Principal. On 23 October the UK Commission for Education and Skills, another new body set up even after the Foster Report, published a report entitled “Simplification of Skills in England”. In it this report admitted that:

“... there are six major underlying causes of employer calls for simplification of the skills system:

- Difficulties of finding/accessing the right parts of the system when needed;
- Complexity of programmes/initiatives, with constant new announcements and changes;
- Restrictive constraints on initiatives, leading to unmet employer expectations;
- Excessive bureaucracy for those employers who do engage with the system;
- Complexity of organisations and structures, all seeking to communicate with employers;
- Constant change meaning that employers cannot keep track of what is on offer”

As I write this Steve Besley (2008) of Edexcel has just published a “Who Does What Guide” to the English Skills System. In creating this, he uncovers 4 planning and funding bodies; 4 regulatory/inspection agencies; 9 bodies representing or supporting providers; 10 support agencies; 12 strategic bodies; and 16 separate support mechanisms.

### **Impacts on Employment and Skill Needs**

The size of employment in both public sector administration and financial and other service industries has a significant impact on employment, the nature of the skills required and so in turn on cross-sectoral relationships. The London Skills and Employment Board Strategy for 2008-2013, London’s Future, reports that 43% of current jobs in London require graduate level qualifications and this will rise to 50% by 2020. It may come as to a surprise that the same strategy reports that many London organisations do not have skill shortages because London as a Global City can import skilled people from the rest of England, or from Europe or indeed from the rest of the world. A far bigger issue for London the LSEB suggests is the 30% long-term unemployment rate in the Capital.

In this context it is entirely reasonable that FE Colleges have amongst their priorities university entrance programmes, delivering Higher Education Courses as well as providing basic language and literacy skills as part of employability programmes.

So what is the overall balance of provision of programmes delivered by English providers?

## **Split between 14-19 Programmes and those at 19 plus**

Well if in architecture form follows function, in vocational education form follows funding. The LSC (2008) has recently revised its funding model, having separate targets and processes for:

- 14-19 programmes in Schools and Colleges
- 19 plus Adult Responsive Provision delivered by FE Colleges, Adult and Community and Private Providers; and
- 19 plus Employer Responsive Provision delivered by FE Colleges, Adult and Community and Private Providers

This split between pre and post 19 funding provides a useful typology for exploring the nature of programmes offered by Further Education Colleges and other providers, though when we look at 19 plus programmes we will also have to look at programmes delivered in Colleges and funded by HEFCE as with some minor exceptions the LSC does not fund Higher Education Programmes.

## **The Four Pathways at 14 - 19**

The current UK Labour Government is planning massive reform for 14-19 education and training in England. Its policy for 14-19 years olds is primarily outlined in the paper, "Raising Expectations; staying in education and training post 16". The title reflects the government's ambition that all young people will remain in education and training, full or part time until they are 18 by 2015. In the subsequent report, "Delivering 14-19 reform: next steps" the government states that all 14-19 year olds would follow one of four routes (DCSF 2008, p22).

The nature of these routes graphically illustrate some of the fundamental differences in the way vocational education is both conceptualised and delivered in England compared to Australia and the nature of its relationship with Higher Education.

The four routes are:

1. General Qualifications, i.e. GCSEs and A Levels
2. Diplomas
3. Foundation Learning Tier
4. Apprenticeships

All four routes can be delivered in FE Colleges, Schools will deliver everything with the general exception of apprenticeships.

The Foundation Learning Tier can be characterised as the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills. The government wants all the other routes to have a pathway to Higher Education. In practice this may prove highly problematic.

A Levels are academic or general education qualifications historically designed for University entrance. The only point to note here is that many FE Colleges, including my own, have wide A Level offers recruiting large numbers of full time 16-18 students. In Australia most of this type of students would be staying on at school.

Diplomas were originally planned to have 13 lines of learning in industry related areas such as Construction, Hospitality, Media, Sport, Hair and Beauty, IT, Business Administration and Finance etc. They were first known as Vocational Diplomas, then Specialised Diplomas and now just Diplomas, partly because the lines of learning have been expanded to include non-industry related areas such as Science, Languages and Humanities. Even though they are supposed to be developed in association with industry, the government is moving away from calling these Diplomas vocational, preferring terms such as applied and practical learning. However the Diplomas are expected to replace a plethora of vocational qualifications such as BTEC Diplomas, Certificates and Awards that cover most vocational areas from Civil Engineering, through Business Administration to Arts and Media.

## **VRQs and NVQs**

BTEC National Diplomas are considered to be a vocational pathway– albeit one that is delivered largely in educational institutions rather than “on the job”. Technically they are often described as Vocational Related Qualifications (VRQs) to distinguish them from the competency assessed National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

The examining body EAL outlines the differences between a VRQ (also known as a technical certificate) and an NVQ on its website (EAL, 2008),

*VRQs are based on national occupational standards having a balance of both academic and practical skills to better prepare the candidate for a career or further study. A VRQ is a qualification that provides knowledge and understanding in a particular subject area. It is not about competence, which is the job of an NVQ but can prepare candidates to deal with the underpinning knowledge and understanding which is required in an NVQ.*

In Australia where all nationally accredited VET sector qualifications are competency based, the VRQ and NVQ are combined in one credential.

Many students studying VRQs and in the future Diplomas are looking to use them for university entrance. However it is easier to get into a “recruiting” than a “selecting” university with a VRQ and practically impossible to get into an oversubscribed areas such as medicine with a VRQ.

## **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships at Level 2 and Advanced Apprenticeships at Level 3 are currently undergoing a major expansion and reform (DCSF/DIUS 2008b). (To help achieve this my College has teamed up with four other Westminster organisations and Skillset Australia to form the “London Apprenticeship Company” – the first Australian type Group Apprenticeship Programme in the UK). Apprenticeships are described and funded as “Work Based Learning (WBL)” rather than as Further Education. To complete an apprenticeship the learner has to follow a “framework” consisting of elements such as:

- a competency based, work place assessed NVQ,
- a technical certificate or VRQ which gives underpinning theory and knowledge to the NVQ; and
- a key skills or literacy and numeracy qualification.

Apprenticeships are sometimes described as the occupational pathway rather than the vocational or academic pathway.

It is difficult to use an NVQ Level 3 qualification to gain entry to even a “recruiting university”. The number of apprentices with a Level NVQ 3 qualification going to university has been described as “tiny” (Anderson and Hemsworth, 2005, p3). Connor and Little (2005, p21) estimated less than 1% of Advanced Apprentices who completed their Apprenticeship Framework went onto Higher Education, though they did indicate the data was unreliable. However Foundation Degrees run in FE Colleges do provide a significant new pathway opportunity for NVQ graduates and apprenticeship completers.

### **Occupational versus Vocational**

Given the fact that Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) are not competency based like the NVQs, it is an interesting debating position to argue that the “occupational” or “work based learning” route in England is far closer to what is considered to be Vocational Education and Training in Australia. In this typology what the English describe as vocational would be seen in Australia as a more general education qualification with an occupational bias, the equivalent say in NSW of an Higher School Certificate with some vocational units or the Victorian Certificate in Applied Learning (VCAL). However the VCAL is not seen as a route to university and VRQs like BTECs certainly are.

### **Private Providers**

If we accept the English differentiate between vocational and occupational there are far fewer “vocational” private providers than Australia. Private providers can access public LSC funding, but I believe the bureaucratic burdens imposed on them are a barrier to entry. The largest national private providers such as VT Training and the now defunct Carter and Carter began by specialising in delivering occupational, work based learning apprenticeship programmes. Private providers like these also took “advantage” of the establishment and growth of LSC funded “employer facing” provision such as “Train to Gain”. Many believe an over optimistic assessment of the market for Train to Gain Programmes and the weight of the administrative bureaucracy is a reason Carter and Carter went into liquidation. Much of its business was bought by Newcastle College of FE.

For many other private providers, like my neighbour London College of Beauty Therapy, the dominant qualification is the “occupational” NVQ. A sign of changing times is that this private provider is working on being part of a consortium to deliver the new 14-19 Diploma in Beauty and Hair as a kind of VET in Schools Programme with local secondary schools.

### **Credit Frameworks**

In parallel to the reforms the English are introducing a new credit transfer framework called the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). This is quite a radical departure as to date few English vocational qualifications have a modular or “unitised” structure. One can speculate this is caused by qualifications being previously all “owned” by private awarding bodies. In the future a module from one qualification can count, subject to certain rules, towards a different qualification perhaps owned by a different awarding body. Under the QCF reforms for the first

time Colleges and industry can accredit their own training – something that has been possible in Australia for well over a decade. To date only a few have done so, however the reforms were only introduced in the last eighteen months – but need less to say many English commentators were outraged by training at MacDonald's achieving national recognition. The BBC (2008) Website had an article, "Q and A: what are MacDiplomas?"

The big issue is that the QCF initially in reality only applies to vocational qualifications. It does not yet cover A levels or Diplomas which will initially have their own internal credit transfer arrangements, though there may be some future alignment. The QCF is due to replace its predecessor NQF, or National Qualifications Framework, in 2010. The NQF mapped whole qualifications to a hierarchy of nine levels from Entry Level to Level 8 with Further Education ending at Level 3. The QCF will use these same nine levels. Despite being called the National Qualifications Framework it also only covered "vocational qualifications". Amazingly to an Australian used to one unified Australian Qualification Framework covering all qualifications in all sectors the English universities have their own separate Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The new Office of the Qualifications and Exams Regulator (Ofqual) even maps the two frameworks against one another on its website.

### **Non prescribed Higher Education**

If publicly funded vocational education largely ends at Level 3 but the QCF and NQF go to level 8 and the universities have their own Framework for Higher Qualifications it begs the question what is covered by QCF and NQF Levels 4 to 8. The answer is some residualised, non degree, higher qualifications (including some Level 4 NVQs) developed by professional associations such as the Association of Accounting Technicians and the Institute of Leadership and Management as well as performing arts, dance and music qualifications developed by awarding bodies such as Trinity College, formerly the Trinity Guildhall School of Music. The funding bodies classify this type of provision as "non prescribed higher education". It was described as practically invisible in a 2002 LSDA Report by Clark (p.8) and is under threat at Levels 4 and 5 from the growth of Foundation Degrees as in most cases it is not seen as providing a pathway into university programmes. It is increasing difficult for Colleges to get LSC funding to run these programmes, as they are not classified as a priority as they do not contribute to Central Government Targets. It is certainly not analogous to the Diploma Level qualifications run in TAFE institutes which are publicly fundable and which Moodie (2007, p3) identifies as around 20% of the publicly funded TAFE institutes teaching load. Croydon College, which in the 2002 Report was identified as having 500 enrolments in this type of provision, has switched almost entirely to Foundation Degrees.

### **Credit Transfer Agreements**

There are thus very few of the national and local, block and unit level credit transfer agreements that have been laboriously put together between VET systems and providers and Universities in Australia. Universities do operate Credit Accumulation and Transfer systems (CATs) but they do so largely autonomously. They are principally concerned with credit transfer between universities. A notable exception is the Open University (OU) that has a comprehensive system which gives credit for a range of qualifications, including some of those categorised as "non prescribed higher education". For example they will grant 10 credit points towards the 300

needed for a BA for an Institute of Leadership and Management Level 5 Introductory Diploma in Management.

It would appear to me that most Universities are principally interested in the QCF to understand how these modular qualifications compare to other university entry programmes at Level 3 rather than for credit in their own degree programmes

### **“Reverse credit transfer”**

Since in England many “vocational” qualifications are principally used to gain entrance to university first degrees and many FE Colleges have large cohorts of full time A level students, the whole notion of “reverse articulation” from University to TAFE or VET of university students into FE Colleges which has excited so much debate in Australia is simply not such a major issue in England.

When I have raised the issue of university graduates doing FE or Work Based Learning Programmes people usually look at me as if I have come from another planet. The only examples in my College of university graduates undertaking a VET sector qualification that my colleagues could think of were the odd refugee or asylum seeker with an overseas degree that was not recognised in the UK or the banker with a humanities degree who wanted to do medicine and thus took a one year intensive A level science programme as that was the only entry qualification medical schools would recognise.

### **Foundation Degrees**

The one qualification that university graduates are coming to FE Colleges for is the Foundation Degree (Foundation Degree Forward, 2008). It is one of the few programmes that are exempt from the recent HEFCE Equivalent Level Qualification policy that means someone with a degree cannot get government funding to do a second first degree. One of the functions the two year Foundation Degree performs is similar to that of the “career switching” Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas offered by TAFE institutes. However that is not its primary purpose, which is to be an “advanced vocational” qualification leading to a Bachelor’s degree for people with “non traditional qualifications”.

Foundation Degrees are one of the very few means by which students with an “occupational” or “work-based learning” qualification such as a NVQ can access a Higher Education programme.

The availability of a growing number of Foundation Degrees are one of the reasons why 10% of all publicly funded Higher Education is delivered not in universities but in Further Education Colleges. Foundation degrees are at a broadly similar level to Associate Degrees in the United States and Australia, that is they represent the first two years of a three-year bachelor’s degree. They usually have a clearly identified pathway into the third year of such a degree. They are employment related and have to be developed with input from employers. They cover a very wide range of occupations but business and media are the most popular. We have recently seen the arrival of closed Foundation Degrees, available only to the employees of a particular organisation, for example the retail management Foundation Degree programme for the giant supermarket retailer, Tesco.

Foundation Degrees are normally less expensive than bachelor's degrees costing around £1,500 per annum compared to Bachelors Degree at £3,000 per annum. Government tuition fee loans are available. Especially attractive for those with occupational or vocational qualifications is that there are no set standard entry criteria and most institutions are quite flexible about what they set locally. They are offered full time and part time often utilising flexible delivery methodologies.

Moodie (2007, p3) quotes Karmel and Nguyen in suggesting that in Australia the Advanced Diploma and Diploma are "cross over" qualifications between VET and HE. They can be offered and indeed developed under different rules by either sector, but they are principally delivered in the VET sector. In England Foundation Degrees could be said to perform this function. They are roughly at the same level as the Australian Qualifications but are definitely an HE qualification, though often delivered by an FE Institution.

### **Colleges awarding their own degrees- a threat to collaboration?**

The Further Education and Training Act 2007 allows Colleges to apply to the Privy Council to award their own Foundation Degrees. The proposal came as a surprise to Colleges and outraged several universities as well as Universities UK. The universities argued it would undermine the credibility of a qualification that was not yet established. Some Vice Chancellors said "research inactive" FE staff were not in a position to develop these awards (Fearn, 2008). People like Baroness Blackstone, former Government minister and Vice Chancellor of the University of Greenwich muttered darkly in the House of Lords about institutional mission drift. Some of the newer universities thought it would weaken cross-sectoral collaboration and increase competition. Fuel has recently poured on this argument by Dr David Collins the President of the Association of Colleges, who has argued for Colleges to be able to award new Bachelor of Vocational Studies Degrees (Newman, 2008). Privately he talks about re-inventing Polytechnics.

To date only one College, new College Durham has applied for awarding powers. I have no intention of doing so as I do not have the developmental resources. To me a bigger threat is my awarding universities thinking my classes of 15-20 are too small to form into viable groups when the students want to do their "third" year at the University.

### **Higher Education in Further Education Colleges**

Though Foundation Degrees are a recent development, Higher Education programmes have a long heritage in Further Education Colleges though funding and accreditation arrangements have changed over time. A HEFCE (2003a, pp6-7) good practice guide neatly tabulates what FE thinks makes their delivery of HE so distinctive. It lists local, flexible delivery with strong support from teaching and educational support staff. Small teaching groups are emphasized with more teaching contact time than a university. The industrial background of FE staff is emphasised, as are the colleges' links to local employers. Finally, and this is something my own College's professional photography HE students value, there is the continuing access to high specification equipment.

One might have expected Foundation Degrees to have replaced the long established Higher National Certificates and Diplomas programmes offered by the awarding body Edexcel. These higher education programmes have existed for many years. Though

at my College we run both an HNC and Foundation Degree in Professional Photography our Foundation Degree in Building Services Engineering accredited by South Bank University has never recruited sufficient students for us to run it, but our HNC in the same discipline has consistently over recruited. Conservative employers like and trust the HNC.

My College, like other FE Colleges, also runs Bachelors' Degree programmes, in our case in Medical Technology. Being England they are all honours programmes as standard. All the students are employed by NHS Hospital Trusts and attend on block release. To an extent this programme is a good example of credential creep having once been a National Certificate, then a Higher National Certificate, then a BSc (Hons) and is now rumoured to be moving to a Masters Degree that we will also offer. The course is accredited by Middlesex University. It is funded by HEFCE, some of the students being part of our direct contract with HEFCE, others being part of a franchise agreement with the University but still ultimately run with HEFCE funds.

### **Dual Sector Universities and Mixed Economy Colleges**

Most English FE Colleges offer some HE. A few universities that were pre 1992 Polytechnics and that very exotic breed, the small specialist independent HE providers within the GuildHE professional association, may also run FE. In the middle ground of this spectrum are a couple of “dual sector universities” and the “mixed economy group” of FE Colleges.

Adapting the work of Bathmaker, Brooks, Parry and Smith a typology of “dual sector” FE – HE institutions might look something like this:

Type	LSC funded activity as % of total load	Professional Association	Award own Degrees	Institutional Examples	Notes
Some post 1992 Universities	Less than 5%	Universities UK	Yes	London Metropolitan University, Southbank University	Small number of highly specialist FE programmes often in art and design
Some specialist independent HE Institutions	Up to 40%	Guild HE	Usually	Writtle Agricultural College; University of Cumbria (also a member of UUK), University College Birmingham	Many of the 21 members of this group do not offer FE or LSC funded programmes – but some offer a lot.
Dual Sector Universities	Up to 40%	Universities UK (UUK)	Yes	Thames Valley University (TVU)	TVU is often the only one listed but University College Birmingham would seem to have all the characteristics
University takeover of FE College	Up to 10%	Universities UK	Yes	University of Derby, High Peak College; Leeds Metropolitan University and Harrogate College	Rare. Leeds Metropolitan and Harrogate are currently de-merging though Derby is looking at other acquisitions
Mixed Economy Group of FE Colleges	Up to 85%	Association of Colleges (AoC)	Not currently, but New College has applied for Foundation Degrees	Croydon College, New College Durham	HE Offer will include Bachelors as well as Foundation Degrees and HNC/HND
FE College with own and franchised HEFCE Contracts	Up to 90%	Association of Colleges (AoC)	Not currently but potential in future for Foundation Degrees	City of Westminster College,	HE offer may include Bachelors as well as Foundation Degrees and HNC/HND
FE College with franchised contract from University	Up to 98%	Association of Colleges (AoC)	No	Hertfordshire Regional College	HE offer probably restricted to Franchised Degrees and HNC/HND

The only English Institution regularly compared to the Australian Dual Sector Universities like RMIT, Victoria University of Technology and Charles Darwin is Thames Valley University (TVU). Its antecedents were Ealing College of Higher Education (a CAE in Australian terminology) a couple of specialist Art and Design Colleges and a couple of FE Colleges in Slough and Reading, both of whom did a substantial amount of Higher Education Work. From a reading of their annual report TVU's funding splits around 60/40 Higher to Further Education (TVU, 2007) It strikes me that University College Birmingham could also be classified as a dual sector university. Formerly the Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies it became a designated HE Institution in 2002 when it passed the threshold of 55% of its load being HE. In 2007 it successfully applied to the Privy Council to award its own degrees, though currently some are still awarded by the University of Birmingham. The following year the College changed its name to University College, Birmingham (UCB).

From a reading of its website (UCB, 2008) you get the impression that UCB is slightly concerned that its change of status might not be perceived as a 100% positive by all of its clients,

*“What difference will the name change make to current and future students?”*

*The name change will actually mean very little in terms of the courses we offer and the qualifications students receive. Our graduates will still receive their certificates from the University of Birmingham. Students studying City and Guilds, BTEC and other courses will still get their certificates from those awarding bodies.*

*In the future we will offer a small number of courses with the UCB name.*

*What the new name does do is better reflect our status as a higher education college and better encompasses the wider range of subjects studied, for instance our well regarded early childhood programmes.”*

The “Mixed Economy Group” are all FE Colleges with a large LSC funded FE offer but with a substantial amounts of HE work. The criterion for membership is a direct HEFCE contract for 500 students per year. Most have many more as well as franchise agreements with universities for indirect HEFCE funding. They would all offer Bachelors Degrees as well as Foundation Degrees and HNC/HNDs. Some like City College Norwich have a very small involvement with Master's programmes. One of this Group, New College Durham, is the first College to apply for powers to award its own Foundation Degree.

### **The impact on quality**

All providers receiving LSC funds are “inspected” by OFSTED and graded on a four-point scale from Outstanding to Inadequate. By comparison with the HE Quality Assurance Agency Process, OFSTED is far more direct and forthright in its judgements – they do not use QAA judgment terms like “limited confidence” or “broad confidence” or the worst you can get “no confidence”. Inspectors' reports on Institutions are published on the OFSTED website. Delivering FE in an HE context can, but does not always, lead to positive inspections. Indeed universities and HE

institutions have had negative reports. In one Inspection (Ofsted 2006a) of a London University with then over 2,000 FE enrolments the inspectors reported,

*“Leadership and management of the FE provision are unsatisfactory. Since the merger in 2002, senior managers have focused their attention on undergraduate and postgraduate provision, which represents the overwhelming majority of the university's work.”*

This university decided to migrate out of much of its Further Education work. Very recently a July 2008 (Ofsted 2008) report of an HE Institution with a large FE offer reported:

*“The overall effectiveness of further education provision is inadequate, in contrast to the college's judgement of satisfactory”*

However another London University received a positive Inspection (Ofsted 2006b) which highlighted some of the benefits dual sector provision can bring,

*“Inspectors judged education and training to be good in foundation art and design. They judged leadership and management of FE provision to be good. The university's key strengths and aspects that should be improved are listed below.*

#### *Key strengths*

- o very good progression to, and preparation for, HE*
- o good academic and pastoral support*
- o good use of HE facilities by FE students*
- o strategic commitment to FE*
- o good partnership working*
- o social inclusion*
- o accurate self-assessment.*

#### *What should be improved*

- o the monitoring of attendance and punctuality*
- o the proportion of teaching that is good or better”*

### **The Management and Governance of HE in FE**

The level of integration of HE and FE work varies significantly between institutions and has been researched from a comparative perspective by Garrod and Macfarlane. They make a distinction between unitary and binary “duals”.

*Unitary duals seek to integrate structures and processes to maximise integration between further and higher education often despite contrary pressures for separation through government funding and audit regimes. Binary duals, whilst seeking to maximise opportunities for internal articulation between further and higher education, essentially maintain separate structures and operations (Garrod and Macfarlane, 2007, p14)*

Even some FE Colleges with large amounts of HE work have structured themselves on sectoral lines. Croydon College has separate “academies” for HE, 14-19 and “Employer Facing” programmes. TVU has a separate “Sixth Form Academy for its A Level programme but has integrated FE and HE in other areas such as Building.

At my own College we have integrated our HE work into our Faculty Structure – thus the Faculty of Culture, Media and Sport teaches vocational programmes at the FE Level as well as HE programmes such as HNCs and Foundation Degrees in Professional Photography and Audio Technology. Staff teach across all sectors.

Our School of Medical Technology happens just to teach HE programmes. Ironically it is the only School where we pay differentiated salaries to lecturers – a minority of lecturers in this School receive a 20% loading not because they are teaching HE but because they require clinical experience. The other “HE” lecturers in this school are paid the same as their FE colleagues across the college. The National Health Service has the highest salaries in the public sector so without this loading we could not attract lecturers with the necessary clinical experience.

One of the arguments in favour of delivering HE in FE is the pathway it opens up within the same institution. Some Institutions, like the one mentioned in the OFSTED report are very good at this. This is not really true for my College. Our BSc Medical Technology recruits from the whole of South East England. The employers, the National Health Service Hospital Trusts, basically do student selection. Though in our other Faculties HE and FE programmes are taught by the same staff, most of the full time 16-19 year old students leave us to take a degree at one of the many large HE Institutions in London. Our HE students in these Faculties are often in their mid twenties or older as the majority are studying part time. In this they are very similar to our other part time FE students.

## **Conclusion**

Most English FE Colleges deliver some higher education programmes. These programmes are funded by the higher education funding council and quality assured by the higher education quality assurance authority. Unlike Australian TAFE Institutes every English General Further Education College has a large body of students on “pre-university” academic or vocationally related courses. Except for a couple of “duals”, a few English Universities deliver comparatively small amounts of vocational, further education programmes. If FE in HE is a historical anomaly, HE in FE is now a significant government policy to “widen participation” of non-traditional students into higher education. Until the Leitch report social mobility appeared a more important argument for investment in this policy direction than the development of national human capital and skills. Compared to Australian TAFE Institutes there are far fewer students in FE Colleges taking hard vocational (occupational), competency-assessed programmes designed to train or up skill for a particular occupation. The minority of students studying in a FE College or private provider for a hard vocational or work based learning qualification find it more difficult to gain access to higher education than any other group. Their best chance is via a “Foundation Degree”. Though this is a higher education qualification it is more likely than any other HE qualification to be delivered by an FE College. Though a Higher Education Sector qualification it is similar to the “cross over qualification” Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas offered under vocational rules by TAFE institutes. The Foundation Degree is thus the major initiative in this area. Ironically the proposal to make it possible to be awarded by Colleges themselves rather than through franchise arrangements with universities, may widen rather than narrow cross sectoral relationships if some universities see these awarding powers as a competitive threat.

But in the end have these initiatives worked? For Foundation Degrees it is too early to say and on their own they are too small an initiative. Social mobility in Britain has

actually declined in recent years, though it now shows some signs of moving. England is a far more static society than Australia. Careers accessed by the occupation route like electrician are far more valued and have far greater earning potential in Australia than England. England has not had a resource boom where trades people working in the highly capital-intensive mining business can earn over \$150,000 per year. The English have now just re-discovered apprenticeships and want to double their numbers by 2013. But one of the challenges is that this occupational route has the weakest pathways into Higher Education. The vocational route will get you into many new Universities but only the academic route will give you the “glittering prize” of Oxbridge.

Had he been alive today, Jude, the Victorian stonemason and aspirant undergraduate in Thomas Hardy’s novel “Jude the Obscure”, might have got a NVQ and a VRQ but he still would not have got into the University of Oxford. He would probably be fortunate to get into Oxford Brookes University for a degree in the built environment. But he also may have made his fortune in Australia.

### Sources and references

Action on Access, 2005. *Widening participation: a rough guide for higher education providers*. Bradford: Action on Access

Anderson, Adrian and Hemsworth, David, 2005. *From apprenticeship to higher education: a guide to developing work-based progression routes to higher education for advanced apprentices and other skilled staff and managers*. London: University Vocational Awards Council

Available at: <http://www.uvac.ac.uk/0401.html>  
[Accessed 3 November 2008]

Association of Colleges (AoC), 2008. *Further Education Colleges: key facts*. London: AoC

Available at: [http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/about\\_colleges/facts\\_and\\_figures/](http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/about_colleges/facts_and_figures/)  
[Accessed 2 November 2008]

BBC, 2008. Q and A: What are MacDiplomas? [internet]

Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7213781.stm>  
[Accessed 12 November 2008]

Besley, Steve, 2008. *Policy watch: who does what in the skills system*. London: Edexcel

Available at: [www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk)

Clark, Janet, 2000. *Non-prescribed higher education: where does it fit?* London: Learning and Skills Development Agency

Connor, Helen and Little, Brenda, 2005. *Vocational ladders or crazy paving*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency

D’Abbio, Anna Cristina, 2007. *Intergenerational transmission of disadvantage: mobility or immobility across generations: review of the evidence for OECD countries*. Paris: OECD

Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/28/38335410.pdf>  
[Accessed 17 November 2008]

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2008. *Delivering 14-19 Reform: the next steps*. London: DCSF  
Available at: [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/delivering\\_14-19\\_reform.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/delivering_14-19_reform.pdf)  
[Accessed 28 October 2008]

Department for Children, Schools (DCSF) and Families and Department of Innovation (DIUS), Universities and Skills, 2008a. *Raising expectations: enabling the system to deliver*. London: DCSF/DIUS  
Available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm73/7348/7348.pdf>  
[Accessed 4 November 2008]

Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2008b. *World-class apprenticeships; unlocking talent, building skills for all. The government's strategy for the future of apprenticeships in England*. London: DIUS/DCSF  
Available at: [http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/world\\_class\\_apprenticeships.pdf](http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/world_class_apprenticeships.pdf)  
[Accessed 28 October 2008]

Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2003. *Models of FE/HE mixed economy provision. Research Report RR458*. Nottingham:DfES

Department for Education and Skills, 2004. *Applications for the award of taught degree awarding powers, research degree awards powers and university title: guidance for applicant organisations in England and Wales*. London: DfES  
Available at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/dap/CriteriaGuidance.asp>  
[Accessed 5 November 2008]

Department for Education and Skills, 2007. *Raising expectations: staying in education and training post 16*. London: DfES  
Available at: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/6965-DfES-Raising%20Expectations%20Green%20Paper.pdf>  
[Accessed 28 October 2008]

EAL, 2008. *Types of qualification*. [Online]  
Available at:  
[http://www.eal.org.uk/about\\_us/products\\_and\\_services/nvqs\\_vrqs.aspx](http://www.eal.org.uk/about_us/products_and_services/nvqs_vrqs.aspx)  
[Accessed 1 November 2008]

Fearn, Hannah, 2008. *Fight or flight*. Times Higher Education Supplement Online [Internet] 16 October 2008  
Available at:  
<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=403908>  
[Accessed 25 October 2008]

Foundation Degree Forward (fdf), 2008. *Innovating workforce development*. [online]  
Available at: <http://www.fdf.ac.uk/>  
[Accessed 6 November 2008]

Foster, Andrew, 2005. *Realising the potential: a review of the future role of further education college*. London: DfES

Garrod, Neil and Macfarlane, Bruce, 2007. *Scoping the duals*. SRHE Annual Conference Beyond Boundaries: New Horizons for Research into Higher Education, 12-14 December, Brighton, UK

Harvey, John, 2008. *Visits to further education colleges delivering higher education*. Bradford: Action on Access.

Available at: <http://aoa.ico3.com/resources/files/Report%20HE%20in%20FECs.doc>  
[Accessed 25 October 2008]

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), 2003a. *Supporting higher education in further education colleges: a guide for lecturers*. Bristol: HEFCE

Available at: [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2003/03\\_15.htm#more](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2003/03_15.htm#more)  
[Accessed 4 November 2008]

Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2003b. *Supporting higher education in further education colleges: policy, practices and prospects*. Bristol: HEFCE

Available at: [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2003/03\\_16.htm](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2003/03_16.htm)  
[Accessed 23 October 2008]

Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2004. *FE/HE practitioner group on mixed economy institutions*.

Available at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/heinfe/meireport.pdf>  
[Accessed 29 September 2008]

Learning and Skills Council (LSC), 2007: *Better skills, better jobs, better lives: the Learning and Skills Councils annual reports and accounts for 2006-2007*. Coventry, LSC

Available at: <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-annualreport07-betterskillsjobsives-aug07.pdf>  
[Accessed 18 November 2008]

Learning and Skills Council, 2008. *Funding Guidance 2008/09: principles, rules and regulations*. Coventry: Learning and Skills Council

Available at: [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/LSC-P-NAT-080077\\_Principles-Rules-Regulations.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/LSC-P-NAT-080077_Principles-Rules-Regulations.pdf)

Leitch, Sandy, 2006. *Prosperity for all in the global economy: world-class skills*. London: HMSO

Available at: [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/leitch\\_finalreport051206.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf)  
[Accessed 25 October 2008]

London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB), 2008. *London's future: the skills and employment strategy for London 2008-2013*. London: Mayor of London

Moodie, Gavin, 2008. *From vocational to higher education: an international perspective*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill

Moodie, Gavin, 2007. *HE within FE: an Australian perspective*. Workshop presented to the ESCalate education subject centre on the changing landscape of HE in FE: an international perspective, Iris Murdoch Building, University of Stirling, 21 June 2007.

Newman, Melanie, 2008. *FE Colleges plan low cost degrees at bachelor level*. Times Higher Education Supplement Online [Internet] 6 November 2008.

Available at:

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=404232>

[Accessed 9 November 2008]

Ofqual, 2008. *National Qualifications Framework*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/52.aspx>

[Accessed 28 October 2008]

Ofsted, 2006a. *London Metropolitan University*.

Available at: [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_providers/full/\(urn\)/133816](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/133816)

[Accessed 1 November 2008]

Ofsted, 2006b. *Middlesex University*

Available at: [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_providers/full/\(urn\)/133850](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/133850)

[Accessed 1 November 2008]

Ofsted, 2008. *Writtle College*

Available at: [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_providers/full/\(urn\)/133850](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/133850)

[Accessed 1 November 2008]

Open University, 2008. *Credit transfer*.

Available at: [http://www3.open.ac.uk/credit-transfer/professional/award000715\\_1\\_BD.shtm](http://www3.open.ac.uk/credit-transfer/professional/award000715_1_BD.shtm)

[Accessed 15 November 2008]

Parry, Gareth, 2004. *The higher education role of further education colleges: paper commissioned by the Foster Review of Further Education Colleges in England*.

London: DfES

Available

at: [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/uploads/documents/Higher\\_EducationinFE\\_Gareth\\_Parry.doc](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/uploads/documents/Higher_EducationinFE_Gareth_Parry.doc)

[Accessed 24 October 2008]

Parry, Gareth and Thompson, Anne, 2001. *Higher education in FE Colleges*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency

Scofield, G, 2007. *HE in FE Repository Project*. Report No. RS6107, The Research Centre, CCN, Norwich

Seddon, Vic, 2005. *An analysis of the progression of advanced apprentices into higher education in England: an investigation into the purposes, intentions and opportunities facing advanced apprentices as perceived by learners, employers and providers of higher education*. London: University Vocational Awards Council

Available at: <http://www.uvac.ac.uk/0401.html>

[Accessed 1 November 2008]

Sutton Trust, 2008. *Increasing higher education participation amongst disadvantaged young people and schools in poor communities*. London: The Sutton Trust

Thames Valley University, 2007. *Annual report and financial statements: year ended 31 July 2007*. London: TVU

UCB, 2008. *A new year and a new name for the College*. [internet]  
Available at: <http://www.ucb.ac.uk/asp/UCB-faq.asp>  
[Accessed 30 October 2008]

United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills, 2008. *Simplification of skills in England: expert advice to government on the simplification of the post-compulsory skills system for employers*. London: UKCES

Universities Australia, 2008. *Students key statistics: student data* [online]  
Available at:  
[http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/publications/stats/Table C.7!A1](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/publications/stats/Table%20C.7!A1)  
[Accessed 1 November 2008]

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), 2008. *Statistical services: school or college type of applicants and accepted applicants over five years*. [online]  
Available at:  
[http://www.ucas.com/about\\_us/stat\\_services/stats\\_online/data\\_tables/abusedubgrd/](http://www.ucas.com/about_us/stat_services/stats_online/data_tables/abusedubgrd/)  
[Accessed 29 October 2008]

Woodward, William, 2002. *Survival of the fattest as class divide widens*. Guardian Online [internet] 21 May 2002  
Available at:  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/may/21/highereducation.education1#send-share>  
[Accessed 10 November 2008]