

What are AAQs?

Studying an Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQ) from September 2025 may be a great option for prospective students – and one you may not yet be aware of.

Read on to learn more about AAQs and understand what they offer for applicants to your institution.

AAQs are new qualifications available from 1 August 2025. They offer an academic qualification with elements of applied learning in a range of subjects at Level 3 and attract UCAS tariff points.

AAQs have been designed primarily to support progression into higher education but can also prepare learners for apprenticeships and employment. They can be studied after GCSEs, and small AAQs range in size from 150–450 guided learning hours (GLH) (for comparison, an A level is 360 GLH).

At least 60% of the content covered by an AAQ is mandatory, with some AAQs offering optional modules in addition to the core content. AAQs also use a variety of assessment methods.

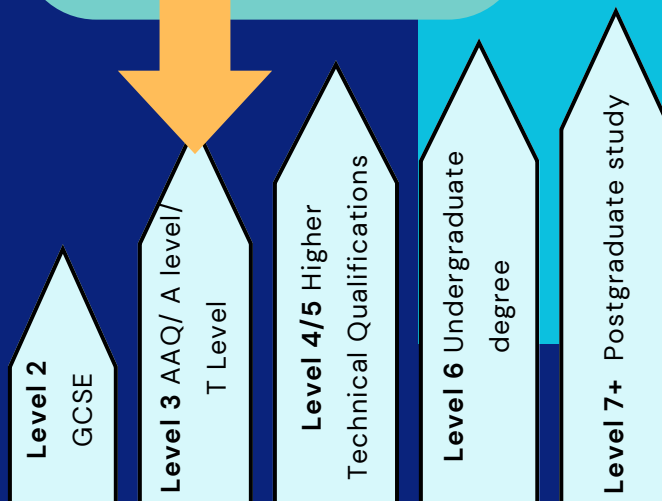
**AVAILABLE
FROM
AUGUST
2025**



Department
for Education

Where do AAQs fit?

AAQs are level 3 qualifications, designed to be studied alongside A levels.



What can you do with an AAQ?

After studying an AAQ, a student could progress to higher education, an apprenticeship or into employment.

SUBJECTS AVAILABLE:

Building and construction
Child development and well-being
Engineering
Health & social care
ICT practitioners
Science

Guide to Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) for Higher Education Institutions

What do AAQs offer?

Varied study options: AAQs are available in subjects not usually covered by A levels, such as Engineering, Medical and Applied Science, and Health and Social Care, providing a broader range of study areas.

Preparation for Higher Education: AAQs are designed to support progression to higher-level academic study, equipping learners with the knowledge and skills needed for university courses.

Balance of academic and applied learning: AAQs combine applied learning with traditional academic study and offer varied assessment methods to meet different learner needs.

Flexible study combinations: Students can study small AAQs alongside A levels, allowing for a more personalised educational pathway.

[Visit National Careers Service for careers advice and guidance.](#)