



NEWSLETTER ON POST 16 QUALIFICATIONS REFORM AT LEVEL 3 AND BELOW May 2024

Welcome to a special edition of our qualifications reform newsletter.


Qualifications approved and funded at level 3 for first teach in 2025

We have **published a list** of new alternative academic qualifications (AAQs) and technical occupational qualifications (TOs) approved at level 3 in cycle 1 as part of the post-16 reforms. These qualifications have been approved for funding and available for first teach from August 2025.

Latest
News

The **final list of qualifications** that will have public funding removed because they do not meet the new requirements has also been published. The last day for publicly funded enrolments on these qualifications will be 31st July 2025. Learners who started their qualifications on or before 31st July 2025 will continue to be funded until they complete their qualification.

We are also reforming level 2 so that there will be high quality qualifications available to those who need to spend longer studying at level 2 in order to progress to level 3, and for those who wish to exit into level 2 occupations. We will announce the first of the new level 2 reformed qualifications in July.

 A levels and T Levels are at the heart of level 3 study programmes. We are providing alternatives to these qualifications where they are necessary, high quality and have a clear purpose. The rationale for the reforms is based on 3 principles – simplifying a complex system that is difficult to navigate, creating a new, world-class technical offer that meets the needs of employers, and improving progression outcomes into skilled employment or further study.

Over 30,000 students have started a T Level since 2020, including over 16,000 students who started a T Level course in September 2023 – almost as many students as in the first three cohorts combined and an increase of almost 60% from September 2022. We are pleased to see this growth and remain confident that numbers will continue to grow as more providers deliver T Levels.

The new qualifications landscape will look different from how it looks now. T Levels are large qualifications covering a range of areas, and are offered by a single provider. This contrasts with the current system where lots of providers can offer a qualification in a given area.

At this stage in the process, we would not expect a significant number of technical qualifications to be approved for 16 to 19 funding, because this cycle of approvals deals only with T Level areas and we will not fund technical qualifications in T Level areas. For 16 to 18, we are funding technical qualifications relating to occupational standards in routes which are not included in the T Level and additional specialist qualifications. However, there are more technical qualifications funded for adults because they do not study T Levels. There are also small alternative academic qualifications that can be studied as part of mixed programmes.

Call to
Action

Over the next few weeks and months we will be publishing a series of guidance documents to support you in preparing for qualification reforms. We are actively developing these resources based on your feedback, so please get in touch with any questions you may have. You can get in touch by using our email address: qualification.reforms@education.gov.uk

HELP AND SUPPORT

Guidance document support information

Using the new level 3 qualifications in the reformed landscape from 2025

Questions and answers linked to the publication of the first list of approved qualifications at level 3 in May 2024

This document answers questions we anticipate ESFA funded providers may have in response to the publication of the list of new level 3 alternative academic qualifications (AAQs) and the list of technical qualifications (TQs) that have been approved for public funding from 1 August 2025

We have already published a Post-16 Qualifications Reform FAQs as part of our Information and support resources for qualifications reform. These include questions about qualifications reform more widely.

CONTACT US



Sign-up to our mailing list by using this form: [Qualifications reform mailing list](#).



Contact us directly: QUALIFICATIONS.Reform@education.gov.uk



One page qualifications reform overview



This document is a really handy guide for people who are new to learning about the reforms and want to understand the context. You can download it from the webspace and it can also be printed for sharing with others.

Titling of new qualifications

We have asked awarding organisations to adopt new naming requirements for newly approved Alternative Academic Qualifications at level 3. You may, therefore, see some changes to the titles of AAQs between now and July, as AOs amend them.



HANDY LINK

In March we launched a dedicated 'one-stop-shop' guide to Government's qualifications reform on GOV.UK [Link to webspace](#). This has been developed with the help of colleagues working in the FE sector and straightforwardly explains the reforms, key dates, and sources of practical help and support.

HELP AND SUPPORT



Occupational Maps

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) occupational maps show where technical education can lead and are an excellent support tool for curriculum development and for students to develop their skills and plan their careers. Find out more about how to use the occupational maps on the [IfATE website](#).

Awarding Organisations

Awarding organisations will publish information on the new qualifications that have been approved for funding on their websites.

Examples of materials that awarding organisations may have available include:

- Qualifications available that have been approved by subject.
- Specifications and examples of sample assessment materials.
- FAQs about their qualifications and what are they offering.
- Curriculum mapping guides and switching guides.
- Transition and delivery guides by subject.

Awarding organisations may also share teaching and assessment materials and career professional development opportunities (CPD), but these may follow later in the year.

We encourage you to contact awarding organisations directly if you have any questions about their qualifications.



Pathway information

As part of our work to support providers we hope to develop some more detailed example pathways and study programmes to show how the qualifications we have approved could be used by students to support their progression to higher education and employment.

Coming soon.....our study programmes combinations guidance will include some illustrations of combinations as a first step, and you will also find **examples** of these illustrated on our webspace.



The Gatsby Charitable Foundation



The Gatsby Charitable Foundation is committed to improving and promoting high-quality technical education. As part of on-going programmes, Gatsby is funding a project to support new collaborative curriculum planning networks, each working with a small group of colleges and facilitated by experienced FE curriculum professionals. The focus will be shaped by the network members to support practical next steps for curriculum reform implementation, development, and innovation.

Any college that is interested in finding out more can contact Sue Clarke, Project Manager (Qualifications Reform) on sue.clarke@gatsby.org.uk

Webinar

RULES OF COMBINATION WEBINAR WITH Q&A

[REGISTER
HERE](#)

[Register for a webinar](#) on the 'Rules of combination' with live Q&A for FE and school leaders and teachers at 16.00 on 25th June 2024.

Hear an update to the rules of combination and explore pathways that students can study at Level 3 in future.

HELP AND SUPPORT

CLOSER LOOK INTO OUR WEBSITE AND SUPPORT MATERIALS



[Link to website.](#)



The space is divided into 9 sections

- Post 16 Qualifications reform introduction
- Post 16 Qualifications reform overview
- Post 16 Qualifications reform over the next few years
- Qualifications reform publications and key documents
- Curriculum Planning and support
- Glossary of terms
- Other resources, further support and events
- Qualifications reform news and updates
- FAQs

Introduction

This page provides an introduction to the information and a link to the sign up form to our mailing list.

Qualifications reform overview

This page includes information about the case for reform, what we are doing, how we will do it, who we work with and the future of post 16 education.

Qualifications reform over the next few years

This section is a timeline of post 16 qualifications reform over the next few years. There are links to some support documents that are available to download including a [full visual timeline](#) and a [subject and qualification timeline](#).

Qualifications reform publications and key documents

This section lists all of our publications and key documents relating to post 16 qualifications reform.

Curriculum planning and support

This area points to further support for you throughout the reforms. There are links to IfATE Occupational Maps and guidance to the future landscape. More support materials will be added as they become available.

Glossary of terms

You can read and download a handy glossary of terms here.

Other resources, support and events

This section has lots of handy links to documents and our partners.

Qualifications reform news and updates

You can read and download all of our published newsletters and updates in this space.

FAQs

We produced an FAQ document in collaboration with the Further Education Commissioner team at the Department for Education.

