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VTQ Stakeholder Group
November 2018

Agenda

- **Welcome**

- **Vocational and technical qualifications - Reform updates**

- **Basic Digital Skills
Liz Walters, Senior Manager, VTQ Policy
Sarah Pearson, Manager, VTQ Policy**

- **Vocational and technical qualifications - wider updates**

- **Good practice in grading vocational and technical assessments
Paul Newton, Research Chair, Ofqual**

- **AOB**

Reform programme updates

- **FSQs**
- **T levels**
- **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships

To ensure that there is a consistent quality and approach to assessment across an apprenticeship standard, regardless of which organisation is delivering the assessment and where and when the EPA is carried out.

- **15** standards represented on the Register

- **44** EPAs (with Ofqual EQA) on the Register

- **31** EPAs from **5** standards technical evaluated

- **20** AOs with EPAs on the Register

- **56** Assessment plans accepted

Insights from EPAOs

Assessment plans

- The issues are now surfacing as assessment plans are implemented
- Tension: employers wants and needs <…> assessment expertise and experience
- Levels of interpretation and risks to consistency

Technical evaluation of materials

- Welcomed and valued… but more time please and more notice

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Insights from EPAOs

Ongoing regulation

- Conflicts of interest
- Relationships with employers, apprentices and training providers
- System challenges
- Implementation implications - especially from Assessment plan to EPA

Data and Information

- Lack of accurate data available on predicted numbers or uptake of EPAs

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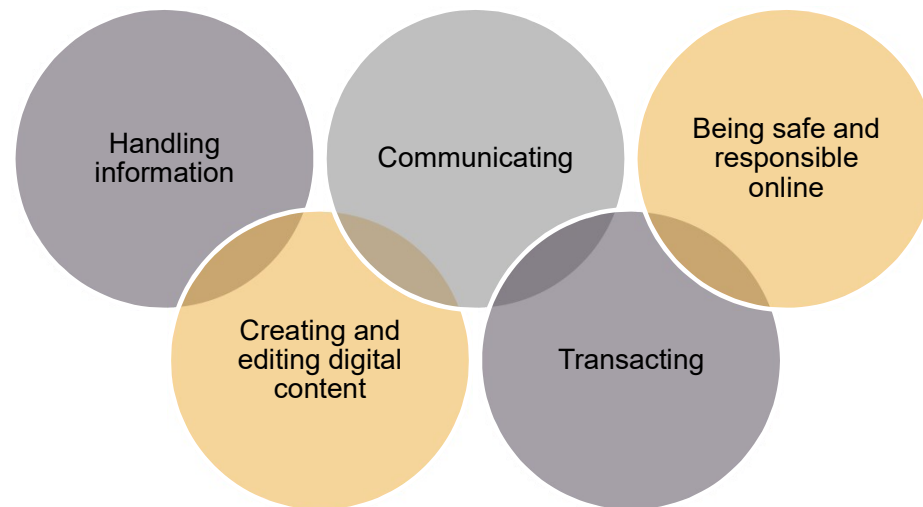**Consulting on our regulatory approach to Basic Digital Skills qualifications**

Liz Walters, Senior Manager VTQ Policy
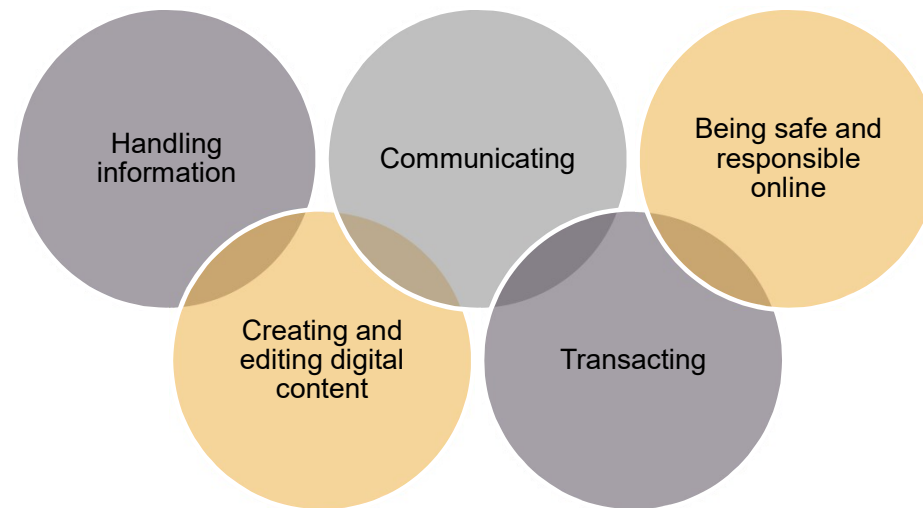
Background to reform programme

- DfE's intention to introduce fully funded basic digital skills (BDS) courses from 2020

- Basic Digital Skills defined as - 'Those digital skills needed to participate in life, the significant majority of jobs, and further study.'

- Primarily intended for adult learners

- DfE consulting on new national standards for Basic Digital Skills

- National standards will form the basis of the content of the new BDS qualifications

- Ofqual consultation on regulation of BDS qualifications

BDS National Standards

Beginner
covering Entry Levels 1-3

Essential
covering Level 1

Handling information

Communicating

Being safe and responsible online

Creating and editing digital content

Transacting

Handling information

Communicating

Being safe and responsible online

Creating and editing digital content
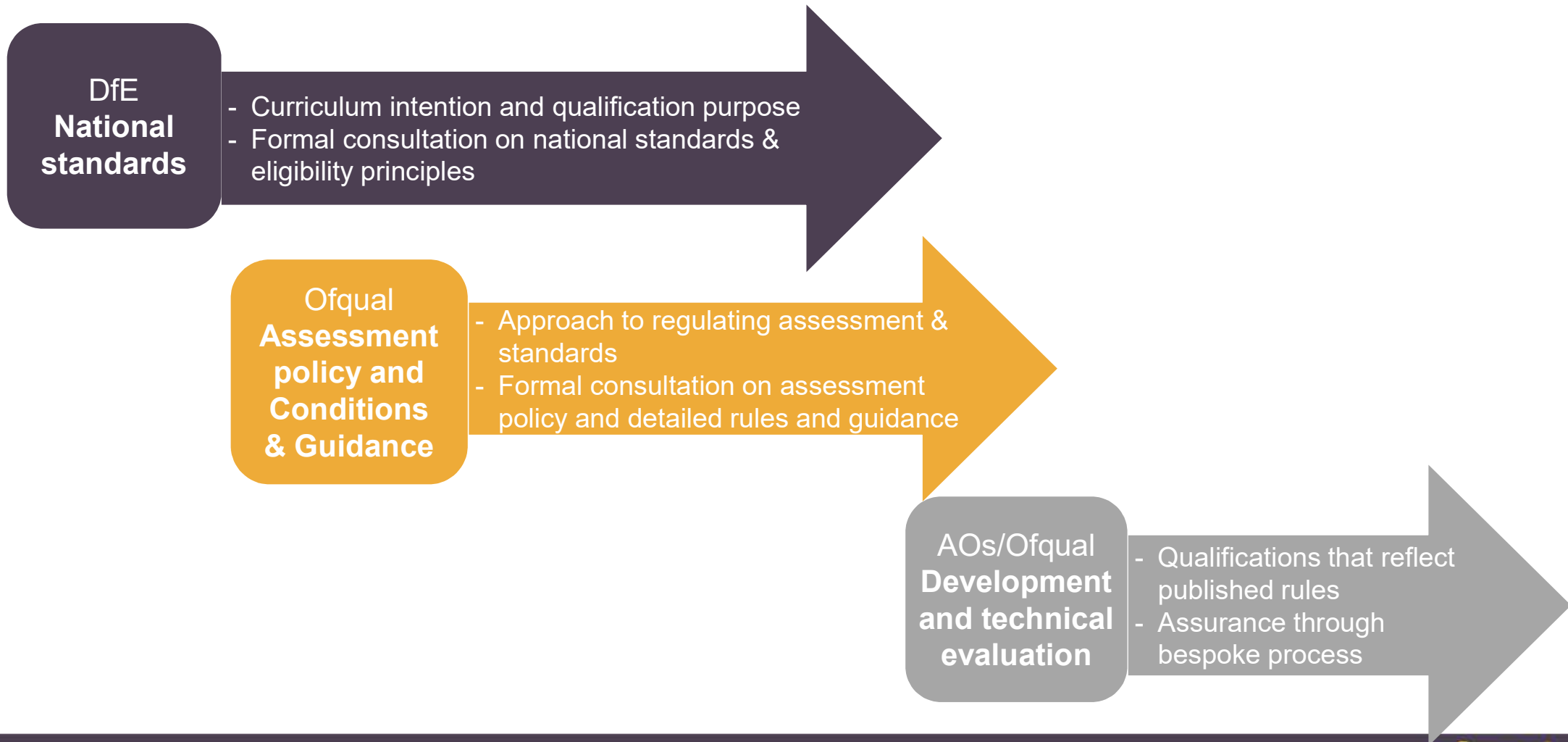
Transacting

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DfE Consultation

Launched 18th October 2018

- **Suitability of draft standards**
- **Intention to review the national standards every three years**
- **Eligibility principles:**
  - **Declared purpose**
  - **Size - at least 45 GLH**
  - **Sector Subject Area Classification 6.2 (ICT for users)**
- **National entitlement up to and including Level 1**
- **Publishing a list of approved qualifications**
- **Use of initial assessment**

Basic Digital Skills reform – roles and stages

DfE
National standards

- Curriculum intention and qualification purpose
- Formal consultation on national standards & eligibility principles

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Assessment policy and Conditions & Guidance

- Approach to regulating assessment & standards
- Formal consultation on assessment policy and detailed rules and guidance

AOs/Ofqual
Development and technical evaluation

- Qualifications that reflect published rules
- Assurance through bespoke process

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Balancing DfE's policy priorities for BDS qualifications

- Providing evidence of learners' achievements against new national standards

- Prioritising the post-19 market

- Retaining the unitised structure of existing basic ICT qualifications to avoid repeating learning

- Improving recognition, consistency and transferability

- Following a standard titling convention for signalling purposes

- Encouraging innovation and flexibility

- Addressing the needs of different types of learning, including permitting different approaches to assessment

- Improving confidence in the qualifications, from employers and users alike

- Not playing a part in the government's accountability system, with the exception of qualification achievement rates

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Considerations when developing our policy approach

- Striking a balance between flexibility and comparability
- Considering the different uses of Beginner and Essential qualifications
- Whether to introduce qualification level Conditions

Proposed policy approach

- Regulate against General Conditions of Recognition (GCR) as far as possible

- Develop some bespoke qualification level Conditions, requirements and guidance

- Disapply some GCR where this has been deemed necessary

- Require awarding organisations to develop an assessment strategy for each BDSQ

- Introduce a requirement for a technical evaluation of BDSQs – before and during delivery with learners

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High level view of our proposed qualification level Conditions, requirements and guidance

- Compliance with the BDS National Standards

- Standard titling convention – to include Beginner and Essential

- GLH

- Assessments set by awarding organisations

- Centre-marking and centre-adaptation of assessments permitted at Entry level only

- Compensatory, mark-based assessment

- Standardised Pass/Fail grading (Entry level qualifications will be awarded at Entry level 3 only)

- Evidence to be used to set and maintain standards

Number of assessments, assessment time, and assessment availability

- We do <u>not</u> propose to set rules around number of assessments, assessment time, and assessment availability
- But, we propose to require awarding organisations to explain their approach in their assessment strategy

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Structure and unitisation

- **Ministerial steer suggested that there was a preference for BDSQs to follow a unitised structure, as used in some current qualifications**

- **However, there is a** balance to be struck between retaining flexibility and introducing the controls necessary to maintain qualification standards.

- **We have therefore set out the benefits and risks identified with unitisation and asked for views on the issue in our consultation.**

Benefits and risks of unitisation

- **Benefits:**
  - Avoids repetition of learning
  - Targeted use of government funding
  - Availability of units and ability to build up a qualification over time may enable/encourage adult learners to participate in learning, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities
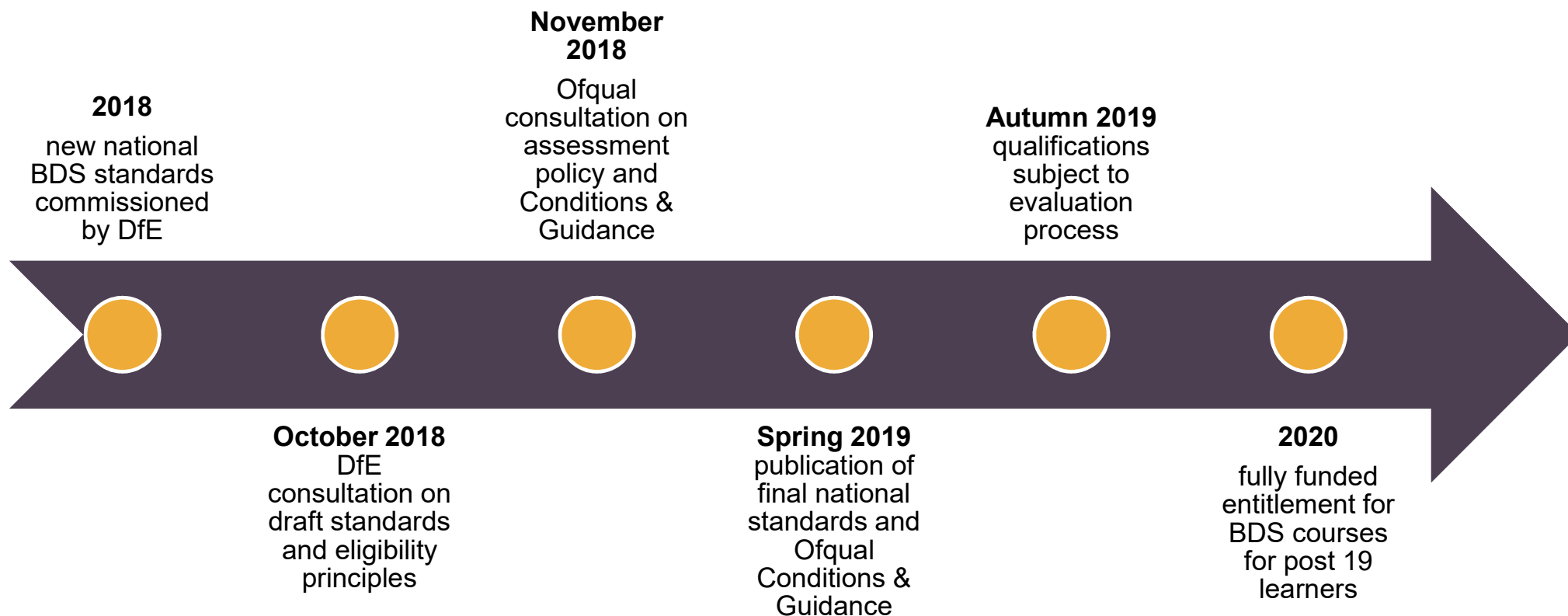
- **Risks:**
  - The new national BDS standards are highly interrelated, and a unitised approach could break apart the assessment of related skills
  - The new national standards are quite small, and units would likely be very small
  - Risk of over-assessment, with the same skill being covered in multiple units
  - Introduces complexities for grading
  - Risk of lack of transparency in titling

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Question for discussion:

Do you think we should permit or prohibit unitisation?

Timescales

2018
new national BDS standards commissioned by DfE

October 2018
DfE consultation on draft standards and eligibility principles

November 2018
Ofqual consultation on assessment policy and Conditions & Guidance

Spring 2019
publication of final national standards and Ofqual Conditions & Guidance

Autumn 2019
qualifications subject to evaluation process

2020
fully funded entitlement for BDS courses for post 19 learners

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Ofqual Consultation

- **Consultation launched on 5 November 2018 – combined policy and technical consultation**
- **Two half day AO engagement events on 4 December**
- **Wider stakeholder meeting on 10 December**
- **Podcast - available early December**
- **Consultation closes 13 January 2019**

Questions

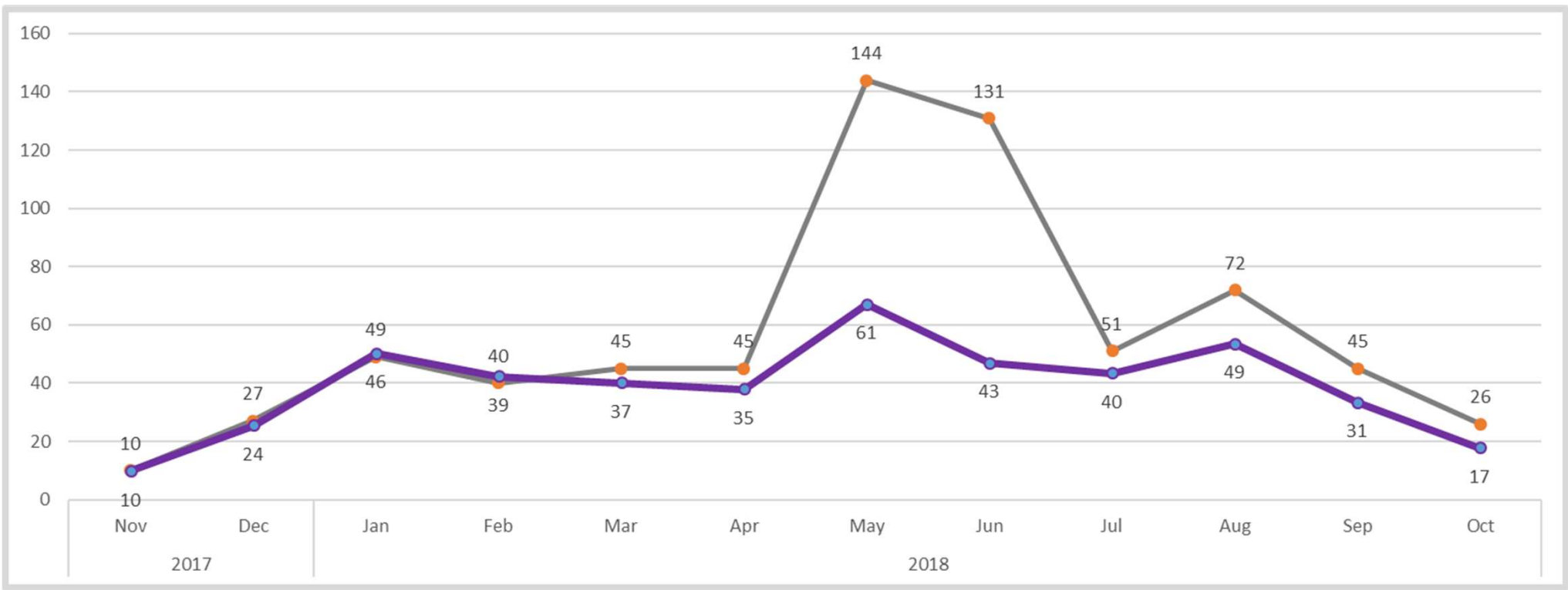# Vocational and technical qualifications - wider updates

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Recognition

- **In touch with 87 organisations regarding recognition**
  - ☐ **From first contact to application submitted**
  - ☐ **Out of scope: existing AOs expanding scope**

- **21 initial meetings**

- **15 further meetings scheduled for completion by end Nov**

- **8 applications are in progress**

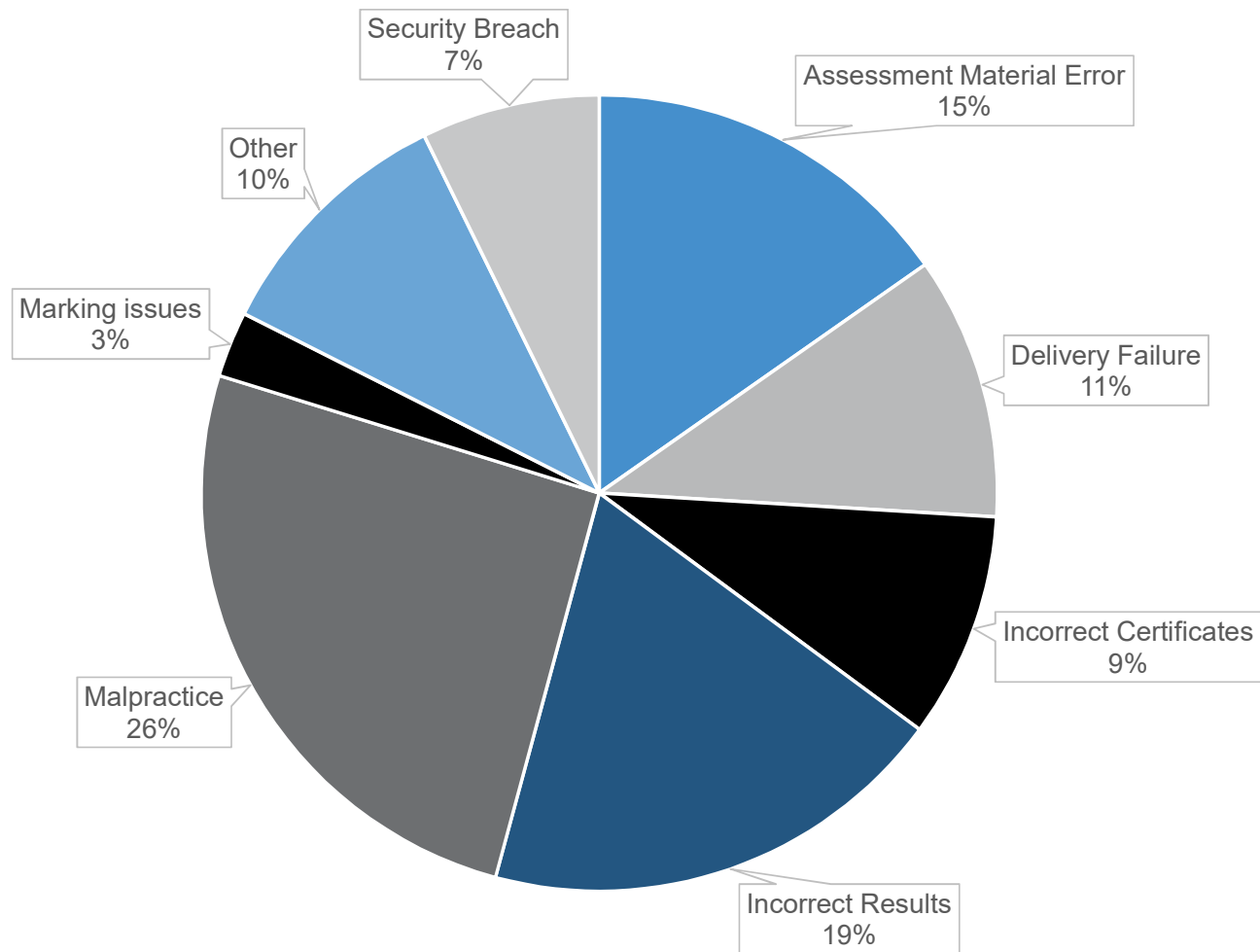- **9 are organisations that want to offer EPAs**

In addition,

- **5 new applications recently approved**

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- Audits of **17** AOs on centre controls

- Evaluation of **35** responses from call for evidence on centre-based assessment judgements

- Analysis of **191** malpractice event notifications and review of **30** AOs' malpractice policies

- Commission of audits of **15** AOs that offer EPAs

- Management of SoCs for **148** AOs through the Portal

- Readiness reviews of **5** VTQ AOs that offer qualifications in performance tables

- Evaluation of **20** external assessments in **14** qualifications in performance tables

- Management of **432** event notifications

- Responses to **616** Contact Ofqual queries

- Engagement visits to **11** AOs

Event Notifications (VTQ) by Type

- Security Breach 7%
- Other 10%
- Marking issues 3%
- Malpractice 26%
- Incorrect Results 19%
- Incorrect Certificates 9%
- Delivery Failure 11%
- Assessment Material Error 15%

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Malpractice in VTQs – what we've done so far
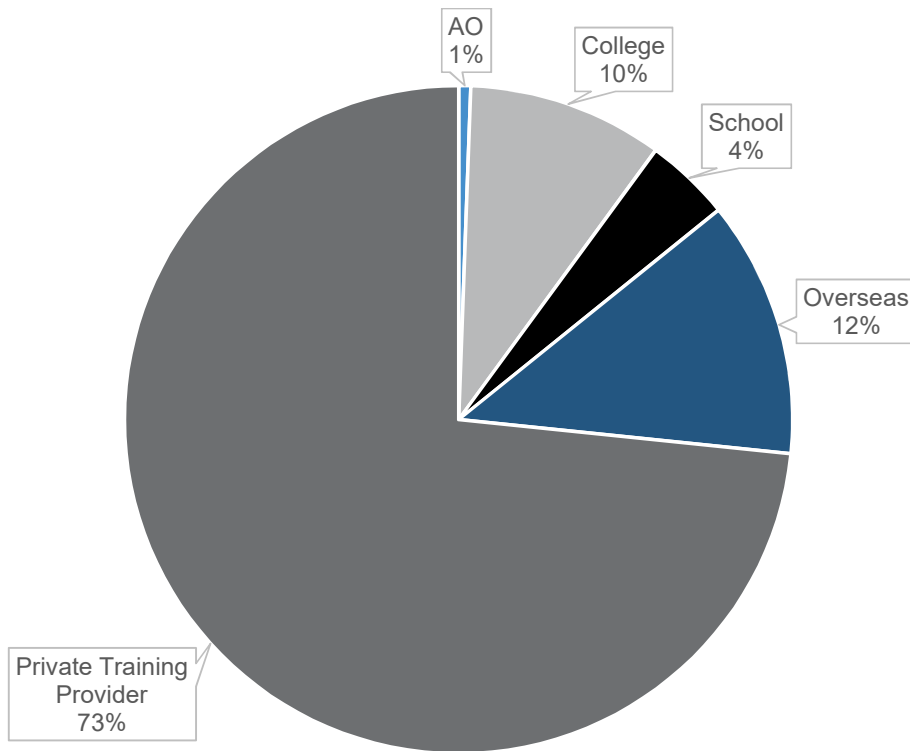
- **Why have we done it?**
  - Systemic issue
  - Important aspect of quality assurance of centres
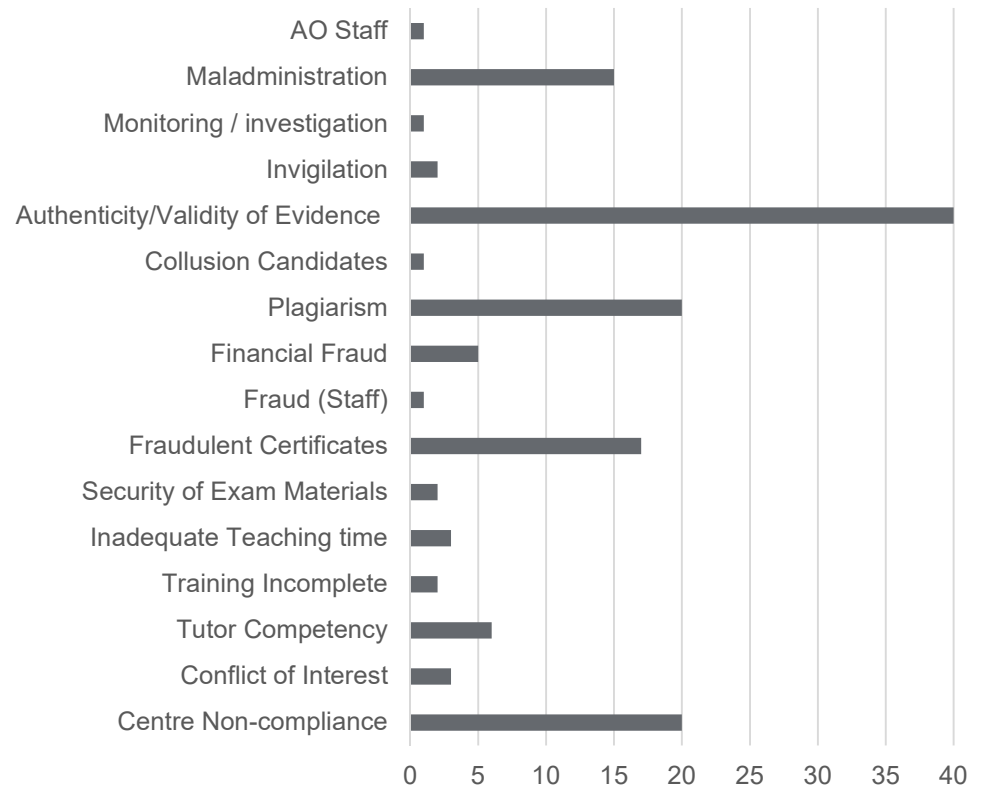- **What did we do?**
  - Audits of 20 AOs on centre-based malpractice between 2017 and 2018:
    - 60% AOs received substantial or adequate assurance
    - 40% AOs received limited or no assurance
  - Analysis of 191 event notifications on malpractice
  - Analysis of 30 AOs' policies on malpractice
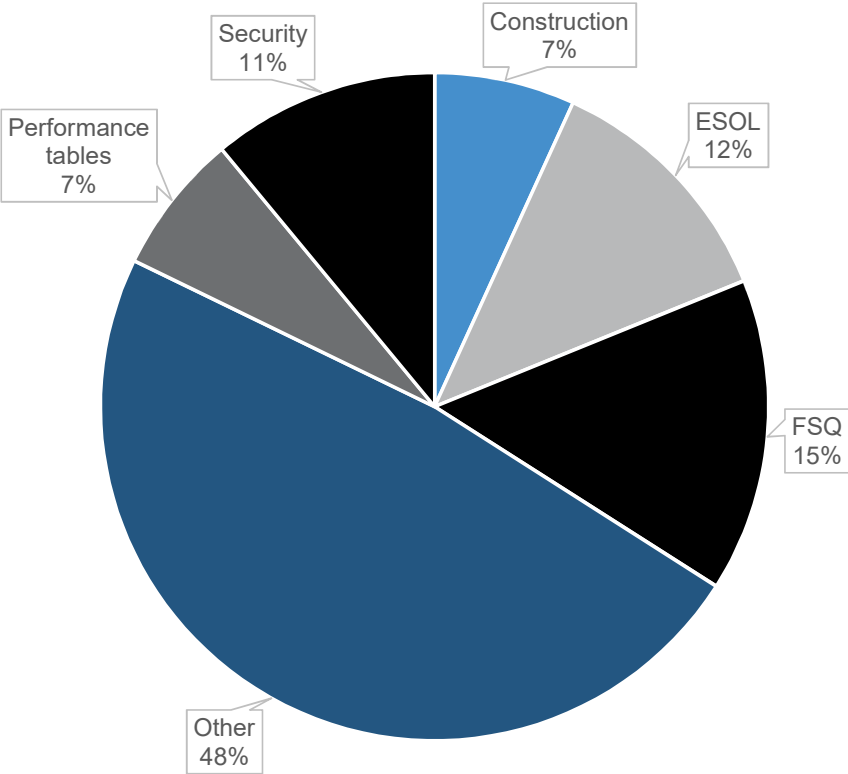
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Malpractice Event Notifications

By centre type

AO 1%
College 10%
School 4%
Overseas 12%
Private Training Provider 73%

By nature within private training providers

AO Staff
Maladministration
Monitoring / investigation
Invigilation
Authenticity/Validity of Evidence
Collusion Candidates
Plagiarism
Financial Fraud
Fraud (Staff)
Fraudulent Certificates
Security of Exam Materials
Inadequate Teaching time
Training Incomplete
Tutor Competency
Conflict of Interest
Centre Non-compliance

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

Malpractice Event Notifications

By qualification

Centre controls

Centre controls programme – Audits

- Why have we done it?
  - Key to the validity and integrity of all qualifications

- Audit suite 1 - controls for centre approval and re-approval
  - Controls were generally adequate
  - Area with least assurance across all AOs – clarity of requirements to prospective centres

- Audit suite 2 – controls for the management of centre subcontracting arrangements
  - Controls were generally inadequate
  - Areas with least assurance across all AOs – establishing, monitoring and enforcing agreements with subcontractors

Correspondence

Centre controls and moderation of qualifications

Ofqual's findings and future actions on awarding organisations' controls on centres that develop and award vocational and technical qualificaitons.

Published 9 February 2018
From: **Ofqual**

Applies to: England

Documents

Centre Controls and Moderation of VTQ

Ref: RO59/2018
PDF, 191KB, 3 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. Request an accessible format.

Centre controls programme – Call for Evidence

News story

Call for evidence on assessment of qualifications in centres

Ofqual launches call for evidence on centre-based assessment judgements in vocational and technical qualifications.

Published 10 May 2018
Last updated 16 May 2018 — see all updates
From: Ofqual

- Why have we done it?
  - Specific issues regarding moderation of VTQs
- What we have learnt:
  - Entwined with other aspects of centre controls
  - Approach and requirements of EQA and sampling are varied
  - Approach and requirements of DCS is varied where granted
  - Context is important
  - Balance needs to be struck between accessible and robust system

Centre controls programme – what's next?

- **Audit suite 3 – controls for identifying and managing conflicts of interest between the AO and its centres**

- **Continue with learning from audits**

- **Review and potential development of policy – controls for quality assuring centre-based assessment judgements**
  - **Possible consultation in first quarter 2019/2020**
  - **Regulatory impact**

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Performance table qualifications

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Performance table qualifications – what we've done so far

Performance

- **Evaluation of external assessments in qualifications included in the 2018 performance tables:**
  - ☐ Technical functioning of assessments, repeating the types of analyses done as shown in the report published in November 2017
  - ☐ Subject expert review of the demand and quality of the assessments

Delivery

- **Reviewed the readiness of AOs to deliver the external assessments of their performance table qualifications:**
  - ☐ governance and accountability
  - ☐ identification and management of strategic risks
  - ☐ assessment material production
  - ☐ marker recruitment & training
  - ☐ centre security
  - ☐ preventing/investigating malpractice
  - ☐ cyber security
  - ☐ special consideration

Demand and quality of external assessments

- **Top 4 themes:**
  - Clarity of the mark scheme
  - Presence of unnecessary or distracting material
  - Ability of the paper to discriminate across the population
  - Appropriateness of external assessment as a method to test content

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Performance table qualifications – what's next

- **Technical functioning analysis and evaluation of assessment materials in external assessments – L2 performance table qualifications**

- **Internal assessments research:**
  - □ **To gain a better understanding of how internal assessments in VTQs are set, prepared for, undertaken and graded**
  - □ **6 qualifications (2 x 3 subject areas), most are / will be in performance tables**
  - □ **Data analysis to explore relationship between performance in internal and external assessments**
  - □ **Qualitative interviews with teachers of the qualifications**

- **Report on our technical functioning analysis and evaluation**

- **Summer Series report - monitoring of delivery of external assessments**

- **Research report on grading over time; conference on VTQ grading**

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What else is coming up?

And....what else is coming up

- **QW review of conditions**
- **Fees & charging**
- **DfE Qualifications Review – and Strengthening project**

Good practice in grading vocational and technical assessments -
Paul Newton, Research Chair

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