



Post-16 Pathways Update

May 2026

ACTION

[READ – Post-16 Pathways Implementation Plan](#)



Today we have published the [Post-16 Pathways Implementation Plan](#) for post-16 technical and vocational qualifications, marking an important moment as we move from policy to delivery.

This follows the March publication, of the [Government response to the Post-16 Pathways at level 3 and below consultation](#), which committed to the introduction of new V Levels, the expansion and improvement of T Levels, and clearer level 2 pathways. Together, these reforms represent the most significant transformation of vocational education in a generation.

At the heart of this work is a clear ambition: to create a coherent post-16 system that gives every young person meaningful choice, strong progression opportunities, and qualifications that are recognised by employers and higher education alike.

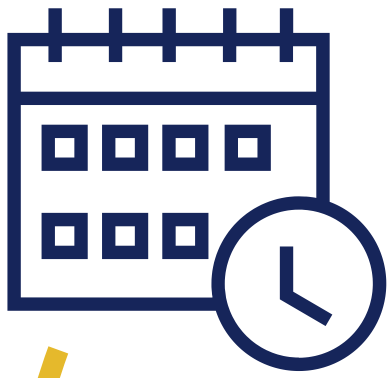
The Implementation Plan provides clarity on how this will be delivered, including:

- Which V Levels, T Levels and level 2 qualifications will be taught in 2027/28 and 2028/29, and the subject areas in scope for later years.
- Key policy decisions for early delivery, including on partnered V Levels and rules of combination in 2027/28.
- New provision, including two new T Levels (Sport and Social Care) and the establishment of a Technical and Vocational Higher Education network.
- Improvements to assessment and delivery of T Levels and removing barriers to industry placements.
- Plans for transition and changes to qualification funding approval.
- Next steps on subject content development and engagement with Ofqual as we move forward.

We know that reform only succeeds if it works in practice. That is why close partnership with the sector sits at the heart of our approach – including working through the Qualification Pioneers and our stakeholder steering group, and why the Implementation Plan sets out a careful, phased and supportive route to transition.

The Implementation Plan provides additional detail and will continue to be updated frequently to ensure that the latest information is always available in one place, as we work with the sector on the detail of implementation.





RESPOND – Strategic Transition Planning Statement (STPS)

In April, we shared the [guidance](#) and early sight of the questions which form a STPS. We are now requesting statements from all post-16 institutions that deliver, or plan to deliver, T Levels and vocational qualifications. This statement should be submitted via this [online form](#). It is due by 6 July 2026 and will confirm an institution's high-level intentions for delivery from academic year 2027 to 2028. If an institution does not currently deliver, or plan to deliver T Levels and/or vocational qualifications by academic year 2027/28, we ask that you confirm this via the same online form.

WEBINAR

SIGN UP – To provide further support, we will be hosting a [webinar](#) on Thursday 4 June: 16:00–17:00, focused specifically on Strategic Transition Planning Statements and including an update on the Post-16 Pathways Implementation Plan.

UPDATE



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.

READ – T Level Industry Placement guidance

We have also published updated [T Level industry placement guidance](#), which gives providers more scope to tailor placements to their local context and the needs of their students.

We are clear that providers remain responsible for delivering high-quality industry placements that support their T Level students to progress.

As set out in the Implementation Plan, we are considering how to embed expectations around high quality industry placements into accountability agreements for providers, as part of our wider work to strengthen provider accountability and performance.



NEWS – Qualification Pioneers

On 6 May 2026 the Minister for Skills, Jacqui Smith, welcomed the new Qualification Pioneers, college and sixth form leaders who will help shape and deliver our groundbreaking reforms to post-16 qualification pathways.

Together we are creating a system that is fairer, clearer and higher quality, that removes the stigma around non-academic routes, and that builds credible pathways for young people.



RESPOND – Content Consultation on the first V Levels and Level 2 qualifications.

On the 23 April we launched the content consultation for the first V Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates in:

V Levels: Accounting and Finance, Digital Systems and Data and Education

Foundation Certificates: Digital Systems and Data and Education and Early Years

Occupational Certificates: Early Years Practitioner, Culinary Skills and Hospitality

The subject content will set out the national requirements, defining the knowledge, understanding and skills expected for the first V Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates subjects and will provide the framework for awarding organisations to create the detailed qualification specifications.

The content has been developed collaboratively with a range of stakeholders. Through this collaborative approach, we aim to ensure that the content is manageable to teach, supports high-quality assessment, and enables learners to achieve the intended progression outcomes associated with each qualification, whether that is entry into skilled employment, further technical study or higher education.

The consultation is open – We are seeking views from a wide range of stakeholders to ensure the content is high quality, relevant and fit for purpose. Please review the subject content and share your views before the consultation closes on the 4 June 2026.

A **separate consultation from Ofqual on regulatory requirements** is live and will close on the 2 July 2026. It covers how the qualifications must be designed, assessed, and awarded.

VISIT – **Ofqual Qualification Reform Hub**

T-LEVELS



UK Government

**NATIONAL
APPRENTICESHIP AND
SKILLS AWARDS 2026**



**Entries to the National
Apprenticeship and
Skills Awards 2026 are
now open!**

The National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards are back, offering a fantastic opportunity to shine a national spotlight on outstanding T Level students, employers, and champions from across the country.

These Department for Work and Pensions led awards celebrate excellence, ambition and impact across apprenticeships and T Levels in England, recognising those who go above and beyond to transform lives, businesses and communities.

Award categories relevant to T Levels include:

- T Level Employer of the Year
- T Level Student of the Year
- Skills Champion of the Year
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Employer of the Year

The nomination process for students has been changed this year to help more students get involved, by allowing T Level providers to nominate their students, so please get involved! Simply visit the [Apprenticeship and Skills Awards website](#) and click on the link to read more about each category and the nomination process.

Previous finalists not only attended a prestigious awards ceremony, but also gained national recognition, accessed valuable media opportunities, and joined a powerful network of ambassadors championing skills across the country.

You can read all about previous award winners [here](#).

UPDATE

Health and Science T Levels now available

Pearson have published their new specifications for T Levels in Health and Science for first teach from September 2026. These can be accessed from their website using the links below:

T Level in Health - [T Level in Health Pearson qualifications](#)

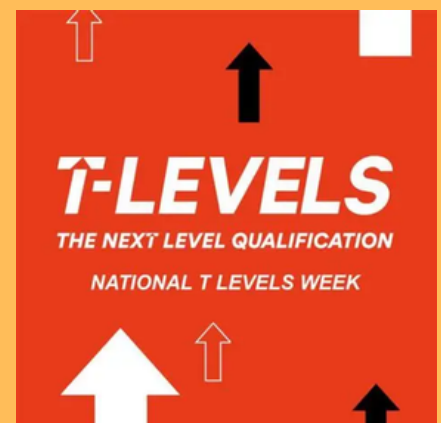
T Level in Science - [T Level in Science Pearson qualifications](#)

For any queries regarding these T Levels, please contact Pearson via this portal [Contact Support](#)

T LEVELS WEEK 2026

T Levels Week is a key moment during the year when we celebrate the achievements of T Level providers, students and employers delivering industry placements. T

This year's T Levels Week will take place from 19-23 October. Please mark the dates in your diaries and we'll be in touch later in the year with more details.



FOR INFORMATION

T Level Delivery Group

- As announced in the post-16 level 3 and below pathways consultation response, we have put together an expert panel that will advise the Department on further measures to improve the deliverability and appeal of T Levels.
- The Group brings together sector leaders, education specialists, and delivery experts, drawing on evidence from providers, students, and employers to address cross cutting issues. These include potential changes to improve progression, and accessibility for students, manageability for providers, and scalability of delivery.
- As an initial focus, the Group will consider whether the current approach strikes the right balance in recognising students who complete some, but not all, of a T Level; whether T Levels are pitched at the right level in terms of content breadth, depth, and expected standards; and how to implement an updated industry placement framework that ensures high quality provision of Industry Placements.
- If you would like to contribute your views to the ongoing discussions and help shape the conversation, please contact your representative body on the panel, which will submit feedback on your behalf

Membership of the delivery group includes the following:

Name	Role	Organisation
Sophie Pinn	Deputy Director, T Levels	Department for Education
Danny Brett	National Vice Chair	T Level Ambassador Network
Jenifer Burden MBE	Director of Programmes	The Gatsby Charitable Foundation
Catherine Large OBE	Executive Director of Policy	Ofqual
Andrew Cropley MBE	Principal/ CEO	West Nottinghamshire College
Anne- Marie Francis	Vice Principal Curriculum	Wigan and Leigh College
Carmel Grant	Deputy Director, Reform and Development	Skills England
Aalok Kanwar	Trust Strategic Lead for Post 16	Outwood Grange Academies Trust
James Kewin	Deputy Chief Executive	Sixth Form Colleges Association
Rob Nitsch CBE	Chief Executive	Federation of Awarding Bodies
Matt Reynolds	Principal/ Chief Executive	Cirencester Sixth Form College
Toni Rhodes	Chief Executive	City of Sunderland College
Dr Catherine Richards	Principal	East Norfolk Sixth Form College
Catherine Sezen MBE	Director of Education Policy	Association of Colleges
Claire Whitworth	Principal	Hartpury College

Become a Voice for Technical Education: Join the T Level Ambassador Network

The T Level Ambassador Network (TAN) is inviting passionate providers to step forward and become ambassadors. You can play a key role in raising awareness, strengthening partnerships, and influencing the future of T Levels.

What is the T Level Ambassador Network? - The TAN is a vibrant national and regional community made up of dedicated employers and education providers. Together, they work collaboratively to promote T Levels, share best practice, and build stronger connections between education and industry.

Why become a T Level Provider Ambassador?

Joining TAN as a Provider Ambassador brings a range of professional and organisational benefits, you can:

- Elevate your organisation's profile at both a local and national level
- Build and strengthen relationships with employers and key stakeholders
- Gain access to peer support, learning and sharing with other providers
- Choose your level of involvement, ensuring flexibility to suit your capacity
- Be part of a respected and influential network driving real change

Support to help you succeed

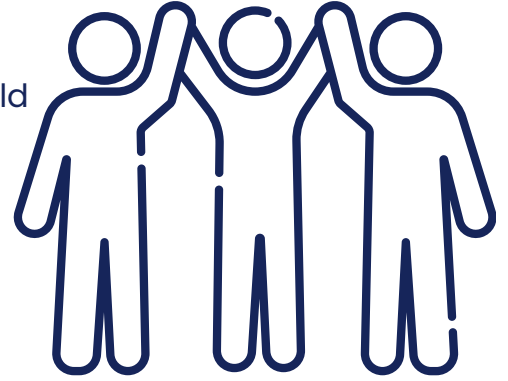
As a T Level Provider Ambassador, you won't be on your own. The network provides a wealth of support and resources designed to help you maximise your impact, including:

- A dedicated Regional Coordinator to guide and support your journey
- Access to practical resources, guidance, and marketing toolkits
- Regular updates and engagement opportunities within the network
- Invitations to exclusive webinars and events
- A digital ambassador badge and access to a LinkedIn support community
- The TAN Mobile App to log your activity and track your impact

Joining the T Level Ambassador Network is more than a professional opportunity, it's a chance to make a meaningful difference in technical education and employer engagement.

Become an ambassador today and help shape the future of T Levels - **Join the T Level Ambassador Network**

Are you ready to champion technical education and help shape the future workforce?



SIGN UP!



JOIN
TODAY

T-LEVELS



NEW

Masterclasses – for T Level employer engagement teams

A new series of practical CPD Masterclasses has been launched to support T Level providers with employer engagement and the delivery of high-quality industry placements.

The sessions – delivered by SDN Mesma Group and funded by the Department for Education – draw on practical approaches, resources and insights gathered through work with providers, employers and the T Level Co-Lab networks.

Each session will be practical and focused, with an emphasis on building employer-engagement confidence, improving placement quality and supporting better outcomes for students.

Employer engagement: what employers tell us and practical tools for placements – Masterclass: 1st July, 10am – 12pm – [Find out more and book your place here](#)

- what builds employer confidence and what leads to hesitation or drop-off
- how employers experience industry placements in practice
- what makes placements more meaningful for both employers and students

Practical tools to support employer engagement will also be shared, including:

- the employer engagement conversation toolkit
- employer-facing brochures and role-specific annexes
- approaches to building confidence and sustaining employer relationships

LinkedIn skills and techniques for employer engagement- Masterclass: 9th July, 2:30pm – 4 pm – [Find out more and book your place here](#)

- key updates in the guidance and what they mean in practice
- designing placements that work for employers and students
- making effective use of flexibilities within the guidance
- aligning placement design with curriculum delivery and student readiness

Student readiness and preparation for industry placements – Masterclass: 16th July, 10am – 12pm – [Find out more and book your place here](#)

- build a strong professional presence
- understand a little about the algorithm
- find and connect with the right employers and key decision makers
- share content that engages and builds credibility

An additional session will also be hosted to help T Level providers understand and practically implement the updated Industry Placement Delivery Guidance once published. More details will be shared nearer the time.

T LEVEL TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYERS IN THE FOOD & DRINK SECTOR

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation, in partnership with The National Skills Academy for Food & Drink (NSAFD), has launched a **new T Level toolkit** for employers in the Food & Drink sector, designed to help businesses strengthen their engineering and manufacturing talent pipelines.

You can access the toolkit here: [New Engineering and Manufacturing T-level toolkit for food and drink employers | Gatsby Education](#)



PROVIDERS: SUBMIT YOUR T LEVEL DESTINATIONS DATA



Following the publication of the [third annual Gatsby Charitable Foundation report](#) into the destinations of T Level learners, T Level providers are being invited to submit destinations data for the fourth wave of T Level students – i.e. those students who completed their T Level in summer 2025.

The tool for sharing data can be downloaded from the following secure website: <https://rcultd.co.uk/Destinations/Tool.html>. For queries, please contact: sarah.herdan@gatsby.org.uk

This report sits alongside a range of T Level student destinations case studies, which can be accessed here: <https://www.technicaleducationnetworks.org.uk/destinations/>

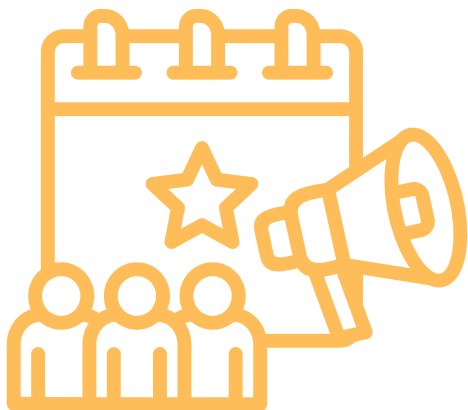
Gatsby's Technical Education Networks Programme (TEN) has launched their first set of teaching materials to support delivery of the **T Levels in Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care** on its website www.technicaleducationnetworks.org.uk.

Launched in 2023 with research and a suite of free resources, the TEN programme is designed to bridge the gap between industry and the classroom by supporting technical education teachers to deliver an engaging and enriched curriculum. Resources are now available across Digital, Construction, Engineering and Manufacturing, Health and Science, and Agriculture.

Find out more about the new resources here: [Gatsby's Technical Education Networks Programme \(TEN\) has launched their first set of teaching materials to support delivery of the T-levels in Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care on its website www.technicaleducationnetworks.org.uk.](#)

NEW T LEVEL AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ANIMAL CARE TEACHING RESOURCES





EVENTS: Post 16 Level 3 and below qualification pathways events – to get ahead of planning, transition and readiness to deliver from the 2027 to 2028 academic year

DfE and AoC are jointly hosting a national roadshow of free-to-attend events focused on the new Post 16 qualification pathways at level 3. The events will support effective and successful planning, transition and readiness for delivery from academic year 2027 to 2028.

Delivered across the North, Midlands and South, these **in-person** sessions are expected to attract significant demand, and early booking is strongly encouraged.

These events are specifically designed for those individuals with responsibility for whole-provider curriculum planning and provision within your organisation

Event locations and dates

North

Tuesday 30 June 2026
City of Liverpool
College, The Learning
Exchange
10:00–14:30
[REGISTER HERE](#)

Midlands

Wednesday 1 July 2026
BMet – Matthew Boulton
College
1 Jennens Road,
Birmingham, B4 7PS
10:00–14:30
[REGISTER HERE](#)

South

Thursday 2 July 2026
Southwark College
25 The Cut, London, SE1
8LF
10:00–14:30
[REGISTER HERE](#)

AoC Provider Insight Days

London South Bank Technical College – Tuesday 30 June
[South Bank Technical College - T Level... | Association of Colleges](#)

Bede Academy – Wednesday 01 July.
[T Level Provider Insight Day – Bede Academy | Association of Colleges](#)

National T level Conferences: AoC in conjunction with ETF are running 2 National T Level Conferences.

London – 16th June
Manchester – 23rd June

There is currently a waiting list to register for both events. To join waiting list, please email events@aoc.co.uk