



Department
for Education

Qualifications Reform Toolkit

Supporting providers and careers development professionals to explain Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) and Reformed Technical Qualifications as a new post-16 option to staff members, learners, parents, employers and others interested in post-16 qualifications reform.

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About the toolkit

In 2024, The Department for Education published newly reformed [level 2](#) and [level 3](#) post-16 qualifications that are available to teach from September 2025.

This resource has been created to help education and training providers, and careers development professionals, explain Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) and Reformed Technical Qualifications as new post-16 options to staff members, learners, parents and employers.

We ask that you use the assets and resources as intended – to help improve understanding of these qualifications – and for no other purpose.

[Click here for a welcome from our AI hosts.](#)

Why use reformed qualifications?

Newly reformed qualifications will be available from 1 August 2025, alongside A levels, T Levels and other level 2 and 3 qualifications. The new qualifications include Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) and reformed Technical Qualifications.

They offer:

Focused learning: AAQs offer academic qualifications with applied learning, ensuring learners gain practical skills alongside theoretical knowledge.

Progression to Higher Education: AAQs are designed to support progression to related higher education courses, backed by universities. Both AAQs and reformed Technical Qualifications attract UCAS tariff points, so they can be used for university applications.

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

Industry-relevant skills: reformed Technical Qualifications are based on employer-designed standards, providing the knowledge, skills, and behaviours employers say are needed for specific occupations.

Learners can be confident in high quality qualifications that will support progression to higher education or into skilled employment.

T Levels

T Levels are high-quality qualifications which provide young people with a firm foundation for their future, designed with employers to meet rigorous standards. They are substantial, with longer teaching hours, and include an industry placement element giving work experience. Students spend around 80% of their time in a learning environment and 20% on the placement. One T Level is roughly equivalent in size to 3 A levels and T Levels are assigned UCAS points to support progression to higher education. T Levels are designed to prepare students for skilled employment, apprenticeships and higher education. Where learners wish to study a large qualification in a T Level route, the T Level should be the main option for them.

T Levels are made up of 3 separate components:

- a core component (400 to 600 guided learning hours) that assesses underpinning knowledge, understanding and core skills relevant to the occupations covered by the T Level
- one or more occupational specialist components (more than 600 guided learning hours) focussed on assessing occupationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to an occupation within the relevant T Level pathway
- a high-quality industry placement focussed on developing practical and technical skills required for the profession or trade that the student is studying for (minimum of 315 hours)

Find out more about [support provided](#) if you are planning to deliver T Levels in your setting.

To use with teachers, parents/carers and learners: editable slide packs

- An editable slide pack and script to use with teachers, parents and other interested parties on the Outcomes of the Review of Qualifications Reform.
- An editable slide pack and script explaining the reformed qualifications with examples of how they can be combined in study pathways for learners.
- An editable slide pack for a careers advice presentation about AAQs and Reformed Technical Qualifications.

To use with parents/carers, learners and employers: explainer flyers, posters, FAQ and social media assets.

- Explainer leaflets for parents/carers on AAQs and level 2 and level 3 reformed Technical Qualifications.
- Social media assets, posters and draft copy that you can use to promote your offer of AAQs and Reformed Technical Qualifications.
- Template letter to local employers explaining Qualifications Reform.
- FAQs for learners and parents/carers.

To use with Higher Education Institutions (HEI): explainer leaflet and student learner journeys.

- Explainer leaflet for HEI admissions tutors and lecturers on AAQs.
- Template newsletter draft to colleagues explaining Qualifications Reform.
- Route-by-route resources showing student learner journeys using AAQs.

Resources for staff: explainers on Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) and Reformed Technical Qualifications, level 2 and 3 qualification landscape for 2025 and options for learners.

Newly reformed qualifications: a total of 140 new alternative academic and technical qualifications have been approved for funding from 2025. This includes:

- [List of Awarding Organisations](#) offering newly reformed qualifications.
- Explainers for teachers, careers professionals and others delivering qualifications about AAQs and Reformed Technical Qualifications. [Level 2 explainer](#) & [Level 3 explainer](#).
- A download [comparing different level 2 and 3 qualification options](#) available to post-16 learners.
- [Level 2 landscape document download](#).
- [Level 3 landscape document download](#).
- [Glossary of Terms](#)

Route-by-route downloads: curriculum pathways, progression options and learner journeys.

Route-by-route downloads for teaching staff and careers professionals including curriculum pathways, progression options and student pathways in:

- [Construction and the Built Environment](#).
- [Digital](#).
- [Education and Early years](#).
- [Health and Science \(including social care\)](#).
- [Engineering and Manufacturing](#).

Learner journeys showing starting points, possible study programmes using the new qualifications and progression for learners in:

- [Construction and the Built Environment.](#)
- [Digital.](#)
- [Education and Early years.](#)
- [Health and Science \(including social care\).](#)

Further support and guidance: support implementing T Levels, support from the Further Education Commissioner (FEC) and more.

- [T Level support offer.](#)
- [FEC support.](#)
- [Support for Employers: template letter to local employers explaining Qualifications Reform.](#)
- [Curriculum Development Group opportunity.](#)
- [Occupational Maps.](#)
- [Higher Technical Qualifications \(HTQs\) Provider Toolkit.](#)
- [Technical Education Networks Materials.](#)

Post-16 Qualifications Reform publications and key documents

This includes current policy, guidance and information on qualifications in the new landscape, reviews that informed the case for reform and consultation documents. It also includes some key publications by Ofqual for further guidance and information.

- [The outcomes of the Review of Qualifications Reform.](#)
- [Current policy and guidance.](#)
- [Post-16 consultations.](#)
- [Post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below for the 2025 to 2026 academic year.](#)
- [Post-16 Level 3 and below pathways consultation.](#)

Qualifications Reform videos

Videos to support understanding and explain more about qualifications reform and the newly reformed qualifications.

- Watch our support video- 'What Qualifications Reform means to me'- Cat Marin, Activate Learning.
- What is an AAQ? Video.
- What are reformed Technical Qualifications? Video.

Want to find out more?

If you want to request any additional information, please contact:

qualifications.reform@education.gov.uk.

To find out more visit: **[Qualifications Reform webpages](#)**.

[Sign up](#) to our mailing list for regular updates.