

## CBI responds to the Curriculum and Assessment Review

The CBI welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Government's Curriculum and Assessment Review. Formal education impacts the smoothness of school to work transitions as well as the baseline skills businesses can develop when young people enter the workplace, meaning a fit-four-purpose education system is of critical importance to employers across the economy.

Consultation with our members, which includes both firms and training providers, resulted in the emergence of three key themes that we have focused on in our evidence to the review.

### Transferable skills are critical

- **Transferrable skills**, including communication and problem-solving, are of critical importance to businesses across the economy and **should be more embedded into the curriculum.**

Differences in roles and services mean different skills and subjects are valued by different employers. The main exception to this is transferrable skills, including communication, problem solving and critical-thinking, which member feedback has highlighted is of critical importance to businesses across the economy.

Concern was high for different types of transferrable skills in the CBI's most recent Employment Trends Survey. Confidence in young people's critical thinking and problem solving ranked particularly low (-47%).

Providers have tried to address these gaps in provision, but the main barrier is suggested to be the lack of flexibility providers have to steer away from prescribed syllabuses

Overall, the curriculum pre-16 needs to make sure that students also have the right foundation and transferable skills to be able to go on and learn the skills needed to support key growth areas.

### Embedding vocational subjects at an early age offers benefits

- There is a growing demand for skilled workers in technical and creative fields. **More support for vocational subjects** such as Design & technology **and embedding vocational subjects into the curriculum at an early age, can provide students with practical job, job-ready skills that are applicable to the workplace.**

Introducing vocational subjects early helps students explore different career paths and make informed decisions about their future. It provides a clearer understanding of the job market, and the skills required.

Business have also highlighted a pressing need to improve STEM education, and in turn create and support the necessary expertise to drive an innovation-led economy. This is of particular importance in a knowledge-based economy, such as the UK

### Businesses Advocate for enhanced Digital Skills in Curriculum and AI Integration in Assessments

- **Businesses are keen to continue to see growing emphasis on digital skills within the curriculum, but also would support the adoption of technology (and particularly AI) in assessments** to better prepare students for the modern workplace and provide more accurate and timely feedback in assessments.

Automating low-stakes assessment practices for teachers should be treated as a priority. Providers have commented positively on the potential for AI in their organisations, and those that have begun to embrace it have highlighted that providers have been able to dedicate more time to other tasks, such as lesson planning and offering support to students requiring additional help.

The CBI's Employment Trends Survey indicated Digital skills is an area that businesses were more confident than not that young people entering the workforce had a good baseline of, ready to be built upon in work (more than 50%). This trend is something to be built on as businesses still highlight the growing need for digital skills.

Overall greater flexibility and agility is needed. The skills requirements for many of the industrial strategy/growth sectors change constantly – businesses are keen to see changes to enable qualifications to be updated regularly, and for more flexible training to be available (e.g. modular, short courses) so firms can upskill the existing workforce as well as attract new talent.