



Before Incorporation:

A Timeline of Key Initiatives
and Policies Shaping
Further Education in
England Prior to 1992

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A Timeline of Key Initiatives and Policies Shaping Further Education in England Prior to 1992

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The provision, organisation and meaning of what has come to be known as Further Education (FE) in England has developed over many years, and can still be described as a 'work in progress'.¹ Knowing something of that history, and the debates and policy interventions that shaped the way FE looks today, can help us make sense of what has always been a complex and dynamic contributor to the country's education and training system. In 2021, the Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL) published *Honourable Histories*, a chronology of the landmark policy reports and interventions following the incorporation of FE colleges in 1992 taking them out of local education authority control. The authors explained that its purpose was to "provide an aid for reflection upon the myriad of changes and shifts in policy and institutions and to give contemporary policy makers a glimpse into the thinking that motivated their predecessors". We were inspired by that exercise to develop a 'prequel' that identified the policy interventions and other significant activities that contributed to the development of FE prior to 1992.

Like FETL's chronology, the timeline presented here is intended to be read as a 'working document' to which we hope anyone interested in FE will feel able to contribute – to fill in missing information and, importantly, to add details about what was happening at both regional and local levels at different periods. It is certainly not presented as a complete history, but rather as a further resource to stimulate debate and reflection.

The main focus is on FE colleges and the drive to establish a national system of technical and vocational education and training. As the timeline shows, however, FE has always encompassed general education (for young people and adults) and has been provided through a wide range of institutions and organisations,



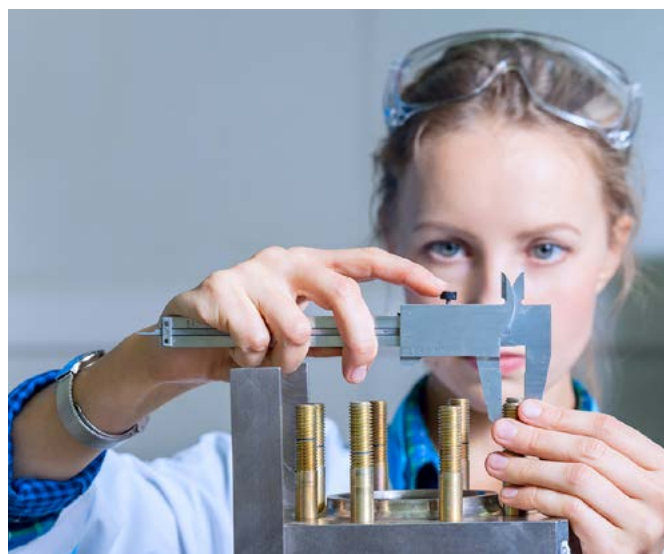
including on employers' premises and by what we now term Independent Training Providers (ITPs). Yet, there is still surprisingly little research on ITPs. We have identified changes in the government superstructures that have overseen policy and funding over the last 40 years, but again, this is not a complete list. In part, this reflects the institutional incontinence of the UK state and the welter of reforms that have been implemented across the institutional landscape, particularly in relation to technical and vocational education and training. Agencies, programmes, and funding streams have come and gone as the speed of change accelerated from the late 1970s. Other than the colleges themselves, relatively little by way of policy architecture has survived from say 1980 (or even 1990). In the light of this disruptive turbulence, it is clear that FE colleges (and some ITPs) have shown remarkable resilience.

¹ The focus in this document is on England. Although some of the initiatives and policies listed here also affected FE in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, it has not been possible to capture the different ways in which FE developed throughout the UK in this document.

The first official use of the term 'further education' occurred in 1906 when the then Board of Education published its *Regulations for Technical Schools, Schools of Art and other Schools and Classes for Further Education* (Board of Education 1906; see Bailey and Unwin 2013 for more information). Various titles for institutions providing 'further education' were in use at that time, including College, Institute and Polytechnic. What the Board called 'classes' were held in a wide variety of venues including: day continuation schools; evening schools; Mechanics Institutes; Schools of Art; Polytechnics; and Working Men's Colleges. There was no overarching framework or 'system' to connect these institutions and activities.

If we look at the range of 'classes' funded by the Board in 1906, we see a remarkable continuity with the eclectic mix of provision (from entry level to higher education) found in many of today's FE colleges:

- Science and art subjects
- Commercial and technical subjects
- London University degrees (external)
- Elementary subjects (writing, reading, number)
- Recreational activities and domestic subjects
- Day technical classes for 12-15 year-olds and full-time 'preparation for employment'
- Classes for people with (in the language of the time) 'disabilities'



Like today's policymakers, members of the Board of Education found this wide range of vocational, technical, academic, and leisure-related provision perplexing. Yet, the range reflected the haphazard and largely uncontrolled way in which FE had been growing, largely stimulated by individuals seeking ways to improve their life chances and by employers wanting to increase their workers' skills to capitalise on the latest technological and scientific advances. A paper given at a meeting of the Liverpool Engineering Society in 1868 captures concerns at the time about the disadvantages for individual learners of a haphazard approach:

Hitherto our workmen have been left to fend for themselves...although engaged from 6am to 6pm at their daily work, they manage to attend evening classes where these are available, and where they are not, they tread their way along, picking up what scraps of information they can find in the nearest lending library and by dint of their British pluck...get sufficient knowledge to fit them for foremen and managers.²

Choosing where to start the chronology was a tricky decision, but we opted for the introduction of the Statute of Artificers in 1563 as this marks the first state intervention in the organisation of what was then the main vehicle for vocational education and training – apprenticeship. The Statute was controversial as it challenged the control of apprenticeship by the craft and trade guilds, thus enabling the state to exert some influence in a private employer-led world. Making sense of the myriad of ways in which FE developed requires some understanding of the three interlocking concerns of successive governments that have affected that development. First, as can be seen with the 1563 Statute, there is the (often uneasy) relationship between the state and employers. As the chronology shows, some of the state's legislation to regulate employer behaviour regarding, for example, the employment of children, had a profound and positive effect on young people's opportunities to access education. On the other hand, employers themselves have also had to intervene to organise FE provision for their workforces. Second, and starting with apprenticeship, the state has regarded further education as one of the means to exert social control over young people. Third, the state

² Cited in Roderick, G. and Stephens, M. (1982) (eds) *The British Malaise*. London: Falmer.

has constantly tried to persuade individuals to choose specific subjects or courses it believes are 'useful' and which it is prepared to fund. Yet individuals, and indeed FE institutions, continue to disrupt the policymakers' desire to tidy up and restrict FE.

The timeline includes events and initiatives that have contributed to the struggle to give young people and adults the right (and resources) to access education and training and (safe) spaces to learn about and debate ideas. It reminds us that the struggle continues today. Behind each entry in the timeline lies a whole micro history. A number of themes and concerns that occupied campaigners as well as policymakers in the 19th century are still being debated today and include:

- **The role and purpose of FE** – is it to serve individuals, to serve employers, to help build capacity in a local community or region, to specialise in specific sectors/occupational fields, to provide education and training to young people and adults with diverse needs and levels of educational attainment?
- **What should it be called** – is it 'further education', 'further education and training', 'further education and skills', 'technical education', 'vocational education'? Why does 'adult education' fit both within and outside of FE? Should there be specialist colleges, e.g. 'Institutes of Technology' or 'National Colleges'?
- **FE's place within the wider 'system' of education and training** – how should FE relate to schools, universities, and ITPs? Should FE be restricted to providing education and training at particular levels and in particular subjects?
- **FE's relationship with the state** – should FE have more freedom to design curricula and qualifications? What should the balance be between reliance on state funding and freedom to generate income?
- **FE's relationship with higher education** – who should deliver so-called advanced provision and what should the cut-off level be? Is there a case for tertiary institutions?
- **The role of and relationship with employers** – how far should they be compelled to fund and provide training for their workforces? To what extent should they be involved in the design of FE-related qualifications and programmes?

- **Individual rights and entitlements to FE** – should FE be free, or should individuals be required to pay?

One of the most striking features of looking back across FE policy is the way in which some issues and debates persist over very lengthy periods, coming in and out of fashion as the economy goes through different phases, and as earlier 'solutions' or compromises unravel or are simply forgotten and the debate springs up anew. In this sense, policy debates on FE are a kind of merry-go-round. For example, a current problem exercising the minds of governments in both Westminster and Holyrood is the ability to get educational institutions as a whole to deliver 'what employers want'. This brings us up against what might be termed the 'Shadbolt dilemma'³. At any given moment in the period covered by the timeline, different employers have probably wanted very different learning outcomes from the same course and/or qualification. The 2016 Shadbolt Review of computer science degrees noted that:

...a clear challenge is that employers are often divided on where the problem lies... we found that employers disagree on what technical skills Computer Sciences students should be taught, although the balance of evidence points to support for ... the fundamental principles of Computer Science, and encouraging and enabling students to learn and adapt to new technologies over their careers. This runs counter to an opposing school of thought that has been evident from some employers, that suggests that they want graduates with the skills that reflect the most up to date technological trends.

In other words, some employers wanted well-rounded and adaptive thinkers, others wanted plug-in-and-play employees equipped with the required skills in a particular coding package.

The key point for the purposes of this discussion is that these tensions are anything but new. We find them, for example, replicated in contributions on the topic of 'what should be the underlying aim of commercial education' in the *Pitman's Year Book and Diary 1930* published in 1929⁴. Pitmans was at that time a major independent

³ DBIS (2016, p.5) *Shadbolt Review of Computer Science Degree Accreditation and Graduate Employability*. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

training provider. It designed and delivered courses (often via correspondence methods) on commercial management, typing and shorthand, and what we would now call business administration. In the following quotations, albeit in the language of the time, we can detect strands of thinking and echoes of debates that persist to the present day, including references to what are sometimes termed 'interpersonal' or 'social' skills as well as concerns about the balance between technical and general education:

...what should be the general characteristics of the successful trader. He must have great tact, great persuasiveness, a wide knowledge of his fellow-men, an impressive personality, excellent manners, and the power to secure unquestioning faith in his honesty and fair dealing. "An Englishman's word must be as good as his bond". This last quality is, I believe, the real keystone of the gigantic arch of British commerce. How are these qualities to be attained? Not, I submit, by an education comprised in "the three R's," with a vocational training to follow: this produces a narrow view of affairs and impossibility to get out of the rut of the particular vocation. Space forbids me describing what subjects should be included in the ideal curriculum, but I would point out that our own wonderful English language, literature, and history, and one of two foreign languages and histories...should form the basis upon which the whole structure should be built.

(Sir Vincent Caillard, director, Southern Railway)

In reply to your question, "What should be the underlying aim of Commercial Education?" I would answer: "To make a man (or woman) think". As in all professions and callings, the business man must be equipped with technical knowledge and accomplishments, and much might be done in the Public Schools and the Secondary Schools of this country to give the scholars in the middle and higher mathematical forms a clearer insight into commercial affairs... Essential as technical knowledge is, however, the mind is intended to be not only a receptacle of facts but also a piece of machinery by means of which problems can be solved and decisions arrived at, and it is the boy who can develop his mind as an instrument of thinking that will be able to accept the most responsibility, and, in consequence, achieve the most success.

(Lord Leverhulme)

In addition to debates about the nature of the curriculum, the timeline shows how the state has sought to intervene in the design and organisation of qualifications. From the 1830s onwards, qualifications obtained through public examinations were used for entry to the professions, some skilled trades, the Civil Service, and universities (Roach 1971). To service this, examination bodies began to appear, and the number of qualifications grew.

Attempting to rationalise the 'qualifications jungle', and the number of what are now termed 'awarding organisations', has been a goal of governments over the years, most notably through the introduction of NVQs in the 1980s. The latest attempt is through the introduction of T levels, the review of qualifications at levels 2 and 3, and questions about whether FE or HE should deliver Levels 4 and 5 provision. This tendency for policymakers to expend time and energy on a cycle of revisiting apparently unresolved problems is a distinctive feature of English education policy. Unlike in some other countries, there are no widely shared and settled assumptions about the shape and nature of FE provision, the role of central and local government, and the roles and responsibilities of employers. In addition, it



⁴ *Pitman's Year Book and Diary 1930 (1929)* London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons Ltd.

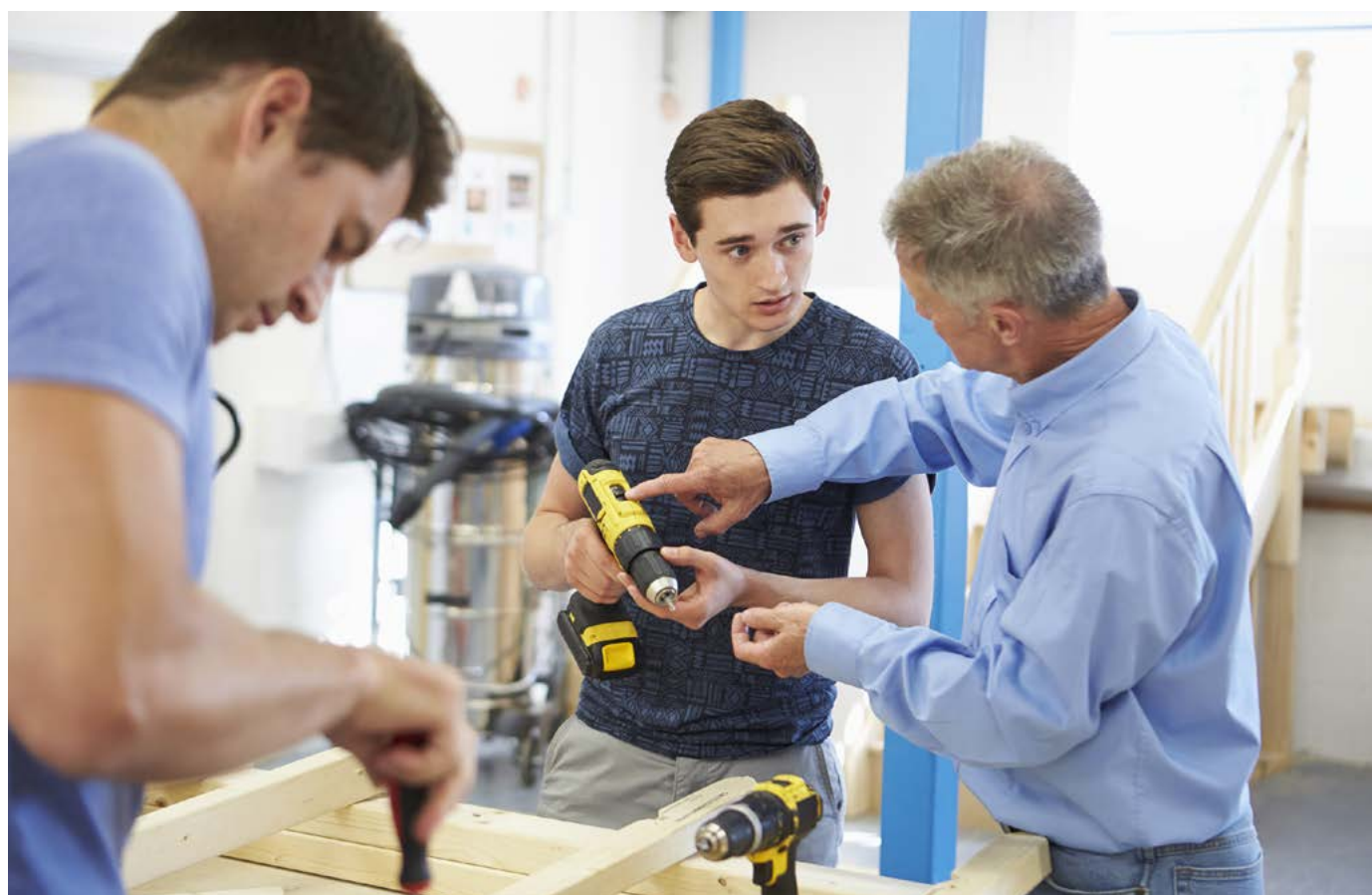
is noticeable in the timeline how plans to invest in FE fall by the wayside when decisions are being made about cutting public spending.

The timeline also reveals that there were at least two decisive break points in the development of national policy in the twentieth century. The first occurred in 1963/4 when the government was forced to abandon a long-standing policy of voluntarism in respect of employers, and to introduce statutory sectoral Industrial Training Boards (ITBs), largely because the quality and volume of training for young people being provided by employers was seen as inadequate and unlikely to cope with the looming demographic bulge of young people coming through compulsory schooling.

The second was a profound shift in the role and nature of central government activity around what tended to be termed vocational education and training (VET), which started to become manifest in the mid-1970s. Education generally and VET in particular became much more visible in national policy discourse and politics, partly as a result of the 'Great Debate' instigated by

prime minister, James Callaghan, and also because the UK's perceived relative economic decline had started to become an issue of serious political concern. Educational failings were seen as part of the explanatory narrative for this national challenge. Moreover, research comparing UK workplaces with those in Germany, France and the Netherlands revealed that our workforce was much less well-educated and vocationally skilled and that this affected both relative product quality and productivity.

In other words, the UK found itself locked into another round of unfavourable international comparisons of vocational skills, of exactly the sort that had powered the Samuelson Commission (1881-84) on technical instruction. The difference with the 1880s was that the latter decline was considerably more visible and was underlined and given much greater political urgency by the recession of the early 1980s, de-industrialisation and mass unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. This perception of deficient and defective VET as a major explanatory factor in national economic decline mattered because it elevated the importance of skills



and FE as a focus for policy interventions by central government. Colleges and the skills they created were no longer something that local government owned, they were part of a much wider policy narrative that national politicians and governments needed to pay attention to and to increasingly take charge of.

This led to a transformation in the role of the state (as represented by national government). During the nineteenth and early parts of the twentieth century, the role of national government was largely to act as an enabler of others – allowing, empowering, and encouraging local government and other actors to do more to deliver FE. With the heightened sense of economic decline and economic crisis that emerged in the later 1970s and early 1980s, the role of the state gradually morphed into one where the state was the main actor, source of ideas and sole enabler of reform. The contrast is clear when one considers that although, by 1980, significant elements of skills policy were largely devolved to the semi-autonomous national tripartite quango, the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), by 1990 it no longer existed and nor did any other kind of tripartite structure. Its role was now being undertaken by direct intervention in the policy sphere by the government, usually with minimal consultation with any other actors or stakeholders. That this transformation should occur under a succession of Conservative administrations ostensibly dedicated to rolling back the frontiers of the state is an important paradox, which can be explained by the fact that as ideological priorities served to reduce the policy levers that the state had at its disposal to tackle economic and social problems (like an active industrial strategy), education remained one of the few policy tools that central government retained. As such, it was far too important to share control with any other actors – hence the steady erosion of the power of local government and other stakeholder groupings. At the same time, these ideological constraints on what the state could or should be doing meant the unravelling of statutory intervention in employer training, the abolition of the ITBs, and a return to voluntarism (until history yet again reversed itself and a Conservative government introduced the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017).

An allied point relates to where power over the education and training policy agenda has resided at national level. As the timeline indicates, a bifurcation originally developed between training provided by

employers and education provided by FE. The 1964 Industrial Training Act instigated a national training strategy that saw training as the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and further education as the responsibility of the Department for Education and Science (DES), working through Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and intermediary bodies (the 1958 Carr Report had recommended that this divide be reviewed). The MSC marked the gradual encroachment into the education and skills sphere of an increasingly powerful agency that reported not to the DES, but to the Employment Department (ED). The Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) also acquired an interest in some aspects of skills policy, such as skills forecasting. Thus, from the latter end of the 1970s onwards, control of elements of funding for FE and wider skills initiatives, and the power to fashion new policies and interventions was shared, sometimes uneasily, between DES, the ED and MSC. In the period after our timeline ends, the 'machinery of government' underwent several reconfigurations. The ED ceased to exist and for a while many of their skills responsibilities were rolled into a Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). There then followed a situation where responsibility for schools was placed within a Department for Children, Schools, and Families (DCSF), while responsibility for FE and HE moved to the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), which morphed into the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS). Today we find we are back with a unified Department for Education (DfE) with a fairly traditional portfolio of educational responsibilities (of which FE is one), albeit now backed by massively greater powers of central direction and control than its predecessors, and with the previous role of local authorities reduced to a pale shadow of what it was before.

Amidst all the policy turmoil, and to the continuing bewilderment of some policymakers, it is important to recognise that FE institutions have continued to provide both full-time and part-time education and training to a very diverse student body. Although today, the majority of FE students are in the 16-19 age group and study full-time, for much of the period of the timeline part-time provision for both young people and adults was dominant and often delivered through evening classes. The following table covering 1946-1970 illustrates this point.

Student numbers 1946-1970⁵

Nos in thousands	1946/7	1956	1963	1970
Full-time (including sandwich)	45	76	184	274
Part-time – day	196	469	613	749
Evening only	527	724	779	736
Evening institutes	827	2,249	2,651	3,174

This table reflects the rapid growth in the post-war period of day-release numbers (on both technical and commercial courses). One impetus was the Civil Service's decision to act on the recommendations of the 1944 Asherton Committee report on the training of its workforce and grant release to all its employees under 18 years of age. The greatest demand, perhaps unsurprisingly, was for technical courses for young people in occupations requiring extensive occupational

training. Although the 1956 White Paper's aim to double the day-release numbers was not achieved due to the voluntarist approach of encouraging rather than coercing employers, day-release attendance on part-time courses increased from 383,800 in 1955/56 to 493,800 in 1961/62. This represented an increase in absolute terms as well as a percentage of young people in employment. These changes in the scale and mode of provision highlight the fact that FE has always had to be highly responsive to shifting patterns of demand and to the impact of changing policy priorities on the composition of demand. This is one factor that has remained constant across the timeline and is liable to remain so.

In conclusion, we return to our starting point and emphasise that this selective timeline is presented as a stimulus for discussion and to trigger further research. There will be a wealth of material (written and visual) in institutional archives, local record offices, and individual private collections that could reveal the more detailed back story behind each of the timeline entries.



⁵ Source: Cantor, L.M. and Roberts, I.F. (1972) *Further Education in England and Wales*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Further Reading

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Chronology

Key



Employment, unemployment and the role of employers



Funding



Institutions and initiatives/programmes



Legislation



Policy pronouncements



Qualifications



Systems management and architecture



Workforce

1563

Statute of Artificers



First apprenticeship policy. Prior to the Statute being introduced, apprenticeships were arranged and managed by employers in conjunction with the craft guilds in London and other parts of the country (e.g. the Company of Cutlers in Sheffield) or by town corporations. The Statute limited 'masters' to having no more than three apprentices each and imposed a seven-year minimum term (usually from the age of 14) to become qualified in a craft or trade. Between 1747 and 1768, further statutes were introduced in response to concerns about apprentices being abused by their masters (see Lane 1996). In 1802, the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act reduced working time to 12 hours per day and required apprentices to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic, and some religious education. But there was little provision to enforce these educational requirements of the Act. The original Statute was repealed in 1814 as there was no means to ensure it was either implemented or monitored. Employers outside the guilds and in the emerging new trades were less happy to have their employees regulated. The state did not give apprenticeship statutory status again until the 2009 *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learners Act*.

1597 &
1601

Poor Law Acts



Parish officers were given the power to bind 'pauper' children as apprentices, but they generally received much less training than other apprentices and, as the first industrial revolution got underway, they were seen largely as a ready source of labour. Apprenticeship as a model of vocational learning continues to be interpreted in different ways today.

1754

Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce



Granted a royal charter in 1847 and from 1910 known as the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), the society's members and President, Prince Albert, helped organise the 1851 Great Exhibition ([see 1851 below](#)).

1766 Lunar Society



Founded by a group of largely self-educated engineers, scientists, doctors and inventors (e.g. Matthew Bolton, James Watt, Josiah Wedgewood, Joseph Priestley and Erasmus Darwin) to discuss the latest scientific and technological advances, wider philosophical ideas, and the implications for education. The Lunar Society inspired the setting up of Literary and Philosophical Societies in England's major towns and cities from 1780 onwards (e.g. the Manchester College of Arts and Sciences founded to teach science, technology, medicine, law and literature to male students including working men). Political and social unrest across Europe, along with scientific advances, stimulated the growth of local clubs and societies providing access to education for working people (see Simon 1974). One example was the Corresponding Societies which were suppressed by the government in 1799 for promoting sedition.

1798 Adult School, Nottingham



Thought to be the first Adult School, this was established to provide education for young women in the lace and hosiery factories ([see 1909-10 below](#)).

1818 Robert Owen – *On the employment of children in Manufactures*



Father of the co-operative movement, Owen called for factory reform, a change in working conditions, and the limiting of children's working hours to allow for time for schooling.

1823/24 London Mechanics Institute (now Birkbeck College, University of London)



This was set up as a new technical institution, under the rallying cry of 'Knowledge is Power' (Hudson Flexner, 2014). Its intention was to provide learning opportunities for all workers. Workers had access to workshops, a library, classes, lectures, and a chemistry laboratory. Other Mechanics Institutes were established in Aberdeen, Leeds, Lancaster, and Newcastle in 1824, and in Manchester, Norwich, Birmingham and Devonport in 1825. By 1850 around 610 Institutes existed with a membership of about 600,000, though, as early as the 1830s, some had drifted away from their original mission of vocational education towards becoming reading clubs for the middle classes and focusing on literary pursuits. It was also the case that the Institutes did not undertake much teaching of the practical aspects of vocational/trade skills, they concentrated on the theoretical side. By this time, a number of Mutual Improvement Societies had also been founded and were prevalent in the north of England.

1833 Factory Act



This stated that children aged 9-13 working in the textile industry could only be employed if they attended school for two hours each day. From 1834, a series of Chimney Sweepers Acts set the minimum age for climbing chimneys at 10 years. No children under the age of 14 could be employed unless as an apprentice. There was a penalty established for 'evil-treatment' of apprentices.

1838

Chartist Halls



Established as part of the drive to secure parliamentary and voting reforms (e.g. Carpenters' Hall in Manchester and People's Hall in Birmingham), these Halls provided safe spaces for people to meet, debate and learn about the issues they were fighting for.

1838

Royal Polytechnic Institution



This was founded in a house in Cavendish Square with an entrance on Regent Street in London under the patronage of Prince Albert to provide the public with 'a practical knowledge of the various arts and branches of science connected with Manufactures, Mining Operations, and Rural Economy'. It held evening classes and was famous for its 'lantern shows'. It closed in 1881 and the building was bought by Quentin Hogg, an evangelical philanthropist and educational reformer ([see 1891 below](#)).

1839

Education Committee of the Privy Council established



The beginning of the state's responsibility for education, the first Secretary being Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth.

1850

Public Libraries Act



This gave local authorities permission to draw on their rates to establish public libraries. The Act built on the 1845 Museums Act which had enabled boroughs with a minimum population of 10,000 to create libraries as part of museums. Free public libraries, established by benefactors such as Chetham's Library in Manchester founded in 1653, had existed since the 17th century.

1851

Great Exhibition



Stimulated by concerns about the challenge to British industrial supremacy from France, Prussia and the USA, there was renewed interest in providing both elementary and secondary education as well as technical education. Although Britain performed well, the Exhibition drew public attention to its lack of facilities for technical education compared to those on the continent. It was agreed that the financial surplus (equivalent to around £17 million today) should be used to develop a national centre for education in South Kensington. The site developed over the years to host the Royal Colleges of Science, Music, and Domestic Science, and the Museums of Natural History, Science and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

1853

Department of Science and Art (within the Department of Trade) and School of Mines



The Department was established to promote arts, science, technology, and design, and to coordinate the different initiatives in technical education. It organised and administered examinations in science and art and design available to anyone in the country attending locally organised classes. The Department

remunerated teachers, who sent their students' exam scripts to London (the expansion of the railways and postal service greatly assisted this), on a 'payment by results' basis. Though absorbed into the Education Department in 1856, it retained considerable autonomy until it became part of the new Board of Education in 1899. It has been argued that the Department's approach encouraged the idea that technical education could be reduced to single examinable subjects (learned from books) and did not provide funds or facilities for practical instruction.

1854 **Working Men's College, London**



This was founded to provide 'liberal education' to working men.

1856 **Education Department**



This replaced the Education Committee of the Privy Council set up in 1839.

1857 **Industrial Schools Act**



This gave local magistrates the power to send homeless children aged 7-14 to residential or day schools to learn trade and domestic skills.

1864 **Clarendon Report (Royal Commission on Public Schools)**



This Report recommended that the nine 'public' schools at the time should introduce science into the curriculum for one hour a week. This was a response to the growing demand for a more robust technical education system (Simon, 1974).

1867 **Paris Exhibition**



This exhibition raised further concerns about Britain's lack of progress in providing both technical education and general education compared to other countries.

1867 – 1868 **Select Committee on Scientific Instruction**



This committee took evidence from government bodies, universities, a few secondary schools with experience of science teaching, and representatives from key industries. It recommended that all children from the 'working classes' should have access to elementary education and benefit from scientific instruction.

1870 **The Forster Act (named after its sponsor William Forster)**



This was the first of a series of Acts between 1870 and 1893 passed to create compulsory education in England and Wales for children aged between 5 and 13.

1870 Royal Commission on Scientific Instruction and Advancement of Science



Known as the Devonshire Commission as chaired by William Cavendish (6th Duke of Devonshire), it addressed concerns about Germany's promotion of technical education and higher industrial standards of industry. Its eight reports provided a comprehensive survey of scientific education in universities, schools, and training colleges.

1873 Royal Society of Arts (RSA) examinations in technical subjects



A combination of the advocacy of four men, Harry Chester, Henry Cole, James Hole and James Booth, persuaded the RSA to provide examinations in technical fields to enable working people who were trying to improve their prospects through self-education to gain certificates. This was also seen as a way to boost the work of the Mechanics' Institutes.

1873 Trade Guild of Learning



Founded by the social reformer Henry Solly (who had led the establishment of the Working Men's Club movement) and representatives from a range of trade societies (e.g. house painters and decorators, woodcarvers, bookbinders) along with politicians and academics, to provide classes for working men in history, political economy and technical education. It failed to secure the support it needed. Solly went on to found the **Artisan's Institute** in 1874 which had more success. The Institute was based in London's St Martin's Lane and taught subjects such as plumbing, bricklaying, carpentry, and sheet metal working, as well as courses in science and mathematics. Funding problems saw it incorporated into the Finsbury Technical College in 1883 (see 1883).

1875 Code of Regulations for Elementary Schools



This included the payment of a special grant to School Boards to provide practical instruction in domestic subjects (e.g. domestic economy, cookery, handicraft).

1878 City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI)



In 1875, the then prime minister William Gladstone, challenged the London Livery Companies (guilds) as to why many of them were not spending their considerable reserves on training apprentices and artisans in their respective trades and crafts. In 1878, the City of London and 16 Livery Companies (guilds) established the City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) to protect and promote the standard of technical education. The plan was to set up a 'Central Institution' for advanced instruction and research, but initially evening classes were organised in school buildings in Cowper Street, Finsbury, where both the theoretical and practical aspects of subjects such as applied chemistry and mechanical engineering were taught. The CGLI also took over the RSA's technical examinations.

1878 City and Guilds Technical Art School, Kennington



The existing South London Art School was extended by CGLI and became a trade school for the applied arts (illustration, pottery, and house decorating).

1880 Elementary Education Act (Mundella Act)



This gave local authorities the 'duty' to ensure that all children under the age of 13 were attending school. Anyone found employing a child under 13 who had not received the standard of education mandated, was to be penalised.

1882 Artisans Technical Committee



This ran for three years to advise the Royal Commission on Technical Education and the Trade Committees, comprised of small groups of technical teachers, employers and 'leading workmen' (Mills, p.7) – Boot and Shoe, Cabinetmaking, Woodcarving, Carriage-building, Engineering, Carpentry, Bricklaying, Masonry, Plumbing and other trades.

1883 Finsbury Technical College



Founded by the CGLI and recognised as the first such college in England, Finsbury College had both day and evening (by far the majority) students. The Samuelson Report commended it as a 'model trade school for the instruction of artisans and other persons preparing for intermediate posts in industrial works.' The college closed in 1926 when it was incorporated into Imperial College. The Higher Education (HE) 'capture' of Further Education (FE) continues today with debates about whether universities and/or FE colleges are the preferred institutions to run Level 4 and 5 technical/professional courses.

1883 City of London Parochial Act



This encouraged local boroughs to create, fund and promote more technical education, more public libraries, and art galleries and museums, and to extend working men's and women's institutions.

1884 Royal Commission on Technical Instruction (Samuelson Report)



The Commission was established in 1881 to: "...inquire into the instruction of the industrial classes of certain foreign countries in technical and other subjects for the purpose of comparison with that of the corresponding classes in this country; and into the influence of such instruction on manufacturing and other industries at home and abroad". It reported that the absence of a national system of technical education and a lack of effective science instruction in schools stood in stark comparison to other countries (Austria, Belgium France, Germany, Holland, Italy and Switzerland). Its recommendations included: a) less part-time employment for children; b) more systematic training for young workers in work schools with help from employers; c) greater powers for local authorities to establish more

technical and secondary schools; and d) more teaching of agriculture and craft work. It also proposed setting up a single authority responsible for technical education.

Committee members toured the country holding meetings to discuss their proposals and some were involved in the establishment of the National Association for the Promotion of Technical and Secondary Education in 1886.

1884 Central Institution at South Kensington



Set up by the CGLI to provide instruction related to the practical aspects of professions such as technical teachers; mechanical, civil and electrical engineers; and those working in the chemical industry. Allowed students from the CGLI's Finsbury and Kennington schools to progress into HE. The college became the Central Technical College, and in 1909 became the Engineering Section of the Imperial College of Science and Technology.

1888 Board of Education Act



A Department of State was created with central direction over the educational system.

1889 Technical Instruction Act



A legacy of the Samuelson Commission, this Act defined technical education as follows: 'instruction in the principles of science and art applicable to industries, and in the application of special branches of science and art to specific industries or employment. **It shall not include teaching the practice of any trade or industry or employment**, but, save as aforesaid, shall include instruction in the branches of science and art with respect to which grants are for the time being made by the Department of Science and Art, and any other form of instruction (including modern languages and commercial and agricultural subjects), which may for the time being be sanctioned by that Department by a minute laid before Parliament and made on the representation of a local authority that such a form of instruction is required by the circumstances of its district.' This reflected the prevailing view that practical instruction was the responsibility and business of employers.

The Act's key elements were to: a) empower the new county and county borough councils to support technical and industrial training out of their rates; and b) to set up Technical Instruction Committees if they wished.

1890 Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act



This gave local authorities the right to spend money from the new customs and excise tax (known as the 'whisky tax') on spirits to support technical education. By 1902, this tax was bringing in £859,011 (which at that time represented more than 80 per cent of public expenditure on technical education) and was supporting the establishment of technical institutions and science schools throughout the country.

1891 Regent Street Polytechnic



Quintin Hogg spent over £100,000 in creating the polytechnic. By the end of the 1890s there were several 'polytechnics' in London including: the People's Palace and East London Technical College (now Queen Mary College), Northern, Borough, Battersea and Chelsea Polytechnics.

1892 Technical and Industrial Institutions Act



This act facilitated the acquisition and holding of land by institutions for promoting Technical and Industrial Instruction and Training.

1893 London County Council's Technical Education Board



Chaired by Sidney Webb, the Board provided scholarships for secondary and technical education. It established the London Day Training College (for teacher training, which later become the Institute of Education, now merged with UCL), the Central Schools of Arts and Crafts and specialist colleges for various crafts and trades such as photography, leather-dyeing, and furniture making.

1894 Association of Technical Institutions (ATI)



This was founded by 27 institutions, including Schools of Science and Art, Mechanics' Institutes and Technical Schools (98 by 1914 and 227 by 1947) to promote technical education and improve the teaching of technical subjects. In 1970, ATI became the Association of Colleges for Further and Higher Education (ACFHE).

1898 Code for Evening Continuation Schools



Evening schools had existed in some parts of the country for many years but were limited in the subjects that they taught and were only funded (by the government's Science and Art Department) to provide for persons aged below the school leaving age. Under the 1898 Code the range of subjects was expanded, and age restrictions were eased. Some students were aiming to progress on to Technical Schools, others would leave education once they had completed their continuation studies. Subjects were grouped into five main themes: 1. Industrial, 2. Commercial, 3. Domestic, 4. Rural and 5. General. This provision filled the gap that existed in elementary school provision, which only covered a very narrow range of science subjects.

1899 Board of Education Act



This brought together the Education Department and the Science and Art Department to create a single central government department focused on education. In 1901 responsibility for the Evening Continuation Schools was transferred to the Board.

1901 Trade School for Furniture and Cabinet Making



Established as part of the Shoreditch Technical Institute, this was the first day trade school designed to take boys near or at completion of their elementary education for a further two to three years to provide them with specialised training to enter the labour market. It is regarded as the prototype for what would become the Junior Technical Schools ([see 1913 below](#)).

1902 Education Act



This replaced the 2,650 School Boards with 350 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) who were empowered to support education (including technical) at and beyond the elementary school level. However, the legislation was permissive as the Act stated: "the LEAs shall consider the needs of their area and take steps as seem to them desirable, to supply or aid the supply of education other than elementary...". Some LEAs were enthusiastic about technical education, others much less so.

1903 Workers' Educational Association (WEA)



This was founded by Albert Mansbridge with the support of the TUC Parliamentary Committee, to encourage people to take advantage of the increasing number of extramural courses which universities were offering.

1904 *Regulations for Evening Schools, Technical Institutions and Schools of Art and Art Classes 1904 – 05*



Article 42 of the regulations gave grants to Trade Schools for 'Day Technical Classes' and led to the creation of Junior Technical Schools.

1904 First Day Trade School for Girls



This was part of Borough Polytechnic and held classes in shorthand, needlework, domestic economy, and book-keeping.

1904 Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions (ATTI)



From the mid-19th century, schoolteachers had been forming Associations to improve their employment conditions and professional standing, but it was not until 1904 that teachers in technical institutions founded their own Association. A key obstacle had been the predominant part-time nature of the workforce and the wide range of professional identities (spanning craft level to degree level and many different subjects). One of the ATTI's first battles was to try to gain parity for members' salaries with those of schoolteachers.

1906 Regulations for Technical Schools, Schools of Art and other Schools and Classes for Further Education)



As noted in the introduction above, these regulations mark the moment when the Board of Education used the term 'further education' for the first time. Between 1918 and 1937, the number of institutions in England and Wales large enough to warrant an inclusive grant from the Board grew from 127 to 149.

1909 - 1910 Adult Schools



By this time around 1,900 Adult Schools had been founded in different parts of the country, often sponsored by the Quakers, providing classes covering historical, political, literary, and religious topics.

1913 Regulations for Junior Technical Schools in England and Wales



The number of these day schools (for 12-to-15/16-year-olds) was growing sufficiently in London and other parts of the country for them to be recognised by the Board of Education. The majority were housed within technical colleges, but some were connected to elementary schools.

1918 School Certificate and Higher School Certificate



Introduced by the Board of Education, the School Certificate was the first state-led public examination since the Science and Art Department's examinations and was aimed at the minority of pupils who remained in school until the age of 16. The Higher Certificate was for pupils applying for university places. Candidates were required to reach the 'pass' standard in five subjects and 'at credit' standard for the higher certificate. This set the framework for Ordinary (O Level) and Advanced (A Level) examinations introduced in 1951 and the General Certificate of Education (GCSE) introduced in 1986.

1918 Education (Fisher) Act



This contained two important related clauses: a) raising the school leaving age to 14 (not enacted until 1921); and b) LEAs to provide free and compulsory part-time continuing education up to the age of 18 for young people not in full-time education after 14 (only Rugby introduced this). At this time, Government Training Centres and Junior Instructional Centres ran courses in skilled trades and programmes to train unemployed women for domestic service.

1919 Burnham Committees on Teachers' Salaries



Named after their Chair, Viscount Burnham, these statutory committees covering elementary, secondary, and technical schools created what became known as the 'Silver Book' of salary scales.

1919

Final Report of the British Ministry of Reconstruction's Adult Education Committee



The committee's terms of reference were "To consider the provision for, and possibilities of, Adult Education (other than technical or vocational) in Great Britain, and to make recommendations." (p.1) The report stressed that adult education was essential for democratic citizenship (see Holford et.al. 2019 for more details).⁶

1921

Association of Principals in Technical Institutions (APTI)



1921

National Certificate Scheme



The Board of Education was concerned about the lack of examinations for technical and commercial students and particularly for those studying part-time. It introduced, in collaboration with a professional body (Institution of Mechanical Engineers), a two or three-year part-time course at a technical college leading to the award of an ordinary-level certificate (ONC), with a further one to two-year course (for which suitably qualified candidates had to be at least sixteen) leading to the higher certificate (HNC). The initial success of this development brought in other professional bodies as well as bodies representing the commercial sector.

1933

ATI conference considers need for training of technical teachers



A paper presented at the conference proposed that some of the larger technical colleges should provide part-time courses for teachers in their regions. The Board of Education considered three possible solutions: a) a Training College for Technical Teachers; b) using the teacher-training departments of universities; and c) establishing training departments in selected technical colleges. By 1938, the Board had agreed to fund courses, but the outbreak of war brought a stop to this initiative.

1938

Spens Report (Secondary Education with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools)



This Report recommended a selective tripartite school system: grammar schools, technical schools (to be developed from the Junior Technical, Art and Commercial Schools), and secondary modern schools. It also highlighted what it regarded as the better and more coordinated technical education found in Germany and France, especially in engineering.

1939

School leaving age raised and then postponed



The school leaving age was to have been raised to 15, as set out in the Education Act 1936, but was postponed due to the outbreak of the war.

⁶ Holford, J., Hodge, S., Milana, M., Waller, R. and Webb, S. (2019) 'An inseparable aspect of citizenship': Marking a centenary in 'universal and lifelong' adult education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 38(2): 127-131.

1943 Educational Reconstruction (White Paper)



Along with proposals for school reorganisation reflecting the Spens Report, the White Paper called for the provision of adequate and properly co-ordinated facilities for technical and adult education. An entire section was devoted to further education, a term which it stated was a 'wide one' to include students of all ages from school-leaving upwards and 'almost every variety of subject' (Ministry of Education, 1943, p.20). It argued for a comprehensive development of technical, arts, and commercial education alongside a flexible system of 'cultural and recreative' provision for young people and adults alike. It acknowledged that since FE provision was not a 'duty' of LEAs, little had been done to meet the demands of industry, and that standards were considerably lower than in other countries. It recognised the contributions of the technical colleges during the Second World War and called for greater capital investment to improve provision. It recommended an expansion of adult education including residential colleges.

1944 Education Act (The Butler Act)



This led to the Board of Education being replaced by the Ministry of Education and the gradual (and in some parts of the country partial) implementation of the tripartite system recommended in the Spens Report and the 1943 Norwood Report. LEAs were now charged with a 'duty' to provide full-time and part-time further education. This was to be partly achieved through the establishment of County Colleges for young people who were not in full-time education. In 1945, the Ministry published its Pamphlet Number 3, *Youth's Opportunity: Further Education in County Colleges*, setting out the aims of the proposed County Colleges, including learning about how to live a healthy life, vocational training, citizenship and sense of community, and the development of character. However, the proposed colleges never materialised.

1944 School leaving age raised to 15



1945 Higher Technological Education (The Percy Report)



The Percy Committee's Terms of Reference were to examine the contribution of universities and technical colleges to 'higher technological education' in England and Wales in the light of the needs of industry, and to make recommendations for 'maintaining appropriate collaboration between Universities and Technical Colleges in this field' (Percy 1945, p.3). It recommended the establishment of a National Council of Technology and Regional Advisory Councils alongside enabling a small number of technical colleges to offer technological courses at a standard comparable to university degrees. This latter recommendation was endorsed by the 1946 Barlow Report (Scientific Manpower).

1946 First dedicated FE and Technical Teacher Training Colleges open



In 1944, the report of the McNair Committee (Teachers and Youth Leaders) on the supply of teachers had recommended that post-war plans to develop teacher training should also include technical

teachers. The Ministry of Education accepted this and invited the Manchester Regional Advisory Council to explore setting up a permanent training college. In 1946, Bolton Technical College agreed to provide a suite of rooms for this purpose, followed by North Western Polytechnic in London, and Huddersfield in 1947. Students were awarded Certificates of Education by the universities in their respective regions (Manchester, London and Leeds). Following the 1956 White Paper on technical education (see below), a fourth college was opened in Wolverhampton in 1961.

1949 Institutional growth and expansion of day-release student numbers



In 1949, the Ministry of Education reported that, 'FE in this country is passing through a revolution' as more employers began releasing their employees to study during the day. (Ministry of Education 1949, 38).¹ By 1953, day-release students exceeded 300,000 for the first time (Ministry of Education 1954). This created considerable challenges for colleges due to the lack of adequate spaces to accommodate students. The number of institutions maintained by LEAs had also been increasing – by 1947 there were 680 'major establishments' of FE maintained by LEAs – double the 1938 total. Most LEAs also provided evening institutes offering a range of non-vocational learning in village halls and on school premises outside normal hours of attendance. Over 5000 evening institutes were in existence by 1946–1947 and more than 9000 were open by 1956.

1951 General Certificate in Education (GCE) 'O' levels 'A' levels replaced the School and Higher School Certificates



1955 Creation of the National Council for Technological Awards



This created the Diploma in Technology to equate with a university degree and the 'sandwich' course model which allowed split study between periods in the workplace and college.

1955 *Liberal Education in a Technical Age*



This report from the then National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE), with the support of the Association of Principals of Technical Institutions, called for a Liberal/General Studies element in FE programmes. It reflected post-war concerns about the expansion of science and technological development and the need to ensure that students in both higher and further education also continued to study the arts and humanities. This led to the introduction by the Ministry of Education in 1957 of Circular 323 (*Liberal Studies in Technical Colleges*) calling for the inclusion of 'Liberal Studies' in courses offered by technical and FE colleges to develop 'habits of reflection, independent study and free inquiry' (see Bailey and Unwin 2008; Simmons 2019). Many battles were fought, both within and outside colleges, to establish and maintain the case for Liberal/General Studies over the next 20 years. By the late 1970s, however, economic pressures and the rise in youth unemployment underpinned the push for a new approach in FE based on 'relevance', 'core skills' and 'learning objectives', and the battle was lost.

¹ Ministry of Education (1949) Education in 1948. London: HMSO.

1956

Technical Education (White Paper)



The Percy Report (1945) and the Barlow Report (1946) had drawn attention to the shortage and quality of technologists required in the light of post-war industrial growth, and noted that it was the technical colleges, rather than the universities, that were responding to the demand. The White Paper also stressed the need for more scientists, technologists, technicians, and craftsmen (defined specifically) and a better link between technical education with education in secondary schools. It painted a gloomy picture of the state of technical education and proposed concentrating advanced technological courses in eight new Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs). The first CAT was the Birmingham College of Advanced Technology. The White Paper proposed the reorganisation of technical education into 4 tiers:

- 1) Local Technical Colleges and new Colleges of Further Education – offering courses up to ONC.
- 2) Area Colleges – ONCs + some advanced work
- 3) Regional Colleges – some ONCs but primarily advanced level work
- 4) Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs) with university status.

Although at this time, what became known as 'advanced further education' was a small part of the work of colleges, many wanted to expand this activity. The debate about what would/should be classed as 'higher' or 'further' education and which institutions should deliver it is still being played out, most recently in the 2019 Augar Report on Post-16 Education and Funding ([see 1963 below](#)).

1957

FE staff training college established – Coombe Lodge, Bristol



This followed a recommendation in the Willis Jackson Report on the Supply and Training of Teachers for Technical Colleges.

1958

Training for Skill: Recruitment and Training of Young Workers in Industry (Carr Report)



This reaffirmed that:

- 1) Training was the sole responsibility of industry
- 2) The apprenticeship system should be retained and strengthened
- 3) Government should concentrate its efforts on the expansion of the nation's system of further education (the report was very critical of technical education provided at the secondary level)

It also recommended the creation of an Industrial Training Council, which was a tripartite body (comprising the British Employers Confederation, the Trades Union Congress, and representatives of the Boards of the nationalised industries). It existed to encourage more training for young people and to raise the overall quality of industrial training.

1959 College Governing Bodies - Ministry of Education Circular 7(59)



This circular stated that all colleges should have an independent governing body.

1959 Crowther Report



This identified weaknesses in the country's technical and vocational education and training provision and recommended raising the school leaving age to 16. It also proposed a 20-year programme to ensure that, by 1980, 50% of pupils stayed in full time education until 18, and reaffirmed the need to establish County Colleges.

1961 *Better Opportunities in Technical Education* (White Paper)



This dealt with various modifications to the schemes of part-time courses at lower and intermediate levels. By 1960, there were just under 300,000 students on part-time or block-release courses, just over 150,000 on evening-only courses, and 14,000 on full-time courses. The White Paper's most important proposals included:

- Preliminary courses in evening institutes be discontinued and students should start at a college immediately after leaving school
 - Improvement in selection procedures and colleges should pilot induction courses and tutorial methods
 - ONC courses should last two years instead of three
 - Courses for technicians, craftspeople and operatives should be reformed and extended in range and scope
 - New courses known as General courses (designated by G and the year of study e.g. G1, G2 etc.) that allowed progression on to Technician courses (T courses)
 - Development of more day-release provision and a reduction in students having to rely wholly on evening study
 - Sandwich and block release courses should be increasingly developed.
-

1961 Association of Liberal Education (ALE)



This was founded to promote liberal education in schools, colleges and universities. It held conferences for FE teachers and published a journal, Liberal Education.

1962 Industrial Training (White Paper)



Proposed a more central control for industrial training – shifting away from reliance on the voluntary activity of employers.

1963 Robbins Report on higher education



This landmark Report paved the way for the expansion of higher education in terms of student numbers and institutions. It said CATs should be able to apply for university status and that leading technical colleges should be able to move towards university status. It announced the establishment of five Special Institutions for Scientific and Technological Education and Research (SISTERS) and the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) to replace the National Council for Technological Awards to award degrees in a range of subjects.

1964 Industrial Training Act (L) (SM) (E)



This established the sector-based Industrial Training Boards (ITBs) and gave them the power to manage a compulsory sectoral training levy equivalent to 0.9% of the gross payroll of employers, three quarters of which was reimbursed to the businesses that carried out training. By 1966, 13 ITBs (this rose to 23) were established covering an estimated 7m workers. They contributed to a growth in apprenticeships and day-release students and to improvements in the quality of on-the-job training.

1964 Day Release for Young People Under 18 (Henniker – Heaton Report)



The Committee's main proposal was that a national target should be set of at least an additional 250,000 boys and girls obtaining release from employment for further education by 1969/70.

1964 Ministry of Education becomes the Department of Education and Science



1966 *A Plan for Polytechnics and Other Colleges* (White Paper)



In 1965, Anthony Crosland, Secretary of State for Education, criticised the Robbins Report's notion of further and technical colleges climbing a ladder towards achieving university status, arguing that they had a distinctive role in providing the industrial, vocational, and professional courses the country needed. The White Paper reflected this by announcing there would be no new universities for 10 years and that the government would establish 'a distinctive sector of higher education within the further education system to complement the universities and colleges of education'. The plan was to establish 28 (later 30) polytechnics formed from over 50 colleges across 31 local authorities. Yet advanced provision grew in what the White Paper had termed 'other further education colleges', so that by 1973 they had almost the same number of advanced students as the polytechnics.

1966 **Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs) given University Status**



1968 **The Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers (Donovan Commission)**



This called for reform of industrial training and qualifications and for apprenticeships to be based on 'objective standards'.

1969 **First 3 colleges designated as polytechnics become operational**



These were Hatfield, Sheffield, and Sunderland.

1969 **Open University founded**



1969 **Haslegrave Committee on Technician Courses and Examinations**



This called for the establishment of two new bodies – Technician Education Council (TEC) and Business Education Council (BEC) – charged with planning, co-ordinating and administering technical courses and examinations. TEC was set up in 1973 and BEC in 1974.

1970 **First tertiary college opened in Exeter**



Devon LEA abolished its school sixth forms and opened a single post-16 college in Exeter. By 1980, 15 tertiary colleges had opened throughout the country, but a national tertiary system was not pursued ([see 1980 below](#)).

1970 **College Governing Bodies – DES Circular 7/70**



This circular said that representatives of college staff should be members of governing bodies.

1972 ***Education: A Framework for Expansion* (White Paper)**



This declared that the previous ten years had seen 'a major expansion of the education service' and that this must continue for the next ten 'if education is to make a full contribution to the vitality of our society and our economy' (DES 1972:1). It listed five areas in need of special attention: nursery education, school building, staffing standards in schools, teacher training, and higher education. In 1973, the DES published Circular 7/73 Development of higher education in the non-university sector ([see 1973 below](#)).

1972 ***Training for the Future (White Paper)***



This focused on developing training programmes and standards for areas of employment not covered by the ITBs. It announced the Training Opportunities Programme (TOPs) for adults.

1972 **School leaving age raised to 16**



1973 **Review of non-vocational adult education in England and Wales (Russell Report)**



The Report called for a re-invigorated adult education service and proposed a framework for 'a comprehensive and varied service of adult education'. Local planning was to be left with the LEAs, but with national steer. The review advocated the creation of a Development Council for Adult Education to act as 'a national channel of consultation and advice'.

1973 **Careers Service formed**



Previously known as the Youth Employment Service, the Careers Service was charged with responsibility for providing careers information, advice and guidance for students in schools and colleges, and also for monitoring their progress within initial employment and providing support services to those at risk of making unsatisfactory transitions from learning to earning. The Careers Service was 'owned' and managed by LEAs.

1973 **Technician Education Council (TEC) formed**



This was charged with developing a unified system of higher-level technical education and its certification.

1973 **Employment and Training Act**



This established the **Manpower Services Commission (MSC)** and its two executive branches - the Employment and the Training Services Agencies. The Secretary of State for Employment was given the power to 'direct' the MSC. Responsibility for oversight of the ITBs, Skills Centres and Job Centres was handed to the MSC. The tripartite Commission had 10 members – a government appointed Chair, three representatives of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), three from the Trades Union Congress (TUC), two from local authorities and one from the education sector. It was charged with reducing unemployment, contributing to economic wellbeing via the supply of skilled labour, securing for workers the opportunities and services they needed to have a satisfying working life, and improving the quality of decisions about human resources and skills. The Act also weakened the autonomy of the ITBs and their ability to encourage more employers to invest in training by replacing the levy grant system with a levy grant exemption system so ITBs became more dependent on state funding. As the MSC's powers and budget grew, it began to have a big impact on the work-related programmes offered by FE colleges. There were concerns that the DES and the DE were competing for resources and influence.

1973

DES Circular 7/73 *Development of higher education in the non-university sector*



This instructed LEAs on the planning required for FE institutions offering advanced courses to contribute to meeting the government's plans for higher education expansion set out in the 1972 White Paper ([see 1972 above](#)).

1974

Business Education Council (BEC) formed



BEC was established to mirror the work of TEC and to rationalise sub-degree vocational education in FE, and HE colleges and polytechnics and to strengthen the connection to the needs of employment.

1975

BBC broadcasts 'On the Move' - Adult Literacy



This series of programmes, fronted by the actor Bob Hoskins, was a response to concerns about the number of adults with low literacy skills. A national helpline was set up to attract volunteer tutors – 75,000 by 1978.

1976

Prime Minister James Callaghan's speech at Ruskin College, Oxford



In this speech, Callaghan spoke about complaints from industry that young people were leaving schools poorly prepared for employment. He advocated stronger links between education and industry and for education to make a greater contribution towards the nation's economic performance. This speech marked the start of official interest in what was termed 'the new vocationalism' and helped entrench the view that youth unemployment stemmed from a 'skills deficit' rather than economic problems.

1976

Unified Vocational Preparation (UVP)



This programme was launched by the MSC and DES to provide a work-related curriculum for school leavers in jobs without formal training.

1976

Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit



This was announced in conjunction with the introduction of UVP with remit to review overlaps and gaps in provision in FE, and to carry out and encourage research on curriculum development. It was established in 1977 and renamed the Further Education Unit (FEU) in 1979.

1976

National Association for Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE)



This was formed by the amalgamation of the ATTI with the body representing staff in teachers training colleges, the Association of Teachers in Colleges, and Departments of Education (ATCDE).

1977

Young People and Work (Holland Report)



This MSC Report argued for a major expansion of youth training for unemployed 16-18-year-olds.

1977

Training for Skills (MSC)



This echoed the 1968 Donovan Commission by arguing training should be to 'agreed standards in appropriate skills' (p.20). Here we see arguments that would lead to competence-based qualifications in the 1980s.

1978

Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) launched



1979

Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit



This was set up at the National Extension College to produce teaching materials and pedagogic strategies for teaching literacy, numeracy and life skills, starting with an input to the delivery of YOP.

1979

Further Education Unit publishes *A Basis for Choice*



The FEU published *A Basis for Choice* setting out a curriculum for the 'new vocationalism'. FEU's mandate was to consider the whole range of full-time pre-employment courses (vocational preparation) then available in England and Wales. This was post-compulsory provision that did not aim at a specific vocational choice or pathway. The report highlighted a lack of coherence and recommended a curriculum structure within which such courses could be designed and delivered to increasing numbers of young people who wanted to stay in education beyond 16 but had not yet made a firm choice of career or job.

1980

Macfarlane Report – 'a tertiary moment'



Following an examination by a joint working party comprising the DES and the Council of LEAs on progress in the local rationalisation of post-16 education and the scale of future demand, the Macfarlane Report (1980) noted the educational and financial benefits of a tertiary approach. Under government pressure, however, the Report fell short of recommending a national tertiary system.

1981 *A New Training Initiative*



This MSC Consultative Document (followed by NTI: A Programme for Action published by the DE) called for youth and adult training programmes, competence-based rather than time-served apprenticeships, and for all young people under 18 to be engaged in education or training. It signalled the opening up of the training market to new providers, particularly in relation to programmes for the young unemployed.

1981 **Employment and Training Act**



This abolished the majority of ITBs, apart from the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) which still exist, along with the Film Industry Training Board set up in 2008. The ITBs were replaced by Non-Statutory Training Organisations (NSTOs) which, in turn, were replaced by Industry Training Organisations (ITOs), National Training Organisations (NTOs), and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

1981 **'Silver Book' conditions**



The 'Silver Book' conditions of employment for FE staff comprised: maximum working year of 38 weeks incorporating 36 weeks of teaching; working week limited to 30 hours; maximum weekly class contact time of 21 hours (thus an annual limit of 756); and a redundancy notice period of one year.

1982 **Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI)**



This was introduced by the MSC to 'attempt to increase the industrial relevance of what is taught in secondary schools, through the development of new forms of teacher training, curriculum organization, and assessment for the fourteen-eighteen age group' (Finegold and Soskice, 1988, p. 32). Much of the focus was on science, technology, design and IT skills.

1982 **Professional Industrial and Commercial Updating (Pickup)**



The DES established the Pickup programme to encourage colleges, polytechnics and universities to produce and sell a greater volume of self-funding vocational courses for adults in employment.

1983 **Youth Training Scheme (YTS)**



This was introduced by MSC to replace YOP. It was a one-year programme for 16- and 17-year-olds comprising work experience and off-the-job training. Mode A trainees tended to be based in private sector organisations, whilst Mode B trainees tended to be in voluntary and public sector organisations. The MSC organised Mode A funding through Managing Agencies (private companies or FE colleges). Some companies converted their existing apprenticeship programmes into YTS programmes. A network of 55 Accredited Training Centres was established to run in-service training for people with responsibility for YTS trainees, including supervisors, line managers, instructors, FE staff and youth service tutors.

1983 **Merger of BEC and TEC**



These two bodies came together to form BTEC (Business and Technician Education Council – later Business and Technology Education Council)

1984 ***Training for Jobs* (DES White Paper)**



This announced a new Adult Training Strategy, with the MSC given the responsibility and power to purchase a greater proportion of Non-Advanced FE (NAFE) from LEA-maintained colleges and other providers.

1985 **Audit Commission report – *Obtaining Better Value from Further Education***



The context for this influential report was a drive to reduce public sector costs, including in LEAs. The Audit Commission examined the management practices of 165 of the 550 FE colleges and polytechnics under LEA control. It raised concerns about poor marketing, high wastage rates, shortfalls in enrolments, and non-viable classes. The DES responded by developing the FE Management Information System (FEMIS), whilst LEAs developed their own alternatives.

1985 **Responsive College Project**



This MSC initiative was a direct result of the Audit Commission report (see above) and was set up to help FE colleges and their sponsoring LEAs find ways to better meet the needs of their local labour markets.

1985 ***Education and Training for Young People* (White Paper – Department of Employment/DES)**



This extended YTS from one to two years in duration and established the Review of Vocational Qualifications in England and Wales (MSC sponsored). A key task for the RVQ Working Group was to provide a plan for accrediting YTS trainees.

1985 **Review of Vocational Qualifications (RVQ) – the De Ville Working Group**



The RVQ's initial report in 1985 declared existing qualifications to be a 'jungle' and recommended the introduction of competence-based qualifications (for a detailed history of the work of the RVQ and the results of its recommendations see Raggatt and Williams 1999).

1985

Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE)



This was a one-year programme designed by the FEU for 16- and 17-year-olds to be delivered in schools and colleges. It covered employment skills, world-of-work, etc and was intended to act as a gateway to progression into continuing education, training and employment.

1985

Development of CATERBASE – precursor to NVQs



MSC enters into a contractual agreement with the then Hotel and Catering Board to develop CATERBASE – the first project to develop work-based assessment and accreditation within the hotel and catering industry for YTS.

1986

GCSEs introduced



General Certificates of Secondary Education replace O Levels and Certificates of Secondary Education (CSEs).

1986

Two-year YTS begins



This version of YTS doubled the overall length of the programme for participants, with 20 weeks off-the-job training for 16 year-olds and seven weeks for 17 year-olds.

1986

RVQ/DeVillie Working Group final report



This recommended the creation of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) and the adoption of a new system of competence-based qualifications – National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

1986

Working Together: Education and Training (DE/DES White Paper)



This announced the extension of the TVEI pilots into a national programme, adopted the main recommendations of the RVQ and heralded the creation of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ).

1986

Establishment of NCVQ



NCVQ's remit was to develop a framework of competence-based NVQs and 'rationalise' all of the country's vocational qualifications into this framework at five levels.

1986 New Occupational Standards Branch created at MSC



This was to be responsible for creating Industry Lead bodies (ILBs) to set the competencies and standards for NVQs (the ILBs were to be linked to existing employer bodies where possible).

1987 Formation of sector-based Lead Bodies



These were set up to design occupational standards for NVQs.

1987 *Managing Colleges Efficiently* (DES/Welsh Office report)



This introduced specific performance indicators for colleges such as the Staff-Student Ratio (SSR) and unit-based costing.

1987 Open College founded



This was seen as the FE equivalent to the Open University and was intended to increase the provision of open learning opportunities on a large scale, with some Open College programmes broadcast on Channel 4. It built on earlier work undertaken by the MSC's Open Tech Programme.

1988 MSC abolished



Following its abolition in April 1988, the MSC was replaced by the Training Commission which was then itself replaced by the Training Agency in October 1988, when trade union representatives on the TC refused to endorse its plans for a new training scheme for the adult unemployed (Employment Training). Many of the executive functions of the MSC were transferred into the Department of Employment (DE) to form the new Training, Enterprise and Employment Directorate (TEED).

1988 *Employment for the 1990s* (DE White Paper)



This established the network of Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), which in effect represented a localised alternative to the national MSC. The TECs' remit was to fund and administer YTS and Employment Training (for adults) and to support, with employers, locally organised training. Employers formed two-thirds of membership of each TEC, and the boundaries of the TECs were based on travel-to-work areas, with the result that in many cases they cut across LEA boundaries. YTS was renamed Youth Training and was placed under the management of the TECs. The white paper also signalled the creation of a National Training Task Force (NTTF). This was to superintend the creation of the TEC network.

1988 *Education Reform Act*



This used 'Further Education' as an umbrella term for: a) full and part-time post-compulsory education (including vocational, social, physical, and recreational training); and b) 'organized leisure-time occupation provided in connection with the provision of such education'. It clarified the disputed sections of the 1944 Act by changing the wording that LEAs should provide 'adequate' facilities for further education to 'securing' provision, but at the same time paved the way for incorporation in 1992 by giving the governing bodies of colleges more freedom to operate independently under what was termed the Local Management of Colleges (LMC). It also abolished LEAs' duty to provide Higher Education, but LEAs retained responsibility for the strategic planning and funding of certain categories of higher education in FE colleges, e.g. HNC and HND courses.

1989 *Towards a Skills Revolution – Confederation of British Industry (CBI)*



This influential CBI report advocated the use of NVQ-based 'World Class Targets' to raise the volumes of qualifications in the population (e.g. by 1995, most young people to attain NVQ Level 2) and the creation of a training market through the use of vouchers called Training Credits (to be managed by the TECs) for 16 and 17 year-old school leavers ('consumers') to 'purchase' vocational education and training courses from post-16 providers. It called for an end to employers offering jobs without training to young people. Initially piloted by 10 TECs, the Training Credits scheme was intended to become national by 1996 but it fizzled out.

1989 *Speech on FE by the Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker*



This was delivered to the Association of Colleges of FE and HE – and was entitled 'Further Education: A New Strategy'. Baker argued that FE was a 'big, big enterprise' and that colleges should dispel their 'dowdy image' and be more business-like.

1989 *Non-Advanced Further Education budget*



This passed from local to regional Training Agency control and LEAs were required to prepare 3-year rolling plans with approval of local TECs.

1990 *Youth Training*



YTS was replaced by Youth Training (YT) in April 1990. YT was a much more loosely specified programme of activity than the two-year YTS it replaced, with employers afforded more discretion in determining what kinds, levels and duration of training would be offered. The main stipulation from government was that trainees were to aim for an NVQ.

1991 ***Education and Training for the 21st Century (DES/DE)***



This announced new 'freedoms' for colleges and a 'triple-track' approach to qualifications based around A Levels, General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) and NVQs – with the new GNVQs piloted and then launched nationally in 1993.

1991 **National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets established**



This was set up by industry and commerce to develop the national targets first mooted in the CBI's 1988 *Towards a Skills Revolution* report.



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