

History of Technical and Commercial Examinations

A Reflective Commentary

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 **Mag extras**

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Preface

This account provides a short history of the development of technical and commercial examinations primarily in England over the past two centuries. It complements the short history of technical education also published by T Mag and available through the website at www.tmag.co.uk.

This is a complex area and I cannot hope to do full justice to the topic or provide a complete explanation. The main focus will be on England and I do not include such subjects as art, design and agriculture. Rather, my account attempts to describe the impact, influences and consequences, arising out of the Industrial Revolution, that progressively shaped technical education and the development of national systems of examinations.

A whole series of social, cultural, economic and political factors interacted at this time to influence and determine the pace and ultimate shape of technical education and the related examination system. A recurring theme throughout this account is the various, fragmented initiatives and the ideas of a number of visionaries that were presented over many decades. In hindsight, if many of these worthy, innovative and farsighted ideas had been adopted at the time and resourced properly the history of technical education would have been very different. Perhaps we in England could have mirrored the positive progress and achievements of our main competitors on the continent and the United States.

In addition to the factual descriptions in the history, I will add some personal observations and asides to a number of the issues covered. Inevitably, in an exploration of this kind, many parallels between the past and present days suggest themselves. It is impossible to resist the pull that the past has over the present.

“History teaches everything including the future.”

Lamartine

Overview and starting points

The history of technical and commercial examinations in England reflects many characteristics in common with the rise of technical education over the same period. The development of both was slow and haphazard, with little involvement by government and dominated by a laissez-faire and voluntarist philosophy that defines so much of English history.

One of the main factors in play was the reluctance of industrialists and business people to give wholesale support to technical education, arguing it was the state's responsibility to fund and organise instruction and assessment. Another major factor was the absence of a national education system before 1870. Even when one was introduced, the instruction of science, technology and tradecrafts was practically non-existent in most schools. Cultural hostility to scientific, technical and practical activities and occupations contributed to the inertia in developing an effective system for technical and commercial education and a relevant programme of examinations.

It was only during the second half of the nineteenth century that employers began to require evidence of educational attainment or paper qualifications from their employees. At first, the numbers of qualified workers with the scientific and technical knowledge to understand and operate machinery was small. But as the Industrial Revolution gained momentum the supply of qualified workers could not keep pace with demand. But even this early evidence of skills shortages did little to dispel the largely negative attitude to technical and vocational studies and employment.

Most technical education throughout the nineteenth century was part-time, taking place in evening institutions and polytechnics mainly centred in London and some of the big industrial cities. Institutions catering for full-time students only really got established during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Although it was the Industrial Revolution that acted as a catalyst for the development of tech-

nical education it took over a century before the government became convinced of the necessity for technical education in an industrialised country.

One common positive feature in the development of technical subjects and their related examinations was the contribution of a small number of visionaries who argued strongly for the introduction of an effective system of examination as the instruction of science and technical subjects emerged. Their ideas and recommendations had to wait years – and in some cases decades – before they were implemented. Mention of these individuals will be made later and many already appear in the short biographies in Appendix ii to the history of technical education.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships were the main vehicle for technical education and training before the Industrial Revolution and were provided by the Craft Guilds. The 'master' craftsman had a duty under the indenture (a contract and agreement between the master and apprentice) to teach the art, craft and, as was often said, 'the mystery of his trade'. This approach worked well, creating a flow and maintaining a stock of skilled craftspeople for the majority of trades and crafts that existed during this period.

Originally, crafts and trades were mainly associated with agriculture and rural crafts. As the Industrial Revolution gained momentum the apprenticeship system began to lose its significance and importance as the craftsman and the workshop were gradually replaced by the machine and factory. The Industrial Revolution brought with it narrower forms of specialism associated with the operation of machines, coupled with larger numbers of less skilled workers. These two factors combined to undermine the traditional master-apprenticeship relationship.

The same period also witnessed massive transformations with people moving to cities from the villages

Personal observation

Apprenticeships still have a major role to play today. Where programmes are configured, managed, delivered and monitored in conjunction with employers they can make a significant contribution to creating a more work-ready and better-qualified workforce.

But to succeed, apprenticeships must be valued highly by parents, politicians, employers and society in general and possess parity of esteem with so-called academic qualifications such as GCSEs and 'A' levels. In the past practical, technical and vocational courses have inevitably been seen as second class and 'for the less able'. Pre-vocational, work preparation programmes merely compounded this view of technical and practical-based programmes. Previous reforms of apprenticeship programmes have failed to recruit sufficient numbers, while persistent political inference and prejudice has contributed to their negative image.

Are current initiatives to reform and invigorate apprenticeship also heading for failure? There is surely a risk that continued political dogma, together with the absence of sustained and effective employer involvement, will yet again create a set of programmes seen as second class. Perhaps the whole current debate about the context of work-based learning and assessment is superficial and flawed by an over-emphasis on functionality. A deeper – and truer – understanding of the challenges and requirements of work-based learning and assessment is essential if meaningful and valued programmes are to be established that address the future needs of employers and employment.

and towns where craftspeople had worked alone or in small groups in workshops. Skills were transferred from the craftsperson to the engineers and designers of the machines. Skilled workers were replaced by machine operatives working in larger units carrying out highly repetitive tasks. Increased emphasis on the sub-division of labour that meant the traditional methods of apprenticeship were increasingly irrelevant. Increased competition from domestic sources and overseas resulted in a different relationship between master and trainee. The need to maximise

and maintain profit margins meant that masters increasingly did not want to teach young apprentices because of the cost in terms of time and money.

The impact of science and technology

Technical and scientific instruction was meagre before the mid 1820s. But as the Industrial Revolution gained momentum, interest in science and its practical value began to increase both among workers and in the minds of the general public. Growing awareness of the scientific ideas of Francis Bacon, Galileo, Newton and other scientists was coupled with exciting inventions leading to the design and use of machines in a wide range of industries – cotton mills, foundries, telegraphy, transport (road, trains and canals), the military and agriculture. New methods of disseminating information and raising awareness about scientific and technical methods were required as Britain's industrial economy and wealth grew.

A number of key developments and movements contributed to this gradual process of awareness-raising. Mechanics Institutes played a major part in increasing the interest in technical and scientific knowledge, alongside literary, scientific and technical societies and bodies such as the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. The first Mechanics Institute started in 1824 and by 1850 there were 610 Institutes with 102,000 members.

At the same date there were eight universities in the UK, of which only two had departments of engineering (two in London and one in Glasgow). The period around the 1840s and 50s witnessed the creation of alternative formal educational establishments throughout England, including the Royal College of Chemistry (1845), the Government School of Mines (1851) and other higher education institutions and professional bodies.

Even though the Mechanics Institutes movement declined after the mid-1850, a precedent had been established for the future development and shape of technical education and the essential requirements for an appropriate examination system had been put in place. Several of the original Institutes transmogrified into larger technical institutions and a number of these later became large technical colleges, polytechnics and universities. The slow growth of a national system of technical education and the resultant need for examinations was supported by other developments after the middle of the century. These included

an emerging national education school system at both elementary and secondary level, the growth of public examinations and the gradual development of a national network of technical institutions, universities, university colleges and professional bodies.

As a result of these and other influences, important defining features of technical education and instruction had emerged by the early 1850s. Just as important was a growing recognition that industrial success depended on an established and effective system of technical education. Increasingly, the ap-

plication of science and the resultant technological developments required new skills and more focussed methods of instruction, training and assessment. The need to apply scientific and technological principles to industry and industrial processes required instruction in basic principles coupled with practical experience, delivered in realistic working environments. This realisation of the need to integrate theory and practice was to occupy much of the subsequent design and development of technical and vocational education and its systems of assessment.

Personal observation

Interesting to note that even in the mid nineteenth century it was argued that the basic fundamental principles of science and technology could not be taught in the workplace – an argument that still persists today in the design and provision of work based/vocational education and training. One of the continuing and central questions ever since has been how to achieve the balance between the theoretical and practical aspects and how to assess these elements, whether in the work place, realistic working environments or by simulation.

The assessment of skills, knowledge and understanding gained through work is a complicated but critical issue. Initially, with their limited physical resources, Mechanics Institutes and other educational institutions could not provide the appropriate workshops and equipment and were often unable to recruit experienced instructors or teachers. As a result the emerging technical education, instruction and examinations were prone to be theoretical and involved little practical activity or work-based assessment.

The problems associated with work-based assessment and the application of underpinning knowledge and understanding in the workplace has always been a challenge to the management of vocational and technical examination. These problems have figured in the endless debates associated with the so-called academic – vocational divide that persist even today. Whatever the merit of these debates, the belief that apprenticeships could not provide the foundations of scientific and technical knowledge brought about the first faltering attempts to create and organise a national system of technical education and a system of related examinations.

Chapter 2

The beginnings of examinations in the nineteenth century

It was not until some time after the start of the Industrial Revolution that any identifiable system of examinations was established. Even then it evolved relatively slowly after 1850. As with the development of technical education, the related examination system began in a fragmented and disjointed fashion and continued in a series of fits and starts, driven by private enterprise and a few farsighted individuals.

It is important to note the influence the Mechanics Institutes had on the development of examinations, through involvement with emerging bodies such as the Society of Arts and the government's Department of Science and Art. One really original and imaginative scheme was proposed by James Hole in 1853 that could have advanced the cause of technical education and the related examination system considerably. Hole proposed that Mechanics Institutes and other technical institutions could become constituent colleges of a new proposed industrial university – one can only imagine the positive consequences of such an ambitious suggestion if it had been put into practice!

The introduction of examinations by the Union of Institutes and the Society of Arts reflected in many ways the wider social and labour market changes occurring during the period when Mechanics Institutes were at their peak. Science and technical examinations may have been the first ones to be introduced. But increasingly, students looked to obtain book-keeping qualifications in order to enter clerical professions such as clerkships, while fewer continued to take technical subjects. In 1861 the dockyards voiced concern that they wanted more technically qualified people, another example of how little impact scientific knowledge had made on the population as a whole.

The decline in sciences is graphically illustrated by a few attendance figures. Leeds Mechanics Institute

increased membership by nearly ten-fold, but the average class size in mathematics fell from 36 to 24 and in chemistry from 19 to 13 between 1839 and 1852. At Manchester classes in the physical sciences fell from 235 in 1835-9 to 127 in 1840-4. Indifference to science was also reflected in enrolments for the technical subjects and this continued to impact on subsequent enrolments in these subjects as the examination systems developed after 1850s.

One recurring difficulty experienced by Mechanic Institutes was that they were not supported by a national system for elementary and secondary education. Workers who attended the Institutes lacked basic literacy and numeracy skills and had little or no background knowledge of science and technology. Grants provided by the Department of Science and Art were an important development, greatly assisting the growth of classes in science and technical subjects for both evening and day schools. Table 1 illustrates the growth in science and art subjects after 1861 when grants were made available, based on examinations results.

Table 1 – Growth in science and arts subjects after 1861

Date	Number of institutions	Number of students
1860	9	500
1862	70	2,543
1872	938	36,783
1880	1,455	57,000

Source: Millis C.T. (1925) 'Technical Education – Its Development and Aims'

Typical subjects taught were applied mechanics, building, chemistry, electricity, heat, optics, magnetism, mathematics (applied and pure) and metallurgy. Knowledge of these subjects was clearly important

for a more effective workforce in the emerging chemical, electrical, foundry and shipbuilding industries.

Initially most examinations were set externally by awarding bodies. During the nineteenth century there were three main providers of technical qualifications and examinations to students in Mechanics Institutes and technical colleges: the Society of Arts, City and Guilds of London Institute and the Science and Art Department. By contrast, the professional bodies' examination systems were not fully developed or wide enough in scope to meet the needs for entry or progression to the occupations. Methods of instruction and examining operated by the professional bodies were also very variable and depended critically on how the bodies had evolved historically. A small number of colleges awarded diplomas in their own right but these were only recognised at a local level.

The gradual development of technical examinations was greatly assisted by many of the recommendations of a number of Royal Commissions throughout the century, in particular the Devonshire Report (1872-75) and the Samuelson Report (1882-84). James Hole argued strongly for examinations in the Mechanics Institutes. James Booth, an active writer on educational and mathematical topics with a particular interest in adult education, was a major figure in establishing the Society of Arts examinations. He wrote the first authoritative pamphlet ever published in England on examinations, arguing that a formal

system of examinations was a way of improving primary, secondary and adult education. Interestingly Booth voiced concern that the middle-classes could be put at a disadvantage in their education relative to the poorer classes as a result of the growing influence and impact of the Mechanic Institutes movement! (A short biography of James Booth is on the T Mag website.)

“to put the educational machinery of our institutes on a proper footing, a system of examinations and certificates must be established”

James Hole, 1853

One interesting example of a number of separate initiatives in specific sciences and technologies was the establishment of the Royal College of Chemistry in 1845. The College provided programmes in applied science and its graduates entered a wide range of occupations, detailed in Table 2.

Inevitably, the early period resulted in patchy provision of technical instruction and technical examinations were heavily influenced by the secondary school regulations. Gradually, as the technical system developed, separate and more sophisticated arrangements began to be established.

Table 2 – Destinations of graduates from the Royal College of Chemistry

Brewing	Chemical Industry	Government	India (Diplomatic/Civil Service)	Iron/Mining	Pharmacy	Teaching
27	106	18	29	25	38	38

Chapter 3

Developments in the twentieth century

Following the merger of the Science and Art Department with the Board of Education in 1902, the Board ceased offering lower grade examinations by 1911 and higher grades by 1918. During the same period the system of payment by results was finally discontinued. It was soon recognised that a major gap now existed and after 1918 the Board involved a number of professional associations to develop a National Certificate scheme that would award certificates to students pursuing part-time courses. The National Certificate scheme did not initially cover commercial studies, mainly because of a low take up for the subject. Right up until the reforms of the 1980s, National Awards at Ordinary and Higher levels for students studying part and full-time in colleges and polytechnics provided a greatly valued set of awards for employers across many occupational areas.

The system of technical and commercial examinations grew throughout the twentieth century as the further and higher education sectors became more established.

Very little reform to the examination system occurred after 1920 until the major reforms following the Haslegrave and De Ville Reports (see Chapter 00). During this period the major awarding bodies consolidated their positions and responded to the changing nature and growth of the technical education sector. As the number of institutions grew and participation rates increased, awarding bodies extended their programmes across different areas.

Developments from the 1960s

Numerous governments throughout the years had attempted to reform courses, programmes and related examinations in vocational and technical education. One good example was the 1961 White Paper 'Better Opportunities in Technical Education', many of whose recommendations were implemented.

White Paper proposals

- Courses available to students leaving school would include National Certificates and Diplomas for students aiming to become at least high grade technicians, technician courses devised specifically for particular industries, craft courses and courses for operatives.
- Ordinary National Certificates should last two years instead of three and entry requirements would be raised.
- There should be new courses of four or five years especially for technicians; these became known as T courses.
- New general courses should be introduced leading to either technician or ONC/D courses; these became known as G courses.
- Craft courses should be modified in a number of ways, updating the syllabus and making theory more relevant to the practical skills required by the occupation.
- Courses for operatives should be vigorously developed to reflect more closely the needs of industry.

These recommendations were an attempt to reduce the proportion of early leavers from technician and other programmes, especially among younger students. The reasons for dropout were familiar: poor teaching, problems associated with weak basic literacy and numeracy and an inadequate appreciation or knowledge of scientific concepts. G courses were taken at the beginning of further education studies unless the student possessed four GCE passes. More specialised technician courses were established by the City and Guilds Institute.

National Certificate and Diplomas were complex and expensive to service and numbers declined as the university sector expanded and polytechnics became established in vocational subjects. Successive governments preferred to encourage 'O' and 'A' levels as the primary qualifications. In retrospect the government had created a system founded on college-based assessment (the National Awards) rather than external assessment to national standards. This approach was against the majority view held by employers and reinforced the belief that the Department of Education and Science was biased towards the academic route and qualifications.

In 1973 the government again pushed for reform and appointed the Haslegrave Committee. The Haslegrave Report (1969) on technician courses and examinations significantly changed the examinations landscape. The report recommended that City & Guilds and the regional examining bodies should consider "drawing closer together to form a unified administrative organisation for the examinations, testing and general assessment of performance". This requirement became even more urgent following the creation of TEC and BEC which resulted in the regional examining bodies having no specific role in examinations or validating technician courses. After 1974 most regional boards reconstructed themselves and merged with Regional Advisory Councils for Further Education.

In 1985 the Review of Vocational Qualifications in England and Wales (the De Ville Report) was published, driven by continuing concerns about the lack of a coherent qualifications structure and the multitude of awarding bodies. The report recommended that a national framework for qualifications should be created and that the awarding bodies should become more integrated. Following its recommendations a National Council for Vocational Qualifications was established. In the view of many, this was the first major move to nationalise and create a more centralised system for qualifications and the associated examinations system. However, once implemented, the national framework actually increased the number of qualifications while the number of awarding bodies remained at approximately 150

The De Ville Report was followed by the White Paper 'Working Together – Education and Training', which established Lead Bodies to set national standards, curtailing the standard-setting role of awarding

bodies. For City & Guilds, this transition meant that the focus shifted from wide representation of professional bodies, Trades Unions, teachers and other subject specialists, to one where employers' needs would predominate.

The next major reform of the examination system was in 1997, leading to the merger of NCVQ with its schools equivalent, the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority, to create a single Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The creation of QCA resulted in even more regulation, reinforcing the view that the government wanted a nationalised system in order to exercise greater central control. Currently all qualifications, however small, are subjected to complex and rigorous QCA requirements. In general the QCA procedures have caused delays and frustration in the approval process for qualifications and their related examinations across all sectors of education, particularly the post-16 sector. Clearly there is nothing wrong with high quality standards but the current situation is far too demanding and politicised.

Personal observation

On past evidence the influence of employers on examinations and qualifications has been changeable and questionable. Employers have a pivotal role to play but there has to be a balanced and representative group of knowledgeable people to develop effective programmes and assessment regimes. Throughout their existence, National Vocational Qualifications have been heavily criticised as expensive and bureaucratic, with employers voicing concern about the costly assessment regimes with their plethora of assessors, internal and external verifiers. The NVQ system was also attacked by academics with little understanding of technical education and training.

As so often happens, government ministers and civil servants were unduly influenced by questionable research and prejudice. All these negative factors undermined and eroded the true potential that competence-based assessment in the workplace could achieve for many occupations. The initial hope that NVQs would become universal across all occupational sectors and thus eventually replace all other work-based qualifications was, in hindsight, far too optimistic.

Commercial education and examinations

In many ways, commercial education and examinations mirror the development of technical education and examinations. Just as the Industrial Revolution brought about a need to instruct workers in the scientific principles and their application, a similar need to create qualified staff to undertake clerical, accountancy and administrative work also arose. From the mid nineteenth century these examinations were conducted by the Society of Arts and the Department of Science and Art.

Although specific subjects like shorthand and typing did exist, commercial examinations were in many ways wider in scope and less focussed on technical specialisms. Examinations in shorthand and typing were introduced in 1876 and 1891 respectively. The mode of study was mainly by way of evening courses and examinations were conducted initially by the Society of Arts and the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes. These were later joined by the other regional examining bodies, London Chamber of Commerce, Pitman Examinations and professional bodies. Specialist colleges of commerce were opened following the 1902 Education Act and from 1935 ONC/HNDs were established. In addition about fifty junior commercial schools were active but these disappeared following the introduction of the tripartite system of secondary schools as a result of the 1944 Education Act. Degree programmes in commerce were developed from the early twentieth century in a number of universities and polytechnics.

As demand grew for commercial subjects and the National Awards scheme got more involved after 1961, new syllabuses and subject areas were introduced. Part-time ONC/HNCs in Business Studies along with HNC/HNDs for full-time and sandwich students began to be offered in further education colleges, as opposed to specialist colleges of commerce. (In general, specialist institutions were more expensive when compared with FE colleges.) Examinations for commercial and related specialisms were set by a number of professional bodies regulating the various occupational categories, such as accountancy, banking and financial services.

Management education was practically non-existent until after 1945. The Urwick Report (1947) recommended that the relevant professional institutions should develop common management themes and that management studies should lead to Interme-

diates and Final examinations, overseen by a Central Council of Management. The British Institute of Management was established that same year, eventually merging with the Institute of Industrial Studies which had been struggling to develop management studies since 1919.

The IIA assumed responsibility for the examinations element from the BIM, initially offering an Intermediate Certificate and Diploma in Management Studies. After 1960 a new Diploma of Management was established and awarded after three years of part-time-study. Since then management studies have greatly expanded and a whole series of awards currently exist across a number of levels including the Certificate and Diploma in Management Studies as well as MBAs at postgraduate level.

Some special features of technical examinations

Despite its slow and at times haphazard development, the technical examination system in England has possessed a number of positive features. It offered real opportunities to students for entry and subsequent promotion in their chosen occupations. The examinations offered were more flexible than their school and university counterparts, matching the wide range of crafts, trades, vocations and occupational sectors involved. In addition to written examinations, assessments of practical activity were undertaken in special workshops or science laboratories. Teachers, employers and other key players were more closely involved, with some examinations set by teachers themselves and externally moderated.

Inevitably there were critics and the system undoubtedly had weaknesses, identified in the various reforms from the 1950s up to the present day. One recurring concern over many decades is the plethora of qualifications and the complexity of the examination system. Various reforms initiated by successive governments have attempted to rationalise the system and reduce confusion. Arguments have mainly centred on how to achieve the difficult balance between central government control and regulation and freedom at local and institutional level. Reform of the system is by no means complete, but the next chapter attempts to reflect briefly on how the different bodies offering examinations contributed at various times to the history of technical and commercial education and training and the development of an examination system.

Vocational awarding bodies

Four national examining bodies for vocational education and training are still in existence today. In order of their establishment, they are: the Royal Society of Arts, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations, the City and Guilds of London Institute and Edexcel. Together they formed the Federation of Awarding Bodies to represent their interests in a coordinated fashion.

During the period when awarding bodies were developing, one national and several regional examining bodies (together with their advisory councils) also played an important role.

Society of Arts/Royal Society of Arts

Founded in 1754 to promote art, industry, commerce and invention, initially by awarding money prizes and medals, the Society gradually extended its activities and was involved with the promotion of the Great Exhibition in 1851. As interest developed in technical education the Society began to work closely with Mechanics Institutes, helping to improve communication and coordination with the emerging network of technical institutions by creating the Union of Institutions. Harry Chester, Chairman of the Society, advocated a national union that should undertake examinations staged by the Society of Arts. Following a conference in 1852, 220 institutes became affiliated with a total of 90,000 members signed up.

Another Society enthusiast, James Booth, was a great advocate of examinations in technical subjects and the affiliation of the unions acted as a catalyst for that development. As a result, the Society of Arts organised a comprehensive examination system for science with approximately 400 institutes. The Union was largely responsible for the development of the Society's examination system in 1854. It started with very low numbers but following revisions to the examinations their popularity increased. This growth confirmed more credibility and laid the foundation for the later development of a national system of ex-

aminations. The Union of Institutions disappeared in 1882 when the examinations were extended to cover all other providers of technical education and instruction, not limited to affiliated institutes. Technological examinations developed by the Society were eventually transferred to the newly created City and Guilds of London Institute in 1879.

The Society of Arts played a pivotal role in the development of a national system for examinations, including significant contributions to commercial and secretarial subjects and for adult learners. The establishment of the first public examinations (the locals), staged by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, were influenced by the examination system created by the Society. The Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations was started in 1857 and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate was founded in 1858. In 1901 the Society of Arts examined 8,797 students.

Over most of its history the RSA has been mainly concerned with commercial subjects and skills at craft level. But like the CGLI it also examines over a wide range of subjects and levels, including vocational areas such as administration, clerical, distribution, information handling, reception and road transport. The RSA also offered single-subject awards in business, commercial and modern languages at Stages 1, 2 and 3. In 1997 the examinations board of the RSA was merged with the Oxford and Cambridge Examinations to form Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR).

London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations

The London Chamber of Commerce was created in 1881 and was committed to improving the condition of commercial education in schools and colleges. The Chamber recognised the importance of modern language teaching in order to improve export markets and as a result introduced the teaching and assessment of modern languages. A Commercial

Education Committee was established in 1887 and the first examinations were offered later in the same year. Overseas operations began in Bombay in 1898, reflecting the importance of the trading activities in the colonies.

The Chamber is one of the oldest awarding bodies in the country and is a major partner in the recently formed Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB). It offers a wide range of examinations leading to qualifications in business, commercial and office studies at elementary, intermediate and higher levels.

City and Guilds of London Institute

CGLI was established in 1878 following a meeting of 17 of the City of London's livery companies, the traditional guardians of apprenticeship and work-based training. In 1901 technological examinations were held in 380 centres with an attendance of 34,246 students and there were 904 candidates in manual (practical) training examinations for teachers.

The range, levels and titles have undergone many changes over the decades. During the 1950s, for example, CGLI offered examinations at three levels:

- Intermediate – represented an adequate level of achievement in a craft or trade, appropriate to the higher grade of industrial workers who had not been required to undertake an apprenticeship.
- Final – represented complete competence for all normal purposes, to the level required of skilled craftspeople, mechanics and artisans who had served a fully recognised apprenticeship.
- Full Technological Certificate – represented a wide field of achievement and competence, indicating that the holder had a comprehensive knowledge of the subject.

It is still possible to see these awards – particularly the full technological certificate – proudly displayed in garages and other workshops.

CGLI is currently active in 100 countries through 8,500 centres, and registering 1.8 million candidates annually. A persistent misperception exists that City & Guilds is only involved in lower level awards. This is most certainly not true. Through its royal charter awarded in 1900 it can confer Senior Awards at Licentiate, Graduate, Membership and Fellowship levels. Universities, professional bodies, other organisations and companies in the UK and abroad can gain delegated authority status following a rigorous

accreditation process to satisfy the CGLI's quality assurance systems. These Senior Awards recognise experience, competence and skill in the workplace and are becoming increasingly popular. More recently the CGLI has developed a suite of Higher Level Qualifications that are vocationally focussed in a range of traditional and emerging subjects. CGLI are currently working with the AQA developing vocational diplomas.

In 1964 the National Examining Board for Supervisory and Management Studies was established under the umbrella of CGLI, offering examinations for managers and supervisors from 1966. It had a national responsibility and contained representatives from commerce, industry, professional bodies and relevant government departments. It raised the profile of management and supervisory education and at its peak had 50,000 registrations. In 2002 the National Examining Board was merged with the Institute for Supervision and Management to establish the Institute of Leadership and Management. ILM is still a part of the CGLI group of companies.

Edexcel (formerly TEC and BEC / BTEC)

The Technician Education Council and the Business Education Council were created in 1973 and 1974 respectively following the recommendations of the Haslegrave Committee. TEC was established to unify and validate technical educational programmes in further and higher education institutions, leading to ONC/ONDs and HNC/HNDs, previously the responsibility of professional bodies and other organisations. BEC was set up to rationalise and improve the relevance of sub-degree vocational business programmes in FE, HE and polytechnics. It assumed responsibility for ONC/ONDs and HNC/HNDs in 1976. TEC's Art and Design Committee established the Design and Art Technician Education Council (DATEC) in 1980.

In 1984 BEC and TEC were merged into BTEC, offering a wide range of awards at First, National and Higher Certificate and Diploma levels. During the 1990s BTEC became involved with the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs). After a relatively short life, these were phased out between 2005 and 2007 to be replaced by vocational GCSEs and Diplomas. BTEC checked and moderated programmes but did not directly assess the centre staff

that responsibility resided with employers and employer groups.

In 1996 BTEC merged with the London Examinations to become Edexcel. Currently Edexcel offers a wide range of qualifications including 'A' levels, GCSEs and BTEC vocational subjects, and is involved with the development of Foundation degrees. Edexcel operates internationally and awards over 1.5 million certificates every year.

Federation of Awarding Bodies

The federation was established in 2000 by the four vocational awarding bodies, with the following objectives:

- Provide a forum for awarding bodies to consider developments in vocational qualifications collectively.
- Formulate coordinated action in response to developments.
- Encourage positive relationships and communication between awarding bodies and other key organisations.
- Establish an ongoing dialogue with the UK government and its agencies to represent the common interests of the Federation and to lobby on key issues.

Since 2001 FAB has extended its membership network to over 80 organisations. The Federation works closely with the Joint Council for Qualifications and the Vocational Qualification Review Programme.

Department of Science and Art / Board of Education

This government department offered a number of examinations from 1857 and from 1859 established a general system of examinations in science country-wide. Initially there were two types of examination, one for teachers who studied for 'certificates of competency' and the other for students. Aspects of the application of science to industrial occupations were examined in order to encourage the study of science amongst workers. Topics included building, chemistry, geology, geometry, mechanics and physics. Other subjects added later included mathematics, nautical astronomy and navigation.

The Department of Science and Art eventually became a major examining organisation, even though there were early problems around funding of institutions, students and the subject range. For example

there were no classes in subjects like plumbing, dyeing and textiles so overall the support to these industries was limited.

Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education (1895) a series of reforms was introduced over the next few years that had important implications for technical education and associated examinations. The 1904 Secondary School Regulations defined secondary education more clearly as a general, academic provision, essentially liberal in its nature. Technical education was a separate activity and received grants for student attendance but with exceptions for higher awards. As a result an increased number of applied and vocational subjects received grants. The old Science and Art Department was split into two with one part responsible for schools, especially grammar schools, and the other part assuming responsibility for the growth of technical colleges, and day and evening classes. Subsequently a new Board of Education was created which assumed responsibility for the examinations offered by the Department of Science and Art.

Following the 1902 Education Act greater responsibility was given to local education authorities and this heralded the changes to the examination system after 1911. As a result of these reforms the examination system was greatly improved with the abuses of the grant system by schools removed. Teachers were given greater guidance on syllabuses helping part-time lecturers involved in evening classes. In 1903 there were 1,488 examination centres in science (with 75,956 papers marked) and 1,166 for art (with 89,992 papers marked). Gradually fewer science examinations were held in schools and the emphasis shifted to the emerging network of colleges.

The Board of Education provided examinations and financial incentives mainly for part-time students. Higher technical education was still an exception in the education system in spite of the perception of Britain as being the workshop of the world. In 1911 Stage 1 examinations were discontinued, changes were made to stage 2 examinations and the higher levels were represented by stage 3 and honours. Higher examinations were continued even after the lower general examinations were abolished in 1916. Examinations in science were finally discontinued in 1918 as the numbers remained small and continued to show a decline.

Regional Examination Unions / Bodies

Regional Examining Unions made a significant contribution to the development of technical education and the examination system. They had two aims. First, to provide standard examinations for the benefit of students studying technical and other subjects approved by the Union within the institutions of its area. Second, to promote the objects of such institutions and FE colleges. One of their real advantages was the effective partnerships that existed between the various advisory and subject committees, underpinned by the representative membership of these and other relevant groups including employers, college staff and HMI.

Regional Examination Bodies

- East Midland Educational Union (EMEU)
- Northern Counties Technical Examinations Council (NCTEC)
- Union of Educational Institutions (UEI)
- Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes (ULCI)
- Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)
- Yorkshire and Humberside Council for Further n Education (YHCFE)

Following the Industrial Training Act in 1967 the regional examining bodies, in conjunction with CGLI, created the Council of Technical Examining Bodies to prepare new and revised schemes for the training requirements issued by the Industrial Training Boards.

With the exception of WJEC, all the regional bodies focussed on the post-school sector, offering examinations for operatives, craftspeople and technicians following an agreement with CGLI in 1966. They also offered examinations in commercial and other subjects as well as some ordinary and higher national certificates. They worked closely with CGLI through advisory committees and the Institute's Committee for Technical Education.

Regional Advisory Councils

Nine Regional Advisory Councils covering the English regions were set up to provide a joint forum for further and higher education, commerce and industry. They also played a role in technical examinations within their respective regions; four of the Councils had a formal relationship with the Regional Examining Bodies. RACs were particularly active in considering and making recommendations on the location of advanced programmes above GCE A level standard, such as HNC and HNDs. In addition some had responsibility for the location of non-advanced programmes.

During the 1970s RACs became responsible for approving proposals for the Diploma in HE and other initial teacher training programmes as well as part-time non-degree programmes leading to post-graduate awards. The Haslegrave Report concluded that the pattern for technician and business programmes was and confused because of the overlaps in provision and management, and recommended new national administrative and co-ordinating arrangements. Their recommendations led to the creating of TEC and BEC and the gradual demise of RACs as the FE system became more centrally driven during the 1980s.

Higher vocational awards

((intro to come))

The College of Preceptors

The Society of Teachers was created by an association of private school teachers in 1846 “for the purpose of promoting sound learning and of advancing the interests of education, more especially among the middle classes”. Three years later it was incorporated by Royal Charter as the College of Preceptors, pioneering formal examinations and qualifications for teachers and awarding grades at Associateship (corresponded to matriculation), Licentiate (pass degree) and Fellowship (honours degree) levels.

The College attempted to raise interest among schoolteachers in more effective ways of teaching in grammar and other middle-class schools. This purpose was mainly achieved through their examinations that started in 1853, initially for teachers and then for students. The examinations attempted to provide parents and teachers with a means of comparing standards. Very few teachers took them, so from the early 1850s the College expanded into examinations for pupils. Its activities were focussed on private schooling and remained small and focussed on a niche market.

The College played a role in getting the study of education as a subject adopted in the universities. In 1873 courses of lectures for teachers were offered, leading to the awarding of diplomas. Table 3 illustrates how the College developed to a peak of enrolments during the late 1890s.

Table 3 – Entries to College of Preceptors examinations, 1860 – 1902

Date	Number of candidates entered
1860	821
1870	1,571
1880	11,208
1890	16,269
1902	9,612

The College changed its name to the College of Teachers in 1998 and continues to provide in-service qualifications.

Joint Committees for the Award of National Diplomas and Certificates

In 1921 the Board of Education, in conjunction with the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, developed a higher education programme comparable to a degree for engineers but through part-time study. The qualification was for engineers already working in industry and provided an examination system that allowed teachers a fair degree of freedom and flexibility in their teaching methods. The first examination was in mechanical engineering followed soon after by one for chemistry, organised in conjunction with the Institute of Chemistry. The scheme was later extended to cover full-time Diploma programmes but these never really gained widespread popularity compared to the so-called ‘gold standard’ of ‘A’ levels – another reflection of continuing debates about parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications.

Table 4 shows the take-up of national awards between 1923 and 1944, while Table 5 illustrates a significant increase in National Certificate awards in the immediate period after 1945.

Table 4 – Take-up of national awards, 1923 – 1944

Years	1923	1931	1944
Ordinary Awards	663	2,043	4,070
Higher Awards	168	749	1,405

Table 5 – Take-up of national awards, 1945 – 1955

Years	1945	1955
ONC	4,629	13,922
HND	1,723	7,507

Table 6 below, illustrates the number of students entered for ONC and HNC from 1952 to 1955, and their pass rates, compared to equivalent figures for CGLI examinations over the same period.

Clearly the pass rates were not particularly good. But it is important to remember that most of the provision was by evening study. Students often did not receive support from their employers and had to support themselves financially to attend classes after a full day's work.

Programmes offered at ONC and HND level included applied chemistry, applied physics, building, chemistry, civil engineering, commerce, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, metallurgy, mining, naval architecture, production engineering and textiles. At OND and HND level subjects included building, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering.

One pleasing feature of teaching ONCs and HNCs was the motivation of students to continue with their studies. Some colleges developed arrangements with local universities to provide exemptions for students progressing onto degree programmes after gaining higher certificates and diplomas. Such developments often referred to as 2+2 or 2+1 (depending on the subjects) greatly enhanced partnerships between colleges and universities.

Personal observation

The development of Foundation Degrees is now threatening the future of the highly respected higher certificates and diplomas – such is academic drift! Current obsession with degrees means that little attention or credibility is given to other, equally valuable, qualifications. Is there a danger that it will distort the post-16 qualification and examinations landscape in a similar way as 'A' levels have done since the early 1950s? Arguable, a focus on somewhat arbitrary and questionable targets deflects and masks meaningful discussion about the purpose of higher vocational qualifications. The real aspiration, surely, should be to create programmes at all levels that satisfy the needs of employers, are fit for purpose and allow all types of students to realise their full potential.

Table 6 – Entries and pass rates to national awards and CGLI examinations, 1952 - 1955

Examining Body	1952	1953	1954	1955
City and Guilds of London Institute	70,856 entered 44,390 passed	75,363 entered 47,510 passed	82,094 entered 49,922 passed	88,511 entered 54,973 passed
Ordinary National Certificates	21,977 entered 11,674 passed	22,243 entered 11,341 passed	24,590 entered 12,443 passed	26,670 entered 13,922 passed
Higher National Certificates	8,831 entered 6,311 passed	9,333 entered 6,567 passed	9,750 entered 6,941 passed	10,647 entered 7,507 passed

Source: Argles M. (1964) 'South Kensington to Robbins'

National Colleges

An interesting development during the 1940s and 50s was the creation of specialised colleges. A Ministry of Education Annual Report of 1947 identified a number of strategically important industries or sectors that employed relatively few workers but required advanced training in specialised institutions. Table 8 shows the eight national colleges, established between 1946 and 1951 and maintained by central government with significant support from the appropriate industry.

Table 8 – National colleges, 1946 – 1951

National College	Location	Date of designation as a national college
College of Aeronautics	Cranwell (now Cranwell University)	1946
Royal College of Art	Founded 1837 as school of industrial design	1949
National College of Food Technology	Formerly the Smithfield College of Food Technology	1951
National Foundry College	Wolverhampton and Staffordshire Technical College	1947
National College of Heating, Ventilation, Refrigeration and Fan Engineering	Borough Polytechnic, London	1948
National College of Horology and Instrument Technology	Northern Polytechnic, London	1947
National Leathersellers' College	Formerly Leathersellers' Technical College (established in 1909)	1951

Source: Payne, G. (1960) 'Britain's Scientific and Technological Manpower'.

The national colleges provided a wide range of courses including higher degrees. Although the numbers of students was small the colleges produced highly specialised and competent technologists for the relevant industries. Some also conducted research activities supported and funded by government and their parent industries. Courses and the related examinations were designed for their particular industry and were dependent on entry requirements.

They included college diplomas, higher nationals, degrees and postgraduate awards. The national colleges progressively underwent a number of title changes including Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs) and eventually became universities or were absorbed into the university sector. One of them, Cranwell, is now a world-class university.

Universities

England's ancient universities played a very minimal role in scientific and technical education, preoccupied as they were with classical and religious studies. The exception was mathematics at Cambridge. The methods of teaching and high cost of provision at the old universities further added to their exclusive nature. In spite of a reluctance by Oxford and Cambridge Universities to teach science and technical subjects several attempts were made to extend their activities into these areas and engage with the Mechanics Institute movement. One example from Cambridge was Arthur Hervey who proposed the creation of "four circuit professors" who would travel to cities such as Birmingham, Brighton and Manchester to teach astronomy, geology and natural philosophy (science).

These ideas, and suggestions made by Sewell from Oxford University, were instrumental in getting their universities to agree to administrate local examinations for the Society of Arts. The Universities of Cambridge and Oxford introduced the 'local examinations' that subsequently influenced the development of the examination systems for schools and entry into universities. Table 8 illustrates the initial growth of the Cambridge and Oxford local examinations.

Table 8 – Growth of Oxford and Cambridge local examinations, 1860 – 1901

Cambridge

Year	Number of centres	Number of candidates
1860	10	355
1870	31	2,482
1880	118	6,429
1890	190	8,476
1901	460	14,473

Oxford

Year	Number of centres	Number of candidates
1860	13	864
1870	23	1,605
1880	33	2,119
1890	62	2,890
1901	241	9,992

Source: Balfour, G. (1903) 'The Educational Systems of Great Britain and Ireland'

The teaching of science and technical subjects came very late to English universities compared with the dissenting academies and the universities in Scotland and on the continent. Until the mid nineteenth century few opportunities existed for students who wished to pursue scientific and technical subjects at higher levels at Oxford and Cambridge. Between 1850 and 1900 new institutions in London and the larger cities were created and began to specialise in applied and pure science and technological subjects. London University, Kings College, Royal College of Mining and University College set the pattern in the capital. Schools of pure and applied science were established in Birmingham (Mason College), Leeds (Yorkshire College of Science), Manchester (Owens College and the Royal Technical Institute in Salford) and Sheffield (Firth College). Similar institutions were founded in Liverpool and other major cities. With the expansion of universities throughout the twentieth century and the absorption of the polytechnics into the sector, some became centres of excellence in science and technologies.

One interesting aspect of the degrees offered by some universities was the development of thin and thick sandwich programmes. One of the constant concerns in technical and vocational education is how to achieve the right balance between theory and practice and prepare students more effectively for employment. Sandwich degree programmes are very effective in achieving these essential aspirations. CGLI works closely with a number of approved universities

who offer sandwich programmes by awarding students the Licentiate's Grade on the Senior Awards. The senior award recognises experience and achievement in the work place for the student on a work placement and represents an added value element for students. The Senior Awards are also used by professional bodies, the armed forces and employers to recognise experiential learning and skill acquisition in the work place

Mention must be made of a unique feature of the University of London degrees, namely the external degree. This degree at general and honours level was offered in a number of the larger technical colleges or colleges of technology throughout Britain and the majority were in science and technology. Many of the colleges offering these higher awards ultimately became polytechnics and then universities. The external degree made a significant contribution to the number of scientists and technologists during the 1950s and 60s. In 1952 there were 1,102 students pursuing external degrees in colleges. I was fortunate to study for an external degree in Physics at the Portsmouth College of Technology in early 1960s.

Council for National Academic Awards

Established in 1964 following a recommendation of the Robbins Report on HE, the Council validated HE programmes including degrees and diplomas to students in maintained institutions outside the university sector. It replaced the National Council for Technological Awards. It later assumed responsibility for teacher education and in 1974 in conjunction with the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design became responsible for degrees in art and design. It was also responsible for the Diploma and Certificate in Management Studies. From 1974-75 the Council, along with a number of universities, validated the Diploma in Higher Education. The Council achieved a great deal and its work was valued by many colleges which offered higher education programmes. It was dissolved in 1993 following the enactment of the Higher and Further Education Act and the establishment of the Higher and Further Education Funding Councils.

Questions for the future

Whilst researching and writing this history of the development of a national system of technical and commercial examinations, several perplexing questions and issues have emerged. From the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century successive governments were reluctant to get involved with technical education. Since then they have adopted a much more interventionist approach. Centralist control has accelerated over the past twenty years and is now characterised by heavy prescription of the curriculum and the related examination system.

This major shift in emphasis from a hands-off approach to one of tight control raises some fundamental and inter-related questions that need to be addressed in order to restore a more sensible balance.

Awarding body impartiality and independence

Can awarding bodies be truly impartial and independent agents within a rigid national statutory framework?

Challenge of a centralist driven policy

In the current political climate with its increasingly centralistic philosophy towards education policy, how can local needs be recognised and managed by the awarding bodies?

Issues associated with freedom and the awarding bodies

With the current heavily prescribed curriculum, inspection regimes and regulation, how much freedom can the awarding bodies exercise in managing and influencing the examination system?

Awarding bodies as businesses especially those that are for profit organisations

How can an awarding body operate in a heavily prescriptive climate and yet continue to be impartial agents able to respond to employer needs and maintain a competitive edge over other awarding bodies?

Number of awarding bodies

How many awarding bodies should there be? Perhaps the government is gradually moving to a situation where there might just be very few say, one for tech-

nical and vocational qualifications and another for academic qualifications. How this does accord with the government's intention to allow colleges and private companies to act as awarding bodies?

Assessment of work based learning

Traditional methods of defining and assessing skills and skill acquisition persist. How can a more meaningful approach to the whole area of work-based teaching, learning and assessment be promoted?

Current value placed on qualifications

A number of commentators have voiced concern about the over emphasis that is currently placed on examinations and the resultant qualifications. Has the examination system become an industry that has lost sight of the real purpose and justification of examinations and assessments? Are qualifications now primarily a means of assessing and measuring the supposed effectiveness of educational institutions?

Personal observation

Entropy is a measure of the disorder of a system. The qualification and examination landscape in England is still one that possesses increasing entropy and as a result remains confusing to employers, learners, parents and other users. The situation has not been helped by contradictory government policies and paradoxical attempts to exercise greater central control while at the same time encourage the so-called 'free market' to rip. There is plethora of quangos, working parties and other government sponsored agencies all attempting to influence educational policy. One of the most perplexing of recent policies is to grant awarding powers to private companies, the first ones announced being McDonalds, Flybe and Network Rail. The QCA gave the three companies official 'awarding body status', allowing them to confer nationally accredited certificates. The latest government reforms include the introduction of vocational diplomas and a new qualifications and credit framework (QCF) both of which will be introduced in 2010.

Appendix

Chronology

Eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Key dates	Developments
1754	Society of Arts Society founded offering medals, prizes and money for useful inventions
1835	Edinburgh School of Arts awarded 'Attestations of Proficiency' certificates – was adopted later by other bodies e.g. the Union of Institutes
1839	Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes formed – established examinations in 1847
1845	Royal College of Chemistry – students leaving the College were awarded Certificates of Attendance or Testimonials
1846	College of Preceptors founded (incorporated in 1849)
1848	Northern Union of Mechanics' Institutes
1850	Board of Trade examinations for Masters and Mates of Merchantman
1852	Department of Science and Art established
1854	Society of Arts – examinations introduced
1855	The first shorthand certificates issued by the Phonetic Institute in Bath (Pitman)
1856	Society of Arts – examinations remodelled to include such subjects as maths, science, modern languages (extended examinations to provincial centres in 1857)
1857	Department of Science and Art – established examinations in science in 1859
1858	London University Examinations – science degrees with examinations open to all
1860	Army Certificates of Education introduced
1864	Society of Arts introduces shorthand examinations
1868	Whitworth Scholarships/Exhibitions – these were awarded after examinations including written papers in chemistry, mathematics, mechanics and physics. In addition there were practical tests fitting, filing, turning and pattern-making. Whitworth directed that eight should be awarded to Owens' (Manchester) and three each to Cambridge, Oxford and London universities, one to Dublin, Durham, Edinburgh and Glasgow and others to University College London and Kings College London.

1873	Society of Arts – established technological subject examinations subsequently transferred to the City and Guilds of London Institute in 1879
1878	City and Guilds of London Institute – founded and incorporated in 1880
1879	City and Guilds held first examinations
1881	London Chamber of Commerce founded
1887	CGLI hold first international examinations
1888	Oxford Local Examinations Board introduces shorthand examinations
1890	London Chamber of Commerce
1895	Union of Educational Institution (started examinations 1896)

Twentieth century

Key dates Developments

1900	Board of Education established – replacing the Education Department and the Department of Science and Art
1908	Society of Arts received its royal charter
1911	East Midland Educational Union
1920	Joint Committees in National Schemes established
1921	National Certificate scheme
1924	Northern Counties Technical Examinations Council reconstituted
1928	Board of Education Committee (Atholl Report)
1947	Northern Advisory Council for FE established
1951	School Certificate and Higher School Certificate replaced by 'O' and 'A' levels
1952	Welsh Joint Education Committee
1953	Associated Examining Board
1955	Council of Technical Examining Bodies§
1961	National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design established
1962	Scottish Association for National Certificates and Diplomas

1964	National Examinations Board in Supervisory Studies established – later called NEBS Management
1965	Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) introduced
1968	CGLI set up a Skills Testing Service as a result of the Industrial Training Act that provided practical tests for training outside the traditional FE system
1969	Haslegrave Report of Technician Courses and Examinations
1971	London Chamber of Commerce changed its name to the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board
1973	Technician Education Council created
1974	Business Education Council created
1979	Ferryside agreement which regulated relations between CGLI and the REBs and the RACs which were not REBs
1981	Northern Advisory Council for FE merged with the Northern Counties Technical Examinations Council to become the Northern Council for FE
1983	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) introduced
1984	BTEC created by the merger of TEC and BEC
1985	Pitman Examinations Institute sold to Longman Group
1986	Review of vocational qualifications and the establishment of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. Introduced a competency-based, outcome-measured national infrastructure, with profound effects on providers.
1986/87	'O' levels and CSEs replaced by GCSEs – first awarded in 1988
1987	Advanced Supplementary (AS) levels introduced
1988	Management Charter Initiative (MCI) launched
1990	CGLI purchase Pitman Examinations Institute
1991	CPVE replaced by the Diploma of Vocational Education (DVE)
1993	GNVQs launched nationally
1997	Oxford, Cambridge and RSA (OCR) established.
1996	Edexcel created following the merger of BTEC with the London Examinations Board – BTEC + ULEAC
1997	SCAA and NCVQ replaced by QCA
1998	College of Preceptors becomes the College of Teachers

The twenty-first century

Key dates Developments

2000	Federation of Awarding Bodies founded.
2001	Prototypes for Foundation Degrees launched
2002	Institute of Leadership and Management created – NEBS Management + ISM\$
2005+	A recent series of reviews and reports e.g. Foster, Leitch along with a number of government initiatives have brought about the development of vocational diplomas, revised apprenticeships and an apparent commitment to skills improvement and vocational education.
2008	A set of interesting statistics. In 2006/07 - 763,000 vocational qualifications were awarded. In 2005/06 - 619,160, 2004/05- 532,478 and for 2003/04 the figure was 441,957. These were consistently below the targets set by the government and the 2006/07 percentage increase showed a deceleration on previous years.
2010	Vocational diplomas to be introduced

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