

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
A Level	Qualification available in a range of subjects at level 3. Usually studied over two years and recognised as meeting entry requirements for further and higher education courses like degrees.
AS Level	An AS level is a standalone qualification, available in a range of subjects at level 3 and usually taken after GCSE level in year 12. It is usually studied over one year and is the equivalent of half an A level.
Academic qualification	A qualification with the primary purpose of supporting a student to progress to higher academic study.
Applied General Qualification (AGQ)	Applied learning qualification for Higher Education (HE) or work; often taken with A Levels.
Applied learning	Teaching and assessment focused on practical, real-world application of knowledge and skills.
Apprenticeship	A paid job combining work and training, leading to recognised qualifications and occupational competence.
Awarding Organisations (AOs)	Bodies responsible for developing, delivering and awarding qualifications, regulated by Ofqual.
Condition of funding (English and maths)	Requirement for students without GCSE grade 4 to continue studying English and/or maths as part of their study programme.
Core Maths qualification	A Core Maths qualification is a level 3 post-16 mathematics course designed for students who have passed GCSE Maths (usually grade 4 or above) but are not taking A Level Maths. It is the equivalent of half an A Level.
Defunding (funding approval removal)	The process of removing government funding from qualifications.
Disadvantaged learners	Students who may face barriers to learning due to socio-economic or other factors.
Enrichment	Activities outside formal qualifications that support personal development, employability and wellbeing
Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)	An Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a level 3 qualification that allows students, typically in Year 12 or 13 (ages 16–18) to choose a topic of interest and complete an independent research project. It is the equivalent of half an A Level.
Foundation Certificate	A level 2 qualification within the Further Study pathway, designed to prepare students for progression to level 3 study.
Further Study pathway	A level 2 pathway which supports progression into level 3 qualifications such as V Levels, T Levels or A Levels.

Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs)	English and maths qualifications focused on practical, everyday skills, available at various levels.
Guided Learning hours (GLH)	The time a learner spends being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.
Higher education (HE)	Study at universities or higher education institutions, typically at level 4 and above.
Implementation plan	Government document setting out timelines, subjects, and rollout details for new qualifications.
Industry placement	A structured work placement with an employer, mandatory for T Levels (minimum 315 hours).
Level (of qualification)	One of nine qualification levels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The higher the level, the more difficult the qualification. Level 3 qualifications include A levels, T Levels, advanced Apprenticeships and AGQs, as well as newly reformed AAQs and Reformed Technical Qualifications.
Level 2 pathways	Reformed routes offering either Further Study or Occupational progression options.
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training.
Occupational Certificate	A level 2 qualification within the Occupational pathway, designed to prepare students for entry into skilled employment.
Occupational Pathway	A level 2 pathway focused on preparing learners for specific jobs or sectors.
Occupational standards	Employer-defined standards describing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for a job.
Ofqual	The regulator of qualifications in England, responsible for ensuring standards and quality.
Progression	The movement of a learner into further study, training or employment after completing a course.
Qualification Pioneers	A group of sector experts supporting the rollout and implementation of new qualifications.
Sector Subject Area (SSA)	A classification system for the sectors in which qualifications sit such as 'Health, Public Services and Care'.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
Study programme	The combination of qualifications and other activities funded for 16–19-year-olds in England by the Department for Education.
T Level	A two-year qualification at level 3, equivalent in size to three A levels and supporting progression to employment or higher education. Based on the same standards as Apprenticeships and available in over 20 subjects.

T Level Foundation Year (TLFY)	This study programme provides a high-quality route onto T Levels for students who would benefit from additional preparation or study time before a T Level.
Technical education	Education focused on developing skills for specific occupations or sectors.
Total qualification Time (TQT)	The GLH plus all other time taken in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training but not under the direct supervision of a lecturer, supervisor or tutor.
Transition plan	A provider's plan outlining how they will move to delivering reformed qualifications.
V Levels	New level 3 vocational qualifications designed to be taken alongside other qualifications, combining applied learning with broad subject knowledge.
Vocational education	Education that prepares learners for a range of careers, often through applied and practical learning.