



Department  
for Education

# Post-16 qualifications reform at level 3 and below newsletter

September 2025

## This Month's Actions & Updates

We've pulled together everything you need to stay ahead of the changes to post-16 qualifications this September. Take a look, click through, and make sure you're fully prepared.

### RESPOND TO OUR SURVEY- HELP US HELP YOU – QUICK SURVEY ON QUALIFICATIONS REFORM.

We'd love to hear from you! Our [Qualifications Reform Evaluation Survey](#) is now open, and your feedback will help us understand what you know about qualifications reform and whether our support materials are meeting your needs.

Your input will make a real difference – it will guide us in improving the resources and support we provide so that they're of the most use. The survey only takes a few minutes, but your responses will help to shape what we can offer in the future. Please also feel free to share the link with your colleagues.

Please complete the survey by 1 October 2025: [Survey Link](#)

### REVIEW NEWLY APPROVED QUALIFICATIONS

Newly approved level 3 Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) and reformed Technical Qualifications that were published on the [list of qualifications approved for funding](#) on Wednesday 10 September. We assessed AAQs and reformed Technical Qualifications against Department for Education's (DfE) [new funding approval criteria](#), in the following routes: Health and Science (including Care), Construction and the Built Environment, Digital and Education and Early Years.

These qualifications will be available for first teach from 1 August 2026.



### PERFORMANCE TABLES UPDATE

The DfE has been carefully reviewing how and when Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) will be included in 16-18 performance measures. We remain committed to ensuring that all AAQs are reflected in published performance data. Previously, we planned to begin publishing AAQ outcomes from the 2027-28 academic year, meaning only learners starting from September 2026 would be included.

However, following feedback from the sector, we will now include AAQs in performance measures starting from the 2026-27 academic year. This change means that outcomes from all AAQ learners, including those who begin their studies in 2025-26, will be included in the published performance tables. The updated list can be found [here](#).

### AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFICATIONS

You may have been using [Find a learning aim](#) to check whether a specific qualification is available for teaching in the 2026/27 academic year. We can confirm that the majority of non-reformed level 3 qualifications are currently approved until 31 July 2026, or their operational end date if earlier.

The review of Qualifications Reform announced the defunding of some qualifications from August 2026, information can be found [here](#).

All eligible qualifications will have their funding approval extended until 31 July 2027, or until their operational end date if earlier, when we confirm the 'rollover' of our funded offers into 2026-2027. We currently expect this to complete by 31 January 2026.

We're committed to keeping things clear and consistent, and we'll continue to provide updates and guidance.



## SUPPORT VIDEOS

**Get up to speed on what's changing with quick explainers:**

**WATCH** our new support videos to learn more about what's changing in September 2025, including explainers on [Alternative Academic Qualifications \(AAQs\)](#) and [reformed Technical Qualifications](#).

You can also watch our "[What Qualifications Reform means to me](#)" video featuring Cat Marin from Activate Learning. In this video, Cat explains the thinking behind the reforms, the opportunities for innovation, and how Activate Learning are preparing learners to progress, whichever path they choose.



## QUALIFICATIONS REFORM TOOLKIT

**Clear, ready-to-use resources to help you explain AAQs and reformed Technical Qualifications to staff, learners, parents and employers.**

**DOWNLOAD** our updated provider toolkit to help you to explain Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) and reformed Technical Qualifications as a new post-16 option to staff members, learners, parents and employers.

## HOT TOPIC: ROUTE-BY-ROUTE RESOURCES

**We've developed detailed resources for each route to help you dive deeper: DOWNLOAD and READ them today to ensure you're ready to support learners.**

- [Health and Science](#)
- [Education and Early Years](#)
- [Construction and the Built Environment](#)
- [Digital](#)
- [Engineering and Manufacturing](#)



**CONTACT US**

**VISIT** our provider webpages.

**STAY INFORMED** by signing up to our mailing list and share this link with colleagues so that they are up-to-date with news and information about qualifications reform.

**CONTACT US** via our email to make suggestions about what you would like to see in future newsletters.