



The Diploma – a view from the regulator

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Where the regulator comes in



- **Established by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009**
- **Independent of Ministers (past and present)**
- **Statutory objectives around:**
 - Standards
 - Confidence
 - Value for money
 - » ... in regulated qualifications (including the Diploma)



The Diploma: what Ofqual has done



- **Produced operating rules for the Diploma**
- **Recognised DABs and CABs**
- **Issued criteria for Diplomas in all the lines of learning**
- **Accredited qualifications against the criteria**
- **Overseen safe delivery in 2009 and 2010:**
 - Joint chairing (with DfE) of 'checkpoint' arrangements
 - Incident management
- **Made sure that Principal Learning and project qualifications were marked and graded properly and consistently**
 - Monitoring of marking, moderation, standardisation, awarding
 - Detailed analysis of assessment material and student work in 7 PL and project qualifications
 - Scrutiny of three Level 2 PL qualifications (published March 2010)
 - »Some issues around question papers and mark schemes



2nd Chief Regulator's report: principles for the longer-term development of the Diploma



- Diploma design and requirements must be understandable
- Detailed regulatory rules and requirements should be as simple as possible, and should allow for use of professional judgement
- Each Diploma component qualification should be valued in its own right
- Ofqual must be able to assure comparability
- Responsibilities for agencies involved in the Diploma should be clear
- The qualification should be value for money



Changed policy context



- **Ministerial preference for greater choice in qualifications**
 - But expect new policies on curriculum and qualifications in forthcoming White Paper
 - The 'English Baccalaureate'
- **Diploma no longer one of a limited number of approved 'routes' for state schools, or a future 'entitlement'**
- **Diploma not seen as a/the long-term qualification of choice**
- **Ofqual vision of a varied range of regulated qualifications**
 - Some credit-based, some modular, some linear, some portfolios
 - All required to show that standards are appropriate
 - All required to show value for money
- **SO the Diploma does not need to carry the weight of an entire curriculum in one qualification**
- **Opportunity to retain the best in the Diploma for the future**
- **BUT need to safeguard delivery of the current qualification in 2011**



Regulatory messages: the Diploma in 2010-11



- Responsibility to safeguard awards to current learners
- Build an evidence-based view of what has worked well
- Continue regulatory work (proactive and retro-active) to ensure that grading standards are consistent and fair in PL, project and functional skills
- Need clear messages to schools, colleges and new students considering starting Diploma courses
- Any revised design must be manageable without intensive/expensive central support
- Diploma components can combine with other qualifications to meet curricular needs
- Operating rules can/should be simplified



But don't

