

Post-16 Pathways Resource Pack

Supporting providers and careers development professionals to explain post-16 technical and vocational pathways to staff members, students, parents, employers and others interested in post-16 pathways.



Table of Contents

<u>Ministerial Foreword</u>	3
About the resource pack	
<u>Post-16 Pathways</u>	5
T Levels	
V Levels	
Level 2 pathways	
<u>To use with parents, students and employers</u>	8
Posters, explainer leaflets and social assets	
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	
Videos and animations	
Employer template	
Student learner journey examples and progression maps	
Employer Support pack	
<u>Resources for staff</u>	9
Level 2 and 3 qualification landscape downloads	
Explainers on post-16 pathways	
Glossary of terms	
Slide packs and links	
<u>Progression and student pathway examples</u>	10
<u>To use with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)</u>	12
Explainer leaflets and information	
Student learner journey examples	
Template newsletter draft explaining post-16 pathways	
Progression maps	
<u>Further support and guidance</u>	13
<u>Key publications and documents</u>	14

Ministerial Foreword



Every young person deserves clear, high-quality choices after 16 that reflect their talents and ambitions. Yet, for too long, technical and vocational education has often been seen as a second choice rather than an equally valuable route to success. This government is determined to change that, as we continue driving forward our mission to ensure two-thirds of young people are in education, training or apprenticeships by 25.

These reforms are central to our ambition to widen opportunity and support economic growth. By making sure every qualification can lead to a skilled job or further study, we can help more young people stay engaged in education and training, develop the skills employers actually need, and progress to rewarding careers in valuable and growing industries.

From 2027, alongside A Levels and T Levels, young people will be able to study new V Levels, Foundation Certificates, and Occupational Certificates. These qualifications will make the choices after 16 clearer, giving students confidence that they can find the route that is right for them, whether that is further study or employment.

With a strong focus on applied and practical learning and assessment, they will help young people develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they need. Including content linked to future skills needs, these qualifications will be underpinned by standards that are up-to-date and recognised nationally by employers.

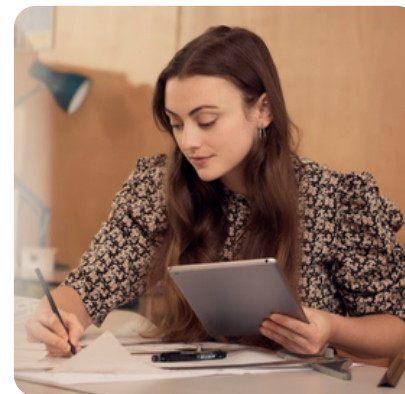
We are committed to supporting schools, colleges, and training providers throughout the transition. This resource pack is part of that support. I recognise the vital role providers will play in making these qualifications a success and I hope this pack supports conversations with young people, parents, carers, and staff about helping every student to succeed, whether through academic, technical, or vocational routes.

Baroness Smith of Malvern

Minister for Skills

[Back to
contents](#)

About the resource pack



We are designing post-16 pathways to provide clear, high-quality routes that support young people to progress into further study, apprenticeships and employment that help to meet future skills needs.

This resource pack has been created to support education and training providers, and careers information advice and guidance professionals to explain V Levels, Occupational Certificates and Foundation Certificates and how they fit alongside T Levels and A Levels. It will support conversations with staff members, students, parents and employers, including communications and engagement activities that increase awareness and understanding of these qualifications.

On 20 May 2026, we published the [Implementation Plan](#) for post-16 technical and vocational qualifications, that sets out how we will move from policy intent to delivery. The plan was updated on 17 September 2026 and will continue to be updated throughout the four-year reform period.

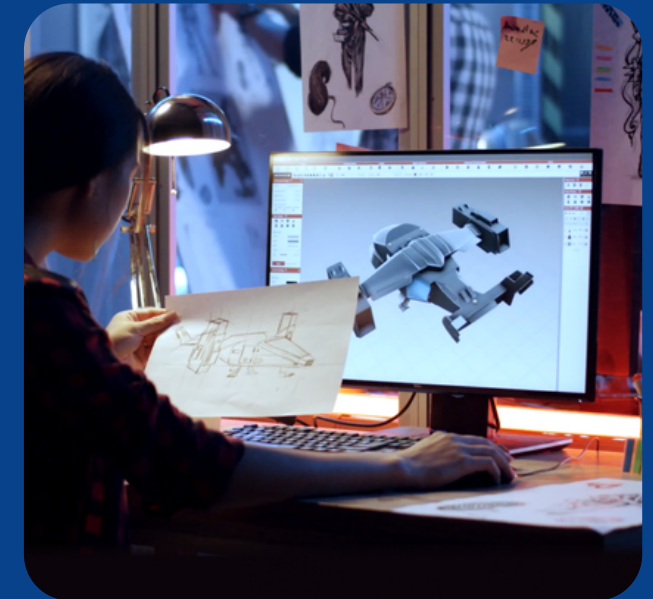
This follows the publication on 20 March 2026 of the [Government response to the Post-16 pathways at level 3 and below consultation](#), which committed to the introduction of new V Levels, the expansion of T Levels, and clearer level 2 pathways. Together, these reforms represent the most significant transformation of vocational education in a generation.

[Back to
contents](#)

Post-16 Pathways and qualifications

T Levels

T Levels are based on employer-designed occupational standards, to support entry into skilled technical roles, either directly or following further/higher study. They are equivalent in size to three A Levels, carry UCAS points and include a mandatory industry placement to give students the opportunity to apply their skills in a real work environment. T Levels will be the only large (1080 GLH) qualification available for students who want a sector-focussed post-16 choice.



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.

[Back to
contents](#)

V Levels

- V Levels are broad applied and vocational qualifications. They will be studied over two years, and a significant proportion of the qualification content will be applied in nature, supporting learning by doing.
- Assessment for each of the first three subjects (for first teach from 2027) will combine timetabled (exam) assessment, worth 40% of the overall marks, and other forms of assessment, known as non-exam assessment (NEA) worth 60%. The balance of exam and NEA will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Ofqual as each set of subject content is produced. Given the vocational nature of V Levels, we expect assessment will include practical applied activities, as well as assessment of knowledge and understanding so students can demonstrate both their knowledge and their ability to apply it.
- V Levels will have a grade scale of A* to E, with an additional grade of P 'pass' grade, plus U for ungraded. UCAS has confirmed that V Levels will attract the same tariff points as A Levels at grades A* to E, supporting recognition and progression to higher education.
- The first V Levels in Digital Systems and Data, Accounting and Finance, and Education will be available to teach from 2027/28. Additional subjects will be introduced through to 2030/31.
- V Levels have been designed to sit alongside T Levels (technical) and A Levels (academic) to provide a vocational option with applied learning, providing three clear pathways for students at level 3.
- They will give providers flexibility to build broad and balanced study programmes. Students will be able to take V Levels with other V Levels to form a full V Level programme, or combine them with A Levels, and where required, English and maths qualifications.
- They strengthen the clarity and credibility of vocational study by linking nationally set content to occupational standards – this means they have been designed around the skills and knowledge employers say young people need to succeed in the workplace. This helps ensure students are learning relevant, up-to-date skills that can support progression into employment or apprenticeships.
- They are aimed at giving students, parents, employers and higher education providers confidence in the quality of provision and in students' progression to positive outcomes.
- They support an applied approach to teaching, learning and assessment to help students develop practical, real-world skills alongside strong core knowledge, supporting progression to higher education or work-based training, including apprenticeships.



[Back to
contents](#)

Level 2 qualifications

At level 2:

The Foundation Certificate is designed for students who want to build confidence, knowledge and study skills to support progression to level 3 options (such as V Levels, T Levels or A Levels), with time alongside for English and maths where needed.

The Occupational Certificate offers a purposeful route for learners who are ready for a more direct focus on work. It supports progression into skilled level 2 employment through classroom-based learning, linked to employer needs.



By providing these qualifications, providers can create flexible, future-focused study programmes that reflect real lives and real careers. This will support students to feel motivated, supported and confident that their learning will lead to meaningful next steps into higher education, further training or skilled employment.

[Back to contents](#)



Resources to use with parents/carers, students and employers

- [Download](#) - Why the Government is reforming post-16 qualifications for parents/carers and students.
- [Explainer posters, leaflets and asset pack, including new branding for V Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates.](#)
- [Template letter](#) to local employers explaining post-16 pathways.
- [FAQs for students and parents/carers.](#)
- [T Levels – a guide for parents and carers](#)
- [T Levels – animated explainer film](#)
- [T Levels – industry placements film](#)
- [Progression maps](#) designed to provide possible destinations and progression opportunities available to students after completing a V Level, an Occupational Certificate, or a Foundation Certificate.
- [Level 3 Learner Pathways: V Levels in Accounting and Finance, Digital Systems and Data and Education, T Levels, A Levels](#)
- [Level 2 Learner Pathways: Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data and Education.](#)
- [Level 2 Learner Pathways: Occupational Certificate in Culinary Skills, Early Years Practitioner and Hospitality.](#)
- [Employer support pack](#)

[Back to
contents](#)

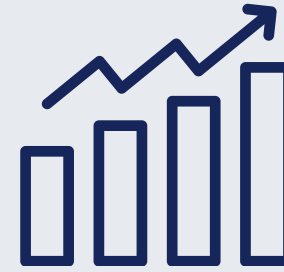
Resources for staff

- A [download](#) explaining why the Government is reforming post-16 qualifications.
- [Link to webinar on the Government Response to the Post-16 pathways at level 3 and below consultation.](#)
- [Link to webinar on the Post-16 pathways implementation plan and Strategic Transition planning statement.](#)
- [Link to slides on the Post-16 pathways implementation plan and Strategic Transition planning statement.](#)
- [T Levels – a guide for teachers and careers professionals](#)
- [T Levels – assembly slides designed to share information about T Levels, including presenter scripts and practical delivery tips](#) [T Levels posters](#)
- [Explainers, posters and leaflets about V Levels, T Levels and level 2 pathways.](#)
- A [download](#) showing an overview of new post-16 pathways.
- [Downloads](#) demonstrating the pathways of programmes leading to destinations.
- A [download](#) demonstrating the new 16-19 system vision at level 3 including pathways of programmes with a clear line of sight to destinations.
- A [download](#) showing the national policy environment.
- A [download](#) showing the post-16 qualification pathways implementation timeline.
- [Glossary of Terms](#)



[Back to
contents](#)

Progression and student journey examples



To support providers in understanding and communicating the new qualification landscape, we have developed a range of illustrative student pathway examples. These include progression maps and study programme examples, showing linked progression routes for each technical and vocational qualification within the new system.

Progression Maps:

To support the introduction of the reformed qualifications from 2027, illustrative progression pathway maps have been developed for the first subjects. These progression maps are designed to provide possible destinations and progression opportunities available to students after completing a V Level, an Occupational Certificate, or a Foundation Certificate and include routes into further study, higher education, apprenticeships and longer-term careers.

Progression maps

Editable progression maps are also available for providers to adapt for their own settings.

Editable template progression maps

Simplified student pathway examples:

Level 3 V Levels in Accounting and Finance, Digital Systems and Data and Education, T Levels and A Levels

Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data and Education.

Level 2 Occupational Certificate in Culinary Skills, Early Years Practitioner and Hospitality.

[Back to
contents](#)

Progression and student journey examples

Alongside the simplified examples, we have produced more detailed pathway exemplars aimed primarily at teachers, curriculum leaders and careers professionals. These are designed to help providers visualise how a full study programme could be structured in 2027. They offer a detailed view of programme design and delivery, particularly for those responsible for planning, delivering and explaining qualifications.

The exemplars are illustrative rather than formal guidance. They demonstrate how different elements of a study programme might come together, including qualifications, employment-related activity, enrichment opportunities and pastoral support. Every student's programme will be unique, so examples will naturally vary according to individual needs, interests and aspirations. The V Level examples do not represent a complete programme comprising three V Levels. We intend to build on these materials as additional V Levels become available, with further development planned for the 2028 subjects.

Detailed student pathway examples:

Level 3 student pathway examples: V Levels in Accounting and Finance, Digital Systems and Data and Education, T Levels and A Levels.

Level 2 student pathway examples: Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data and Education and Occupational Certificate in Culinary Skills, Early Years Practitioner and Hospitality.

We have also created flexible, editable templates that providers can adapt to reflect their own context and student profile. If an example does not fully meet local needs, it can be modified and personalised accordingly. **Editable downloads of student pathways:** [Link to editable pathway example.](#)



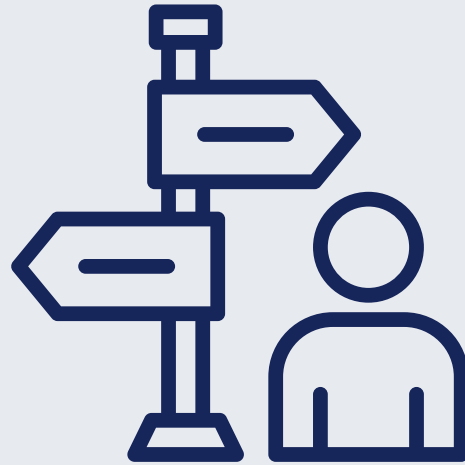
[Back to
contents](#)

To use with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

- [Download](#) - why the Government is reforming post-16 qualifications
- [Explainer leaflet](#) for HEI admissions tutors and lecturers on V Levels
- [Template newsletter draft](#) to colleagues explaining post-16 pathways.
- [Resources](#) showing student learner journeys using the first V Levels in Digital Systems and Data, Education and Accounting and Finance.
- [Supporting higher education providers to understand T Levels](#)
- [A download showing the national policy environment.](#)
- [A download showing the post-16 qualification pathways implementation timeline.](#)
- [Progression maps](#)



[Back to
contents](#)



Further support and guidance

- [Implementation plan.](#)
- [Industry Placement Guidance.](#)
- [Strategic Transition Planning Statement.](#)
- [Strategic Transition Planning Statement guidance.](#)
- [Further Education Commissioner Support.](#)
- [T Level support offer.](#)
- [T Levels and industry placement support for employers.](#)
- [Occupational Maps.](#)
- [Skills for careers website](#)
- [Higher Technical Qualifications \(HTQs\) Provider Toolkit.](#)
- [Technical Education Networks Materials.](#)

[Back to
contents](#)

Key publications and 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.

- [Implementation plan](#)
- [Regulating post-16 vocational and technical qualifications at levels 2 and 3.](#)
- [Post-16 Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications: 2027 proposed subject content.](#)
- [Government response: Post-16 pathways at level 3 and below consultation.](#)
- [Post-16 Level 3 and below pathways consultation.](#)
- [Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper.](#)
- [The outcomes of the Curriculum and Assessment Review.](#)
- [The outcomes of the Review of Qualifications Reform](#)
- [Post-16 consultations](#)
- [Study programme guidance](#)



[Back to
contents](#)

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](#). 
