

THE NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT OF SCHOOL PUPILS

DISCUSSION PAPER ON CURRICULUM, PROGRESSION AND RECOGNITION

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ABSTRACT

This draft discussion paper aims to take forward our thinking about the element of the research concerned with the possible formal recognition of school pupils' paid part-time employment. It has been written by John Hart, one of the members of the research team. At this stage it is being circulated to **advisory group members** only for their comment. We view this paper as a starting point and expect that the various models presented in it will be revised in the light of comments and as we obtain data from the other elements of the research.

CHAPTER ONE CURRICULUM AND PROGRESSION AND RECOGNITION – THE CONTEXT

This element of the research is concerned with (i) whether the learning associated with part-time work undertaken by school pupils could be linked to their formal schooling in some way to make use of their workplace learning and (ii) whether the outcomes of this learning could be recognised in some way.¹

Essentially this will be a feasibility study which will address key questions such as:

- is any recognition being given to part-time work at present?
- what is the potential for the development of forms of recognition?
- how could part-time work link with progression pathways?
- what is the rationale for seeking recognition for the learning associated with part-time work - who would benefit and how would they benefit?
- how desirable would such a development be from the perspective of the young people and other key stakeholders?
- what approaches might be taken and what are the implications of each?
- how might formal recognition be related to National Qualifications and to the SCQF?
- and how practicable would the arrangements for recognition be?
- who would resource and/or implement the recognition mechanisms?

The starting point for this work is the recommendation in *Determined to Succeed* that ‘opportunities for certification of appropriate part-time work as part of the National Qualifications Framework must be investigated so that it is clearly recognised by employers’.²

Some definitions

For the purposes of examining the extent of participation, the research will define ‘part-time work’ as ‘any paid employment including family- based work’. This will include such things as newspaper delivery jobs, shop-work, selling goods door-to-door, babysitting and office or factory work. As far as possible, account will also be taken of unpaid and voluntary work in this context. However, this does not address the issues of quality which will have to be examined in defining ‘appropriate’ part-time work.

The term *recognition* is used here to include both formal recognition of achievement through certification and other kinds of recognition. For example:

- the contribution which the learning associated with part-time work could make to learning in a subject might be recognised by being mentioned in an SQA Course

¹ The other element of the research is designed to obtain an in-depth picture of school pupils’ experience of part-time work and examine how this relates to their enterprising attitudes, skills and behaviours, to their academic attainment and to their career aspirations.

² *Determined to Succeed* - Section12, p40. A substantial number of young people undertake some kind of part-time paid or voluntary work whilst at school, but there are no participation figures available on a Scotland-wide basis. The figure of 40% for paid employment is given in *Determined to Succeed* but the Research Team view this as a conservative figure, particularly for senior school pupils. Some of the young people who are not in paid employment (and some who are) will also be involved in voluntary activities. The survey being conducted by the research will establish baseline figures for participation.

Arrangements document or a unit specification or a NAB (an assessment pack from the National Assessment Bank)

- the ways in which part-time work could be used to generate evidence for skills which are already part of units or courses could be recognised in guidelines on assessment
- other skills developed in part-time work could be developed into new National Units
- the potential role of part-time work in personal development could be recognised in paper or IT support for Progress File or Personal Learning Plans
- the contribution which part-time work could make to an individual's personal development could be brought out in a range of new ways which a young person could draw on in seeking to progress in education or into work

Each of these is further explored later in this paper where five draft models of recognition are set out.

In developing these models it has been assumed that it is important to ensure that the recognition will have national currency where this can be achieved. In line with the *Determined to Succeed* recommendation the research will investigate links to the National Qualifications Framework, but as indicated above will also go beyond this. However, where formal certification is envisaged, the default approach will be to seek to secure inclusion on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate.

In this paper, the term *Certification* is used to mean inclusion in the catalogue of awards made by an awarding body (normally, in this context, the SQA). On the other hand, the term *accreditation* is avoided as far as possible in this paper because it has so many meanings. One meaning covers the same ground as *certification*; a broader use would also include the formal awarding of credit for some outcome(s) of learning (usually this credit would count towards a credit-based qualification); and a third, more technical, use implies a process of quality assurance within a framework which gives a status or legitimacy to, for example, a qualification (thus, for example, a discrete part of SQA accredits all SVQs, qualifications which are offered by a range of awarding bodies). Where *accreditation* is used in the research it should be understood to accord with the everyday meaning of giving formal recognition through discrete certification.

Part-time work and education for work

Although this research will be breaking new ground by investigating part-time work among school pupils, the *recognition* element will be able to draw on work in the established area of Education for Work, where a lot of work has been done over the past five or so years. In doing so, however, clear distinctions will have to be drawn between these related areas. For example, one of the findings of the study of the gains from Education for Work undertaken by the National Centre: Education for Work and Enterprise in 2002 was as follows:

*It does appear that in some respects part-time work is a more powerful learning experience than work experience and this may be due to the greater responsibility given to part-time workers. In other areas work experience appears to provide more learning and this may be due partly to the types of jobs available to part-time workers and partly to the greater preparation and debriefing associated with structured work experience. Schools made little attempt to value and build on the learning gained from part-time work. Indeed some school staff involved in this research expressed anxiety about the impact on examination performance of too much part-time work.*³

³ *Interchange 74: Learning gains from Education for Work* (SEED 2002) – Page 8.

Possible models of recognition

In principle, there appear to be five models of recognition. These are differentiated by a number of factors including the following: the extent to which the school is involved, the extent to which the employer is involved; the nature of the link (if any) to the school curriculum; the nature of the link (if any) to employability or other progression; and whether or not they will lead to certification.

Model 1: recognition of part-time work through full embedding in the curriculum

In this model part-time work would be recognised as a context for school learning and assessment. This could be achieved through syllabus inserts and/or by ensuring that there were opportunities for learners to draw on their experience of part-time work in assessments. There would be no discrete certification.

Model 2: recognition that part-time work can develop generic transferable skills

In this model part-time work would be recognised as a context for the development and assessment of skills which complement the subject-based curriculum. These could either be skills which can already be assessed and certificated through national units (eg core skills) or skills which would require the development of new national units (eg other employability skills).

Model 3: formal recognition of the distinctive outcomes of part-time work

In this model part-time work would become a focus for discrete certification in which either the school or the employer or both could be involved. This would result in the generation of formal record of the outcomes of part-time employment within the Scottish Qualifications Certificate, possibly involving the SQA's new profiling facility.⁴

Model 4: recognition of the role of part-time work in personal planning

In this model, part-time work would be formally recognised as having a part to play in the learner's personal development planning. This would be captured in paper or IT-based support materials related to Progress File and/or Personal Learning Plans.

Model 5: recognition of the potential of part-time work to contribute to progression

This model focuses on the contribution which the experience of part-time work may make to the learner in future – ie to the next stages of education or to employment - rather than on possible links to concurrent school activities. Examples of the outputs envisaged here would include web-based self-assessment programmes for the learners, structured references for use by employers, or a combination of these.

In further developing the models, close attention will have to be paid to the quality of the experience of young people undertaking part-time work. At present there is a lack of data on matters such as the types of work, types of employer, frequency or duration of employment and so on. However, it would be reasonable to anticipate that not only will the work itself vary considerably in nature – eg the extent of the skills and degree of responsibility involved – but the opportunity for personal and/or vocational development or progression within the employment and the support available for those involved is also likely to be very different in both degree and kind. These factors will influence the learning which takes place and the recognition which can be given to it.

⁴ This is explained in section 8 below. The use of profiling would have to be investigated with SQA and supported by them. It might be possible to establish a pilot of this approach.

Also, in considering the viability of each model, three constraining factors need to be taken into account:

In table 1 below the models are shown as relating along two axes. One of these shows the nature of the links with the formal school curriculum and the other shows the extent to which the model is concerned with the formal assessment of outcomes. Whether they would be intended to lead to some form of certification is shown by an asterisk.

* associated with some form of certification

The current Curriculum Guidelines, *Curriculum Design for the Secondary Stage (Guidelines for Schools)*, were published by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (now Learning and Teaching Scotland) in 1999. These set out a flexible model of curriculum design for the senior years and this appears to offer a number of ways in which the learning associated with part-time work could be found a place. This principle of flexibility was reinforced by Circular 6/99 and a number of related developments and papers.

skills, attitudes and expectations necessary to prosper in a changing society and to encourage creativity and ambition’.

In pursuing some of the models set out above, the research will need to try to establish how far this flexibility is being used or is likely to be used in schools.

Current Curriculum Guidelines – the outcomes of work-related learning

A number of documents have already been identified for further investigation. These include *How good is our school at education-industry links?* (SCCC 1997), *Education for work in schools – HMI Report* (Scottish Executive 2000), *Work experience: a guide to promoting quality* (SCCC1999), *Managing for success in Education for Work – a Guide* (SCCC 1999), *Education for work: Education-industry links in Scotland - A national framework*, *Education for Work and the secondary curriculum – making connections* (LTS 2002) and *Career Education in Scotland – a national framework* (LTS 2001). The Centre for Studies in Enterprise, Career Development and Work has also produced materials to back up the findings of the HMI report. Some of these documents are being reviewed and links will be established to Learning and Teaching Scotland to investigate this. As indicated above, these documents will need to be used with care since they are **not** directly concerned with part-time work. However, they may offer a basis for reflecting on the role which schools might reasonably take in the recognition of the learning associated with part-time work. For example, the national frameworks for Education for Work and for Career Education offer a kind of curriculum structure based on detailed outcomes which may be useful in identifying the outcomes of part-time work.⁵

Model 1: recognition of part-time work through full embedding in the curriculum

It is likely that this model already operates in some classrooms on an ad hoc basis and the question to be addressed is how far this could sensibly be formalised and whether formalising it would offer significant advantages.

It is envisaged that this form of recognition could be achieved in some subjects by means of syllabus inserts and/or by ensuring that there were opportunities in formal assessments – NABs and external assessments – for learners to draw on their experience of part-time work. There would be no discrete certification.

Most young people and parents will, with whatever reservations, be likely to support an approach in which progress is mainly measured in subjects. They know that Highers count when seeking employment and high grades count when seeking admission to higher

⁵ The Education for Work Framework states, for example, that by 18 young people should be able to:

- search career information using information and communication technology (ICT)
- provide appropriate CV and job application, drawing on a record of achievement
- give some examples of self-employment and entrepreneurial opportunities
- display good self-awareness and confidence at interview
- show evidence of good levels of punctuality and attendance
- describe employer and employee responsibilities for health and safety
- explain legislation on equal opportunities and offer examples of appropriate behaviour
- describe the main functions of trade unions
- explain different forms of taxation on earned income
- display a responsible attitude to health and safety
- show a broad appreciation of a range of equal opportunities issues, eg rights of disabled people
- show an appreciation of the concerns of trade unions and employer organisations
- explain changes in working patterns such as home working, electronic office, part-time employment’

education. Scottish Group Awards, which offer some possibilities for creating more broadly based packages, have had low uptake, being seen as adding a distracting complexity to the simpler subject-based curriculum.

This approach would be likely to face the following problems, however:

- a) The areas of syllabus concerned would have to be optional since not all pupils would have the relevant experience and not all of those who did would choose to use it.
- b) The work required to create materials would require the commitment of significant resources both for initial development and, in some cases, for periodic updating – given that the materials would be optional this might not be an attractive prospect to SEED or be seen as a high priority by LTS (assuming that LTS would have to develop or in some way approve the materials).
- c) SQA might not be warm to the prospect of revising courses – and the consequent republication of documents – so soon after the big review of National Courses.
- d) Teachers might also be opposed to further change and disinclined to undertake the options if they were seen as a further burden.

Model 2: recognition that part-time work can develop generic transferable skills

The *Curriculum Guidelines* do give formal acknowledgement to cross-cutting aspects of learning - the dispositions, skills, capabilities, knowledge and ideas, and essential experiences which should be ‘incorporated within all areas, courses and activities’ and should be seen as ‘providing a basis for personal and social development’. They also note that ‘individual curricula may be enhanced through additional courses and activities designed by schools, work experience and special programmes arranged with further education colleges and employers’.⁶

The two main definitions of cross-cutting skills relevant to this study are probably the national core skills, as defined in the Core Skills Framework, and the employability skills identified by CBI in their publication *Re-thinking Scotland's Skills Agenda*. The core skills, which were initially developed by Scotvec in 1992 based on a set of skills set out in the CBI's *Towards a skills revolution*, are tied closely to the level descriptors of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. They are Communication, Numeracy, IT, Problem Solving and Working with Others. The CBI's employability skills are:

- values and attitudes compatible with work opportunities
- basic skills (ie literacy and numeracy)
- ‘the defined core skills’
- customer service skills
- up-to-date job-specific skills and knowledge
- career management skills

In this model, guidance or support materials could be developed to support the use of part-time work as a basis for developing evidence of the acquisition of skills of this kind. If new skills were to be certificated, the support of the SQA would be required.

⁶ 2nd revised edition, Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (1999) – Appendix 6, p55.

In practice, however, since little real attention has been paid to date to this aspect of the curriculum, as represented by core skills, it is uncertain that this approach would generate the support necessary for successful implementation.

Model 3: formal recognition of the distinctive outcomes of part-time work

Since the Curriculum Guidelines were drafted, the provision available to senior school pupils has been revised in a number of ways and consultations have been undertaken or are planned in a number of areas including the Scottish Qualifications Certificate, Scottish Group Awards and Core Skills. Last year SQA agreed that, in addition to the provision listed above, SQA would develop and issue more profiles. A profile has been defined as a record of achievement in the form of a series of outcomes or outcome-like statements which capture the main features of a specified learning activity or programme. Profiles would be intended to record learning achievements which do not easily meet the requirements of units and courses and might have a role in tailoring and/or broadening out the curriculum. They would not be subject to the same quality assurance processes as a qualification and candidates would not necessarily have to go through the same rigorous assessment processes as those associated with a course or a unit.

In this model part-time work would become a focus for discrete certification. This would provide a formal record of the outcomes of part-time employment through the Scottish Qualifications Certificate. Different mode of delivery, administration and assessment could be developed giving for the school or the employer or both. Again, the support of the SQA would be required to explore this option fully.

The viability of this model would be linked to the demands made on the school and/or the employer by the certification process – essentially these would have to be very light-touch. This is the most clearly learner-centred of the models which link to the curriculum, in that the certification process would certainly have to have the full support of the young person and would possibly have to be initiated by the young person.

Model 4: recognition of the role of part-time work in personal planning

A recent development which is of significance to this study is the work undertaken by the Scottish Executive on Personal Learning Plans (PLPs). These are currently being piloted with a view to rolling them out for all secondary pupils over the next few years. PLPs will be of particular importance in ensuring that momentum is sustained throughout middle and senior stages as pupils are being given increasing responsibility for their own study and for the management of their time. In so far as part-time work is found to contribute to the development of the skills associated with self-management, it should have a role to play here and this could be supported by appropriate paper-based or IT-based materials linked to PLPs.

In the meantime Progress File is still available and the materials for S5-S6 concentrates on 'helping pupils to choose future pathways towards employment, further education, higher education, training or a combination of these using action planning. Topics covered include Core Skills, work related activities, self-presentation, personal statements and applications, financial responsibilities and budgeting (mainly post-school).' ⁷

These developments would give a central recognition of learning through part-time employment which would not be linked to certification.

Model 5: recognition of the potential of part-time work to contribute to progression

This is the most innovative model being proposed and this section is therefore the most indicative at this stage.

In this model the recognition of part-time work would be separated from both the school and the curriculum. In some ways this might be seen as missing an opportunity, but it might have advantages in terms of motivation. Depending how it was to be set up, it might also turn out to be most closely related to the skills which part-time work is assumed to develop.

The form it might take includes self-assessment on-line, some kind of structured evaluation or reference, or a combination of such approaches and as indicated above, it might be initiated, supported and/or operated by any or all of:

- the young person
- the employer
- some other agent such as a Careers Scotland adviser

One aim of this approach would be to try to ensure that young people with experience of part-time work could be made more aware of its potential value and better able to articulate what they have gained. There would clearly be value in getting employers more involved in this sort of way, but it is not certain at this stage how realistic this aim would be.

⁷ *Personal Learning Plans: A Framework for Implementation*, Scottish Executive Education Department (September 2000) – Annex on Progress File.

CHAPTER TWO CONCLUSIONS

This preliminary paper raises a number of issues about the intention of the review group behind *Determined to succeed*, the attitudes of young people to the purport of this research, the appropriateness of involving schools – even indirectly – in the part-time work undertaken by pupils, and the capacity and willingness of schools and employers to be involved in recognising the learning associated with part-time work. It also makes the point that many of the ways of developing the recommendation of the review group would make considerable demands on national agencies such as SQA, Learning and Teaching Scotland and Careers Scotland, some of which could be additional to their current remits.

At this stage it is at least clear that there are a number of lines which the research can explore, although it may be unlikely that all of them will prove viable. The data which will be generated by the research will provide an important basis for judging the feasibility of the different models.