



PARENT AND STUDENT FAQ



Your questions answered on
Technical and Vocational
qualifications including T Levels,
V Levels and level 2 pathways.



Department
for Education

Why is the government changing post-16 education?

The government is changing post-16 education because the world of work, skills and careers has changed and the current system does not work well enough for too many young people.

Young people need clearer choices and stronger pathways.

The reforms are built on three key principles:

- Progression: every qualification should lead to a positive destination.
- Future-proofing: qualifications should reflect real skills needed now and in the future.
- Clarity of choice: students should be able to easily understand and compare their options.

By introducing V Levels, strengthening T Levels, and creating Foundation and Occupational Certificates at level 2, the government aims to create a system where academic, vocational and technical routes are equally respected, easier to understand, and better at helping young people succeed in work and life.

Are V Levels right for me?

V Levels may suit you if you:

- Want applied, practical learning without specialising too soon.
- Are interested in learning in a more vocational way.
- Want strong progression options after post-16 education
- Prefer a range of different types of assessment.

V Levels use a mix of assessment methods, including practical assessment, helping you demonstrate both your knowledge and practical skills.

If you're not sure, talk to teachers or careers advisers about which qualification or pathway is the best fit for your goals right now.



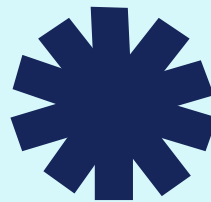
What are V Levels?

V Levels (vocational) sit alongside A Levels (academic) and T Levels (technical) as one of three clear post-16 pathways.

V Levels are a new type of vocational qualification at level 3. They are:

- Focused on applied, real-world learning linked to employment sectors
- Are intended to support progression to related higher education or work-based training, including apprenticeships.
- The same size and level as an A Levels
- Designed to be taken alongside other V Levels, A Levels and GCSE maths or English.

Parents and students can find out more about V Levels in this leaflet.





Can I go to university after I have studied V Levels?

Yes. V Levels are designed to support progression to higher education and further training, including higher and degree apprenticeships.

The government is working closely with universities and UCAS so that V Levels are recognised by higher education providers, given appropriate UCAS tariff points and clearly understood as part of level 3 entry routes.

What should I be aware of?

University entry requirements are set by individual universities, not centrally, so if you're thinking about university, it's a good idea to:

- Check entry requirements on higher education provider websites.
- Speak to your school or college careers adviser.
- Look at how different qualification combinations support your future plans.

V Levels are being designed so that vocational routes are valued just as highly as academic ones when students move on to their next step.

What qualifications do I need to be able to study a V Level?

Speak to the college/school you are applying to, to find out more about their specific entry requirements.

When do V Levels begin?

V Levels will be introduced in phases, starting from 2027. The first V Levels will be available in:

- Accounting and Finance
- Digital Systems and Data
- Education

More subjects will follow over time. Schools and colleges will share details about which V Levels they offer.





What are Foundation Certificates?

Foundation Certificates are level 2 qualifications designed for students who:

- Are not yet ready for level 3 study
- Would benefit from more time to build confidence and skills

They help students:

- Prepare for progression to V Levels, T Levels or A Levels
- Strengthen subject knowledge and study skills
- Continue improving English and maths where needed
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Foundation Certificates are part of the Further Study pathway at level 2. You can find out more about the Foundation Certificates in this leaflet.

What are Occupational Certificates?

Occupational Certificates are level 2 qualifications for students who have a clear idea of the type of job or occupation they want and want to develop practical skills in a classroom-based setting.

They are designed to prepare students for entry-level skilled jobs, support progression into work or an apprenticeship and are clearly linked to employer and industry needs.

They form part of the Occupational pathway at level 2. You can find out more about Occupational Certificates in this leaflet.

When do Foundation and Occupational Certificates begin?

Foundation and Occupational Certificates will be rolled out in stages from 2027. The first Foundation Certificates will be available in Digital Systems and Data and Education. At the same time, the first Occupational Certificates will be introduced in Hospitality, Culinary Skills, and Early Years Practitioner.

They will roll out by subject area, so availability may differ between colleges and years. Schools and colleges will give clear information on start dates, course content and progression routes.



Are Foundation or Occupational Certificates right for me?

Foundation and Occupational Certificates are both level 2 qualifications, but they are designed for different starting points and goals.

Foundation Certificates are designed to help you prepare for the next stage of education, rather than move straight into work.

The Foundation Certificate might be right for you if you:

- Are not yet ready for level 3 study
- Are aiming to progress to V Levels, T Levels or A Levels and like applied, practical learning.
- Want more time to build confidence in learning and need to strengthen key skills and subject knowledge
- Need to continue improving English and/or maths

Occupational Certificates focus on building the skills needed for entry-level roles in a specific area.

The Occupational Certificate might be right for you if you:

- Have a clear idea of the type of job or sector you want to work in
- Prefer practical, job-focused learning
- Want to develop skills that employers value
- Are aiming to progress into an entry level skilled job or an apprenticeship

What subjects can I study?

Not all subjects will be available everywhere at the same time. Your school or college can explain what's offered locally.

Will they be available in my area?

To find out if your local college is offering these qualifications, please contact them directly.

When can I apply?

Application timelines depend on the college or school you want to apply to. Please contact them directly to find out more.



How will I be assessed for V Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates?

Assessment will be designed to reflect the practical and applied nature of these qualifications. You will be assessed through a combination of methods, rather than relying on a single final exam.

This could include:

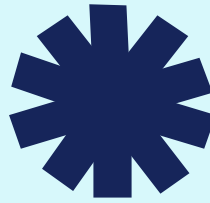
- Exams set and marked by the awarding organisation.
- Practical or task-based assessments that allow you to demonstrate your skills and knowledge in real-world contexts.
- In some cases, teacher-marked assessments, with quality assurance processes in place to ensure fair and consistent marking.

Assessments will be spread throughout the course using a modular approach, meaning you can complete assessments at appropriate points during your studies rather than everything being assessed at the end.

For V Levels, assessment will take place across both years of study, with a significant proportion occurring in the second year.

This balanced approach is designed to help students show what they know and can do, while maintaining high standards and supporting progression to further study, training or employment.

How long does a V Level or level 2 pathway take to study?



V Levels are typically studied over two years, as part of a level 3 programme.

Foundation Certificates usually take one year and support students into a two year level 3 programme.

Occupational Certificates are typically two-year programmes, supporting progression into work at 18.

Study length may vary depending on individual needs and support requirements.



What is a T Level, why should I consider one?

T Levels are a high quality, technical alternative to A Levels for 16–19-year-olds. A T Level is equivalent in size to 3 A Levels, and focuses on a broad career area such as Construction, Engineering & Manufacturing, Health, Digital, Craft & Design and Animal Care.

All T Levels include an industry placement of at least 315 hours, providing valuable hands-on experience of the workplace, helping to give students a head start in their future career.

A T Level suits those students who might have a good idea of the general career area they would like to work in and would benefit from an in-depth study programme with workplace experience.

After their T Level, students can go onto employment, apprenticeships or higher education (T Levels carry UCAS points in the same way as A levels).

Students can find their nearest provider through a postcode search at www.tlevels.gov.uk and there is more information in the parents and carers leaflet [here](https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/resources/t-levels-parents-and-carers-guide/)

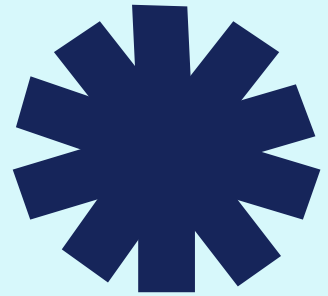
How are V Levels different to T Levels?

V Levels and T Levels are different types of qualifications designed to suit different students and career goals.

V Levels are for students who want to keep their options open and explore a wider range of sectors, rather than focus on a specific job role. They are the same size as one A Level and help students develop broad knowledge and skills that can lead to higher education and further work-based training, including an apprenticeship.

T Levels are designed for students who already know which broad career area they want to follow and prefer a single, large qualification equivalent in size to three A Levels. They also include a substantial industry placement with an employer. T Levels focus on developing the technical knowledge and skills needed for specific occupations and can lead directly to skilled employment, an apprenticeship, or further study.

V Levels are intended to offer broader vocational learning and greater flexibility, while T Levels provide a more focused route into a particular job sector.



CONTACT & VISIT US

If you want to request any additional information, please contact:
qualifications.reform@education.gov.uk.

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

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