



ECDL dropped from 2018 league tables – 12 months earlier than planned

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Bruce Nightingale
Teacher (11-18)



Mar 29 2017, 11:02

ECDL dropped from 2018 league tables – 12 months earlier than planned. For more detail, read the Schoolsweek [article at this link](#).

"The Department for Education has been approached for comment.

A spokesperson has previously said: "We want pupils to choose qualifications that are in their best interests and help them reach their full potential.

'We conducted a comprehensive review of the ECDL qualification, which concluded that it does not demonstrate the characteristics of a Technical Award.'

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Patrick O'Brien
Curriculum lead for Computing



Mar 29 2017, 11:20

Wow that's a bit unfair for people who had planned this in for next years GCSE groups.

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Bobby Grewal
Head of Computing / ICT



Mar 29 2017, 11:47

We are slowly being forced to change subject specialism. Disappointing news!

Any ideas for replacements? 1 hour a week?

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Andrew Morbey
Teacher (11-18)



Mar 29 2017, 13:47

If you are doing this on 1 hour there are no other qualifications that will cut it. We do CIDA as a full blown GCSE option and have said to SLT if we want to do ICT it needs to be on the same pegging as any other option and then let the kids choose it!

Our path of travel over the past 11 years: OCR GCSE ICT 4 hours per fortnight whole of KS4 » (brief spell with DIDA!) » OCR Nationals 4 hours per fortnight whole of KS4 » BCS Digital creator 2 hours per fortnight (non tripple scientists) » OCR GCSE Short course ICT 2 hours per fortnight (non tripple scientists)& GCSE computer science 5 hours per » Edexcel GCSE ICT and Computer science GCSE both as options 5 hours per fortnight » CIDA Edexcel and Computer science GCSE both as options 5 hours per fortnight.

What a joke!

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Dominic Connor
IT Professional
Journalist, Headhunter



Mar 29 2017, 14:03

Obviously the short notice is not welcome, but from what I read on CAS ECDL is not widely respected as "equivalent" to a GCSE ?

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Ian Gover
Master Teacher
IT Professional



Mar 30 2017, 07:06

The reality is that 'schools' will not gain performance points for years 9 and 10 as they cannot claim them until year 11. Learners will still have a useful qualification.

Timetables will now set about removing 'ECDL' lessons from next years provision and schools will look at staffing in Computing departments.

Schools will save money on the qualification.

PiXL and others will look at other ways of gaming the system using igcse English as a second language etc.

Computing departments in general will be released from the moral dilemma of teaching skills against computational thinking.

And rainbows will appear all over the world....

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Paul Powell
Hub Leader
Teacher (11-16)
2 more



Mar 30 2017, 07:35

The really bad thing is that some schools will have registered whole cohorts, bought courseware and exams (there are bulk discounts). If the DfE could worry more about the timing of decisions it would sure save stress and money.

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Paul Scott



Mar 30 2017, 09:36

We have paid for year 10 whole cohort and have stuck to the GLH. We are absolutely fuming because unfortunately schools who don't deliver this qualification properly have affected our year 10 cohort who have achieved some cracking results doing it properly. We started teaching the skills when they were in Year 8, exam style prep in Year 9, then 2 exams year 10 then it would have been 2 in year 11. Not happy!! Our school value core ICT in KS4 but this is becoming extremely difficult to get a balance of teaching time, realistic outcomes for students and lack of qualifications to choose from.

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Eric Knutsen
Teacher (11-18)
HE Academic
Assistant Headteacher



Mar 30 2017, 10:08

My favourite qualification that has emerged is from TLM Ingots. See <https://theingots.org/community/performance>.

For the most part, if your students have produced work in various units, chances are that the qualification may be used to accredit it.

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Richard Cambridge
Teacher (11-16)



Mar 31 2017, 06:39

I completely understand the anger and frustration, and that is entirely down to the timing of the announcement. A large chunk of money will have been spent on entering the students, and it is not fair that the government move the goalposts half way through a course. Having said that, for the schools using it JUST for performance table points they are not half way through the course since some of them deliver it in 3 days.

We have a small, low-ability group taking ECDL, for whom it is entirely appropriate. Other schools who are gaming the system are the ones whom are going to suffer most. We are still going to run the qualification, and maybe continue with Year 9 if there are students who would benefit.

3 people like this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Jed Blackburn
Teacher (11-18)



Mar 31 2017, 09:27

@Eric Knutsen - TLM Level 2 has been removed from the 2019 performance table (only Level 1 counts). Found out yesterday and now not sure what to do.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2019-performance-tables-technical-and-vocational-qualifications>

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Chris Butter
Teacher (11-18)



Mar 31 2017, 10:04

I'm not really surprised that many schools have moved to ECDL. After all, when the list of eligible qualifications for progress 8 reduced, schools had less options so were funneled into it and the increase in numbers taking the course is used to argue against it's existence.

The real problem, is that if we want all students of all abilities to have some computing experience alongside a digital literacy competency, there is no suitable certification available (IMHO). Thus it won't get the valuable timetable allocation it needs.

With qualifications being removed before suitable replacements are available, departments have or will be destroyed and the rebuilding process will take valuable time; there is certainly no guarantee they will be better in their re-incarcerations.

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Paul Taylor
IT Professional



Mar 31 2017, 10:10

I appreciate that it makes planning very challenging and don't shoot the messenger, but the 2019 list will be updated in May and August. If you look at most AOs websites, including BCS (ECDL), they are re-developing for a September target (the June submission deadline). The impression I get from various meetings and reading the government's Digital Strategy, is that IT qualifications were too office based and I suppose that ECDL "proved" that these skills can be acquired in as little as 3 days. The Digital Strategy claims that these skills can be acquired from "local libraries". We shall see, given that these are all being closed.

We could have appealed and modified our existing L2, but decided to re-develop it in light of the requirements of various government messages about digital skills and security. We submitted this new qualification in March so should hear something in the May update. The new qualification summary is [here](#). The detailed guidance is in the [handbook](#). We feel this qualification retains some of the flexibility of the previous qualification, but offers some new opportunities. We are also partnering with a UK based ISP to offer a free ePortfolio space for students to complete the project part of the qualification.

No guarantees in this topsy turvy world, but we think it is a good re-boot of our well liked L2.

Declaration of interest: I'm resource developer at TLM an Ofqual regulated awarding organisation.

2 people like this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Paul Powell
Hub Leader
Teacher (11-16)
2 more



Mar 31 2017, 10:21

re-incarcerations of qualifications - typo or Freudian slip?

1 person likes this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Carol O' Connor
Teacher Trainer



Mar 31 2017, 15:52

I am also fuming we have used the correct number of guided learning hours if not more for our year ten and eleven cohorts, we now have to complete the ECDL course for our year ten this year, and look for something else to fill the gap. Our students have worked really hard over four hours a week, and have done some sterling work, and it is not fair that schools who have done it correctly should be penalized for those who abused the system, it is going to be extremely difficult to find a course for our year ten going into year eleven that will be linked to the performance table, I am so incensed about the whole thing, like I say we did it correctly, and took time to create resources, buy into the electronic material. I am in the process of looking at the specification for the BCS Level 1/2 Technical Award in Digital Literacy Skills in terms of students learning the office applications i do not think you can do it in three days. Anyone else know what they are going to do to replace ECDL.

1 person likes this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Adrian Mee
HE Academic
Teacher Trainer
a.mee@ucl.ac.uk



Apr 05 2017, 09:42

I think it's really important that we consider why we teach something and why it's worth learning.

Bruce started the thread with:

"ECDL dropped from 2018 league tables "

The qualification hasn't been abolished or withdrawn. Pupils will still be awarded the ECDL and it will still represent the same skills and capabilities it did before.

Will be they be bothered if their qualification doesn't count towards school league tables? Will and employer care or think less of the qualification.

If they are pulled off the course to do something else then that is not the fault of government but of the school? If the course was thought valuable ...how does the announcement alter its value (other than in league table points)?

If it was offered to pupils as a useful thing to learn and something which would give them usable knowledge then is anything lost by this announcement? If the qualification was chosen and offered just because it contributed to league tablesthen the new chief of OFSTED is absolutely right! We do need to look at why schools are designing their curriculum in a particular way.

5 people like this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Rob Easton
Master Teacher
Hub Leader
2 more



Apr 05 2017, 12:24

This is great news!

DIDA and GNVQ and their weighting in league tables put ICT in its coffin; it was just a long and painful death. ECDL in league tables is just adding nails.

If your doing ECDL because you see it as valuable skills for your students then you will not be upset. If you or your head teacher are just seeing it as a grade production machine then it serves you right!

At the beginning of the academic year, we had all our internal targets increased (even year 11) and when I questioned this I was told that which was due to the number of schools entering lots of students for ECDL and its distortion to overall added value figures. We need to increase targets to address this.

Hopefully, when the dust settles everyone will share my view on this.

1 person likes this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Rob Easton
Master Teacher

Apr 05 2017, 12:37

I would add that I do feel sorry for those staff that have been instructed by head teachers to deliver ECDL. The wasted hours of your time, is the only reason for understandable outrage.

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Hub Leader
2 mo



Mike Davis
Teacher (11-18)
mike@mike-davis.net



Apr 05 2017, 12:57

Our Y10 group will be carrying on. It's worth something to them even if it isn't to the school.

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Brian Lockwood
Teacher (11-18)
IT Professional
Self employed ex-teacher



Apr 06 2017, 08:55

While there is probably a place in schools for training schemes, ECDL is one of a suite of qualifications that confuse competence with comprehension. ECDL shows (a very basic) competence in productivity apps whilst contributing little to the comprehension of the student to very much about the world in general.

The question then arises as to whether we should be putting whole year groups through relatively low skill trade qualifications due to market pressure from OFQUAL or whoever.

When I went to University, most Universities that I looked at still required a language and I think that Medicine still required Latin (I may be wrong about that.)

Once these requirements disappeared there was a knock on effect in schools. In fact, the gender gap in some subjects such as Physics compared to Chemistry and Biology is likely to be the result of market forces.

At least that is my theory rather than the kind of peculiar selective unconscious bias that the IOP seems to think is applying to Physics teachers and yet appears to be largely absent in the case of Chemistry and Biology Teachers.

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Daniel Lee
Teacher (11-18)



Apr 06 2017, 09:40

So many people keep saying things to the effect of "when is the government going to realise that people need IT skills". However, if it can be done in less than a week then industry need to be providing this training.

The ECDL has become a laughing stock - a quick fix to school league tables. The cost of entering students for the qualification is ridiculous and this money can be better spent in other areas. Most students don't want or respect it because they see it as a total joke.

6 people like this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Adrian Mee
HE Academic
Teacher Trainer
a.mee@ucl.ac.uk



Apr 06 2017, 10:17

Brian - I think you are absolutely right. This is not about a "bad" qualification. It is about the use and abuse of different qualifications.

A little time back I wrote this from contributions made by CAS members.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299445444_Digital_curriculum_trends_A_case-study_of_the_European_Computer_Driving_Licence

I've tried to be clear and told BCS that in my view the ECDL is a perfectly good course if used in the context for which it was created.

If I was given 20 16-18 year olds with few qualifications and told "do something which will be useful to them to get then ready for employment".....ECDL would probably be one of the things I'd choose. It's systematic, useful and applicable skills and it's a certificate to take to an interview, Absolutely nothing wrong with that.

There was (arguably) nothing wrong with the old GNVQ etc. The problem was that it was abused as OFSTED noted...the problem was NOT a bad curriculum (PoS)...it was a bad curriculum implemented by schools where huge numbers of pupils were put though "unsuitable qualifications".

Soit's the fault of schools...i.e. headteachers? Not really! Hands up, if wearing the head teachers shoes ..you would NOT do exactly the same. (My hand is NOT up). I'd feel that what I was doing was "not ideal".....but with schools living and dying by the league tables.....what real choice do they have?

So who's "fault" is it? I'd offer "it's this government"...AND "the last government" and indeed every government since 1988 which has been obsessed by rating, scoring, grading and labelling schools based on "measurable outcomes". They become aware of a problem.....so they tinker with the system...again...and again and again. Each time...schools relearn how to game the system.

Is this system really leading to a good quality education for all children.....or is it actually preventing schools from trying to provide it? Do parents really look at the league tables and say "Oh look Bogsworth Academy has 99.9% A* to CThat's a great big number and I don't care what Jonny will actually learn...as long as he gets above a C in it".

This lunacy will continue until there is political will, courage and imagination to kick the addiction to metrics and look at quality in a broader sense.

6 people like this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Dave Russell
Teacher (11-16)
IT Professional
daveanson1974@googlemail.com



Apr 06 2017, 12:01

@Daniel said, "industry need to be providing this training". I suppose it depends what you mean by industry. Individual companies or schemes such as LearnDirect? Either way I propose that we would end up in a stalemate.

Of course, in principle, companies should provide the training or allow time for training. Although this rarely happens, at least in my 12 years commercial experience, where I can count one hand how many times I've been given company time to do training. If companies are left to provide training, this will not be consistent among good and bad companies; Many companies will neither fund or spare time (time is money) for employees to do standard skills training in something that will benefit their competitors, when the employee leaves or fail their probation period.

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Adrian Mee
HE Academic
Teacher Trainer
a.mee@ucl.ac.uk



Apr 06 2017, 12:27

Daniel / Dave. Yes - in work training and the relationship between education and training is a fundamental weakness in the UK.

It has not always been so!! At 16 I was an apprentice with the GPO!! They funded me with money and time to draw up logic gate networks and truth tables on one day and then into work the following day to actually put it all into practice!.....I had a proportion of my digital training here!!! :-)) https://ichef-1.bbci.co.uk/news/624/media/images/75472000/jpg/_75472096_bp2.jpg I seem to remember the bar most of all!!

I dread to think how much money they spent on our training.

Today, as you say, the view of many politicians and "business leaders" that the role of the school is to turn out "trained" labour ready to go. It isn't! We have much to learn from other countries.

1 person likes this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Keith Wyles
Teacher (11-18)
Retired
wylesk@shlc.org.uk



Apr 06 2017, 13:35

@Adrian But perhaps some students should be allowed to opt out of schools and its becoming "trained labour" at an earlier age - like 14.

Agree with you about school achievements stats being too much of a driving force. Remember being told some time ago that the government also knew this, but parents now expect the data, so they can't stop. So perhaps it is the electorate that are at fault. Another issue is that education doesn't change over a short timescale, but elections do. Perhaps there needs to be a mechanism that allows politicians to change education, but over a much longer timescale and with less ability to tinker.

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Jim Darby

Apr 06 2017, 13:35

It has to be said that "back in the day" the GPO apprenticeships were (correctly) very highly regarded. It did, however, last years mostly because it was pretty much the equivalent of a degree level of education (but more practically focused).

I would agree that schools teaching basic digital literacy is reasonable. As I understand it the ECDL

IT Professional
STEMNet Ambassador



I would argue that schools teaching basic digital literacy is reasonable. As I understand it the ECDL seems to provide that.

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Apr 06 2017, 17:36



Jude Slama
Teacher (11-18)



I agree that ECDL was used like GNVQ and DIDA to prop up school results in too many cases.

On another note, I'm furious that the OCR Cambridge Nationals haven't made the 2019 cut...in fact, the government doesn't seem to want us to teach ICT as very few of the vocational qualifications on the 2019 list are ICT...thinking I might start teaching a different subject...at the moment I teach ICT, Computing and Business and there seems to be more vocational options for Business then for ICT for 2019!

1 person likes this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Dominic Connor
IT Professional
Journalist, Headhunter



Apr 07 2017, 11:09

The demographics of CAS are necessarily those who've succeeded in the education system and more precisely those who weren't amongst the victims of "inclusive" education like the CSE which screwed with the lives of quite literally millions of working class kids.

Inter alia that leads to a bizarrely romanticized view of education before the Thatcher/Baker reforms. Go look at the numbers of girls doing any sort of STEM before we finally got our first STEM grad prime minister. Research the complaints of the NUT that league tables were unfair because they expected them to teach maths at girls schools. Overt and explicit racism was the norm, including telling kids what subjects they may or may not do based on their race and gender. Now that a black girl passing physics has the same number of points as a posh white boy "coincidentally" their numbers have gone up, not enough, but they were going down before. My own wife was told not to study physics but biology and I quote "because it's more caring".

Before Thatcher, most kids left with nothing that even proved basic literacy and numeracy and working class boys had "apprenticeships" foisted on them. One reason so many such people vote... [show more](#)

1 person likes this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



James Davenport
Hub Leader
HE Academic



Apr 07 2017, 12:48

Alas, overt and explicit sexism is still common. One of my research students reports that her younger sister was told earlier this year at school not to do Computing GCSE because "girls don't like computing". Said research student is part-time, working for Cray and just installed a £3M system at the Met Office.

1 person likes this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)



Adrian Mee
HE Academic
Teacher Trainer
a.mee@ucl.ac.uk



Apr 07 2017, 19:25

I remember one recent secretary of state suggesting he did not believe schools would shape their curriculum around the league tables! I challenge ministers to a little experiment. Introduce 2 new GCSEs in basket weaving and uni-cycling giving each the status of a "double award".....and then sit back and see what happens. I've already bought shares in United unicycles and Wicker-R-U's.

A) Leagues tables v B) let teachers choose their own definition of "success"?

We have had 'A' since 1988. We had 'B' 1944 to 1988. Neither extreme has worked.

Evaluation is one of the most nuanced and sophisticated of skills and if done skillfully with balance and reason it provides the foundations for creation.

connoisseurship and quantification are reconcilable perspectives. But data driven cranked out league tables are so much easier and cheaper to produce, easier to manipulate to get the results showing "we have done a great job"...."but the other party did a bad job".

When every school must be outstanding and we cannot be satisfied with satisfactory.....have we strayed into Wonderland.....or are we merely seeing what happens with a system which has been manipulated, gamed, twisted and spun until it is meaningless and ready for an evaluation system produced by adults for adults.

2 people like this. [Like](#) [Report concern](#)

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