



Department
for Education

NEWSLETTER ON QUALIFICATIONS REFORM AT LEVEL 3 AND BELOW March 2024

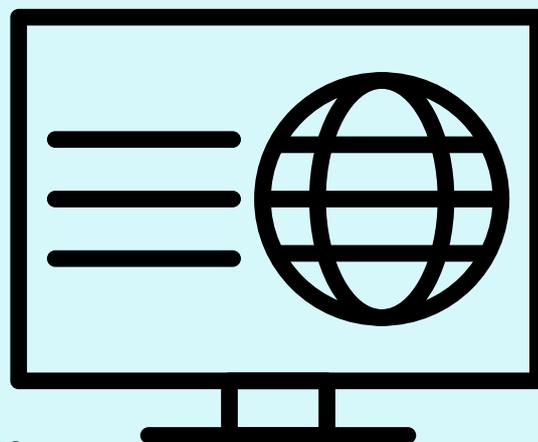


Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter. In this newsletter we hope to keep you updated on everything Qualifications reform.

We have resources available for you to access on our new web pages, which are now live here [link to web pages](#)

These web pages include;

- Updates to guidance and documents
- An overview of the reforms
- A useful glossary of terms
- Timelines
- Our publications and key documents
- Curriculum planning and support documents
- FAQs
- Events
- A way to contact us directly.



We have listened to the sector and will continue to update the website with information and guidance to support all providers throughout the reforms process.

Please contact us via our email address if you have any further ideas about how we can support you in your setting.

Our email address is qualifications.reform@education.gov.uk



March 2024

PSEQS Consultation

We have now launched our consultation on the new national standards for Personal, Social and Employability Qualifications (PSEQs).

These qualifications serve a diverse range of students and employers, so to ensure they meet these needs, we have drafted the new national standards with expert panels including educators, employers, student group and subject experts. We are now sharing these standards and supporting proposals to gather wider views to ensure the final standards promote the best possible outcomes for students.

To respond to the consultations please click here [link](#). The consultation will close on 20th May 2024 at 4pm, after which we will review replies and issue our own response in the summer.

We will be holding several events to explain the proposals and hear your views. Please check here for the latest information [link](#).

If you would like any further information, please contact us at

By email: PSEQs.Consultation@education.gov.uk

By post:

Post-16 Qualifications Review Team
Department for Education
2 St Pauls Place, 125 Norfolk Street
Sheffield S1 2JF

By phone: 0370 000 2288



Events

DfE Qualifications
Reform webinars

Tuesday 9th April 16.00–
16.30 Introduction to
Qualification Reform
Website
Sign up here [link](#)

Tuesday 16th April 16.00–
16.30 Introduction to
Qualification Reform
Website
Sign up here [link](#)

L2 qualifications submitted for funding approval August 2025

We have published our post-16 level 2 qualifications submitted for funding approval from 2025 on GOV.UK. This data highlights the subject areas and routes for level 2 qualifications submitted by awarding organisations for public funding approval from 1 August 2025. It is intended as a guide to support education providers in planning their curriculum. [Link](#)



Changes to funding approval and Nesting Qualifications

FOR ACTION

Currently awarding organisations allow nested qualifications so that learners can top up their previous studies in a subject, to achieve the next qualification in the group e.g. from a Certificate to an Extended Certificate or Diploma. As part of the government's qualifications reforms at level 3 and below, funding approval for qualifications that overlap with wave 1 and 2 T Levels will be withdrawn from 1 August 2024. 'Nesting' may be something you need to be aware of when planning your curriculum as this change could have an impact on learners being able to achieve the larger qualification.

From 2024, qualifications will start to have public funding removed and so if you are planning to move a student on to an extended certificate or diploma the qualifications you are planning to use in the future may no longer be funded. If you are planning to change the qualifications, then for those qualifications being defunded you will need to do this before 31st July.

Please use this link below to check the qualifications that are on the overlap list and will have funding removed in 2024 and please contact your Awarding Organisation if you are unsure or need further clarification.

KEY DATES

Qualifications that overlap with T Levels - GOV.UK
(www.gov.uk)

Phases

Phase 1: Complete– Funding approval removed from around 5,500 qualifications with sustained low or no publicly funded enrolments in England.

Phase 2: Current phase– This phase will be complete by August 2025 and will see funding removed from qualifications which overlap with T Levels.

Phase 3: Future phase– Will see a new funding approvals process, which all qualifications will go through to be funded from 2025.

Cycles

Cycle 1– Level 3 qualifications that have been submitted by exam boards are currently going through the approval process and lists of the approved qualifications will be published in May 2024 for first teach August 2025.

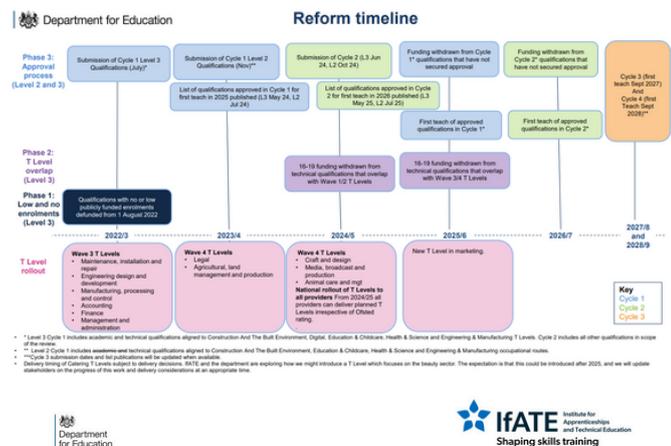
Cycle 1– Level 2 qualifications approved will be published in July 2024 for first teach August 2025.

Longer term– 2025 onwards

Cycle 2– For Level 3 the cycle 2 approvals will be considered over 2024–25 and the lists of approved qualifications will be published May 2025 for first teach August 2026.

Cycle 2– The Level 2 qualifications approved in cycle 2 will be published in July 2025 for first teach August 2025.

[Link to timeline download on website](#)



Timeline for post-16 Education Reform

Timeline for post-16 Education Reform	Year
The three phases of post-16 reform	1
L3 Small Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) and Technical Qualifications available for first teach in 2025	4
L2 Technical Qualifications available for first teach in 2025	5
L3 Large and Small Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) available for first teach in 2026	6
L3 Technical Qualifications available for first teach in 2026	7
L2 Technical Qualifications available for first teach in 2026	8
L2 Non-Technical Qualifications available for first teach in 2026	9
L3 Technical Qualifications available for first teach in 2027	10
L3 Non-Technical Qualifications available for first teach in 2027	11





Every month we will share one of our FAQs- if there is something you have a question about then please get in touch.

One subject we get asked about a lot are the rules of combination for AAQs. Can you explain the rules of combination regarding AAQs with other qualifications?

Where a student wants to take academic subjects at level 3, it is our clear expectation that an academic study programme should include at least 2 A levels wherever possible and appropriate. This is based on the evidence regarding progression from A levels into higher education when compared to applied general qualifications. The evidence shows that students taking study programmes consisting entirely of non-A level qualifications in order to progress to higher education generally experience worse outcomes at university. We want to ensure that all students taking these qualifications benefit from the improved outcomes that a mixed study programme which includes A levels can bring.

The government recognises, however, that multiple A levels will not always be possible in all cases and providers will have the flexibility, as they do now, to design study programmes within the funding rules which are tailored to the needs of individual students. For example, providers may wish to design study programmes containing 1 A level and 2 small Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) where this would benefit students on a part-time study programme, students with lower prior attainment a level 2, students with special educational needs and disabilities or those with exceptional circumstances. Study programmes comprised of a mixture of A levels, AAQs and technical specialist qualifications will not be permitted, and specific funding rules will prevent this.

However, a study programme containing a technical occupational entry qualification combined with small AAQs or A levels to form mixed technical programmes at level 3 will be permitted and may also benefit some students. The technical qualification must form the core of such a mixed technical study programme. Such a mixed technical study programme must also provide coherent learning in a clear individual learning plan and the outcome must be technical competence and progression to skilled employment. Study programmes solely comprised of AAQs or a combination of AAQs and AGQs will not be permitted, and specific funding rules will prevent this. We want to ensure that all students taking these qualifications benefit from the improved outcomes that a mixed study programme which includes A levels can bring. We will provide more information on rules of combination once we have published the list of approved qualifications in May 2024.

Gathering college insights to inform the future curriculum.

March 2024



In late 2023 and early 2024, IfATE and Gatsby, with support from Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB), hosted a set of events which brought colleges and awarding bodies together to discuss specific areas of the future curriculum. These events were born out of discussions at the DfE and IfATE hosted post-16 reform events held earlier in 2023 and were designed to ensure that colleges had the opportunity to feed their insights into the reform process.

The subject areas selected for discussion were adult care, travel & tourism, and uniformed protective services. Around eight college curriculum leads attended each event, engaging in a day of discussions exploring topics such as student destinations, local employer skills needs, and how a future technical offer might meet student and employer requirements. These were highly valuable discussions, and we thank those who attended for sharing their insights to inform the process of reform.

The output of each event took the form of an insights document which was agreed with attendees before being sent to FAB for circulation amongst their member awarding bodies. The expectation is that awarding bodies use the insights collected to help shape their prospective offers in these subject areas.

As events addressed the key areas of concern, highlighted through the post-16 reform events, no further events are planned at this time. However, where there is demand for such discussions to facilitate college input, we are happy to consider putting on additional sessions in this format. If you have a subject area you think would benefit from specific exploration, please contact the Student and Sector Readiness team qualifications.reform@education.gov.uk.

Karl Anderson, Head of Qualification Policy at IfATE said of the events: 'It was a privilege to chair discussions with such engaged groups of subject experts, united by the shared purpose of delivering great outcomes for students. It was excellent to see that, through discussions on each day, the future technical curriculum started to become clearer; with this curriculum being seen by attendees to be of benefit to the students of tomorrow'.



ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES

Association of Colleges said of the events 'These workshops provided a valuable opportunity for college teachers and managers to feed into the qualification development process. Utilising the subject, teaching, learning and assessment knowledge of college experts will help ensure that new technical qualifications meet the needs of students as well as employers.'



qualifications.reform@education.gov.uk