



Department
for Education

Level 3 Pathways in Digital

Digital T Levels



Digital T Levels

Digital Production, Design and Development T Level (Titled Digital Software Development from September 2025): this T Level focuses on software development and programming. Learners design, implement, and test software applications, covering topics like coding, algorithms, and data structures. It's ideal for those aiming for careers in software engineering or application development.

Digital Support Services T Level (Titled Digital Support and Security from September 2025): this T Level prepares learners to provide IT support and services within organisations. It covers areas such as network infrastructure, cybersecurity, and system maintenance. Graduates often pursue roles like IT technician or network engineer.

Digital Business Services T Level (Titled Digital Data Analytics from September 2025): this course combines digital technology with business operations. Learners are taught about data analysis, digital project management, and business process improvement. It's suited for those interested in roles like data analyst or digital transformation consultant.

Industry-relevant skills: because they are designed with input from employers, ensuring learners gain the specific digital skills needed in the workplace, such as programming, cybersecurity, and data analysis.

Balanced learning: T Levels combine classroom learning (80%) with a substantial industry placement (20%), giving learners both theoretical knowledge and real-world experience.

Digital T Levels are beneficial for learners for several key reasons:

Clear progression pathways: they provide strong routes into employment, higher apprenticeships, or university, offering flexibility depending on a learner's goals.
• **Recognised qualification:** as a level 3 qualification (equivalent to 3 A levels), they carry weight with universities and employers.

Workplace readiness: The extended industry placement helps learners develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving- these skills are essential for digital careers.



Focus on emerging tech: the curriculum is often updated to reflect the fast-evolving digital sector, helping learners stay current with trends like AI, cloud computing, and software development.





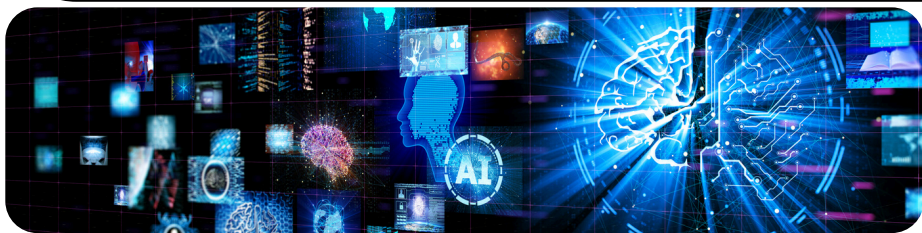
Myth Busting!

Myth: There aren't many options in Digital T Levels.

Myth busted: there are three focused Digital pathways (Software Development, Support & Security, and Data Analytics), each tailored to high-demand sectors, as careers in the digital sector grow. Each pathway is broad enough to cover multiple roles within the digital sector.

- Digital Production, Design and Development T Level (Titled Digital Software Development from September 2025) could lead to a career as a software engineer, app developer, games designer, web developer
- Digital Support Services T Level (Titled Digital Support and Security from September 2025) could lead to a career as an IT technician, network engineer or cybersecurity analyst.
- Digital Business Services T Level (Titled Digital Data Analytics from September 2025) could lead to a career as a data analyst, digital marketer or business intelligence specialist.

These T Levels also include tailored modules that allow learners to explore niche areas (e.g., user experience, coding languages, or cloud computing), giving flexibility within the course. Digital T Level learners also gain transferable skills in problem-solving, logic, and digital tools supporting learners' adaptability. These are cutting-edge areas that A levels and many Applied General qualifications (AGQs) don't cover in the same depth.



Myth: Employers don't know or care about Digital T Levels.

Myth busted: T Levels are excellent qualifications, based on employer-led occupational standards, with the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers need.

Digital T Levels were developed with input from over 250 employers, including digital industry leaders like IBM who supported curriculum design for Digital Production, Fujitsu who contributed to the structure of industry placements and Cisco who were involved in shaping cybersecurity and networking content. This input ensures that the curriculum matches real workplace needs.

Employers offer real industry placements—thousands of UK businesses are offering T Level placements to learners. For example, BT Group offers placements in software and IT support roles; Capgemini partners with education providers to host digital T Level learners on tech projects and PwC has welcomed Digital T Level learners into their digital and technology services teams. These aren't token placements, learners can gain hands-on experience with professional tools and live projects. T Levels address a skills shortage: there is a well-documented shortage of digital skills in the UK. Employers are actively looking for talent that T Level learners can provide in fields like data analysis, cloud computing, cybersecurity and software testing... are all growing fast and T Levels are targeted directly at these gaps.

Employers also use T Levels to build their future workforce and value T Level learners as a pipeline of job-ready candidates. Many businesses see placements as a chance to identify and nurture future apprentices or employees, reduce recruitment costs and upskill local talent in digital technologies.

Myth: Young people and colleges can find it hard to arrange an industry placement for Digital T Levels.

Myth Busted: thanks to updates to industry placements in January 2025, arranging a Digital T Level is more flexible and accessible. The new hybrid and simulated placement options along with broader placement choices and route-level flexibility, supported by employer guidance, mean there are more viable routes than ever. Employers are not required to host learners on-site every day, up to half the placement can be virtual, and supported on-site options exist within education hubs.

What's new and why it helps:

- Up to 50% remote work allowed for Digital T Level learners—previously just 20%
- Route-level placements now permitted, meaning placements can span across broader digital roles.
- Simulated or group-based work on-site at colleges or skills hubs can make up to one-third of placement hours, ideal where live access isn't feasible

These updates respond directly to learner and employer feedback, making arranging a Digital T Level placement is now even more flexible, supportive, and learner centred.



Exploring Alternative pathways in Digital

While T Levels offer a strong mix of academic knowledge and real-world experience, alternative pathways can offer a range of options for learners, each designed to support learners with different needs, aspirations, and starting points.

T Level Foundation Year

The T Level Foundation Year provides a high-quality route onto T Levels for learners who would benefit from the additional study time and preparation before they start their T Level. It includes a diagnostic period to identify the learner's development, learning and support needs and help them make an informed choice about their chosen T Level route.



Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs)

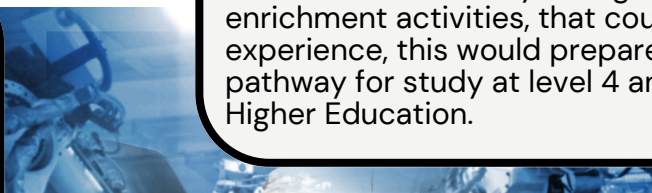
Learners have the option to pursue Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) in this area. AAQs are available for first teach from 2025, and there may be more approved for 2026 onwards too.

Designed primarily to support entry into Higher Education, AAQs also provide a strong foundation to continue onto apprenticeships and work. They are academic qualifications that contain space for applied learning, and they provide scope for a variety of assessment methods, further meeting the individual needs of learners.

There are 6 small AAQs available in the Digital route. Learners could study a small AAQ in Data Analytics alongside A levels in subjects such as Maths and Computer Science, to lead to a career as a data analyst. Together with enrichment activities, that could include work experience, this would prepare learners for a pathway for study at level 4 and above in Higher Education.

Apprenticeships: Hands-on learning

For learners seeking practical, workplace-based training, apprenticeships offer a valuable alternative. Apprenticeships, from technical IT support to software engineering, provide practical experience while earning a qualification, aligning with both industry needs and individual career goals.



Reformed Technical Qualifications

Newly reformed technical qualifications are also available to be taught for the first time from 1 August 2025 the Digital route.

Technical Occupational Entry qualifications deliver competence against an occupational standard and these qualifications aim to support a learner to enter, or to progress within, a role.

There are 4 reformed Technical Qualifications available for adults in the Digital route for first teach 1 August 2025.

