



Department
for Education

Post-16 Pathways Update

September 2026

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Join the T Level Ambassador Network



V LEVELS

FOUNDATION CERTIFICATES



T-LEVELS

OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATES

UPDATED Post-16 Pathways Implementation plan

The Rt Hon Lucy Powell, Secretary of State for Education, and the Rt Hon Jacqui Smith, Minister for Skills, have written to all 16-19 providers to mark the start of the new academic year, thank them for the important work they do to support young people, and recommit to the timeline for delivering reformed qualifications, V Levels, Occupational Certificates and Foundation Certificates, for first term from September 2027.

This comes alongside the **Post-16 Pathways Implementation Plan**, which was updated on 16 September 2026. This brings together the latest information on implementation of Post-16 pathways. It includes important updates on V Levels, new and existing T Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates, as well as progression maps, qualification funding and professional development support.

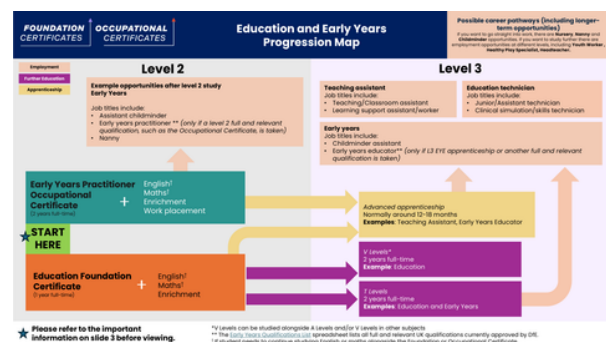
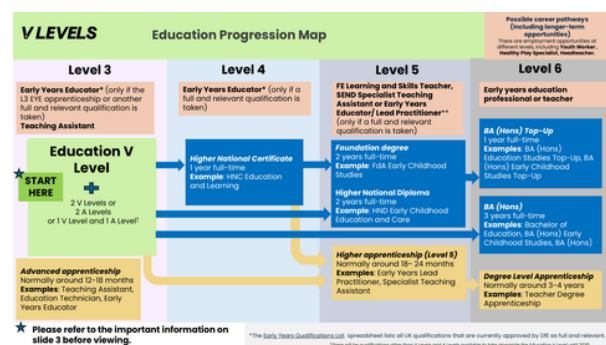
We encourage all providers and stakeholders to read the updated version to understand the latest changes, key milestones and what they mean for planning and delivery.

Progression Maps published

To support the introduction of the reformed qualifications from 2027, example progression pathway maps have been developed for the first subjects to illustrate suggested learner destinations and progression opportunities.

These progression pathways are designed to provide a clear and accessible overview of the opportunities available to learners after completing the first V Levels, Occupational Certificates, or Foundation Certificates. These include routes into further study, higher education, apprenticeships and longer-term careers. The progression pathways aim to give learners greater confidence in planning their next steps and understanding a range of opportunities that these new qualifications can unlock.

Find out more and explore the progression pathways to see how V Levels, Occupational Certificates, and Foundation Certificates can support future study and career ambitions.



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ACTION: DOWNLOAD our **UPDATED** Post-16 Pathways resource pack

Making the most of the Post-16 Pathways support pack

To support the introduction of new post-16 pathways, we have updated our **Post-16 Pathways Resource Pack** for education and training providers and careers information, advice, and guidance professionals.

The pack brings together a wide range of practical resources to help providers communicate with staff, students, parents and carers, employers, and other stakeholders. Designed to support communications, engagement activities and curriculum planning, the materials can be integrated into existing outreach and guidance programmes to build awareness and understanding of the post-16 qualifications landscape. The support pack provides ready-made communications, planning tools, presentations and engagement materials to help make conversations about post-16 pathways and qualifications more straightforward and consistent.

V LEVELS T-LEVELS

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**OCCUPATIONAL
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Technical and Vocational Qualifications (TVQ) 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.

What is included in the support pack?

- Information and guidance on post-16 pathways and qualifications, including T Levels, V Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates.
- New branding materials for Occupational Certificates, Foundation Certificates and V Levels.
- Resources for students, parents/carers and employers, including explainer leaflets, posters, template communications and frequently asked questions (FAQs).
- Materials for staff and careers professionals, including presentations, qualification explainers, pathway overviews and implementation resources.
- Student progression materials, featuring illustrative learner journeys, new progression maps and routes at levels 2 and 3.
- Resources for higher education providers to support understanding of new qualifications and progression opportunities.
- Editable templates and communications assets that can be tailored to local audiences and settings.
- Planning, implementation and careers support materials, alongside provider guidance and T Level resources.
- Key policy publications and reform documents, including consultation responses, implementation plans and supporting information on post-16 qualifications reform.

NEW BRANDING

V LEVELS

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EXPLAINERS/POSTERS

What are V Levels?

V Levels are a new flagship vocational qualification that sit alongside A Levels and T Levels. They are designed for students who want vocational learning, real-world skills, and the flexibility to keep their options open. V Levels will be available from 2027.

What can you do with a V Level?

After studying a V Level, a student could progress into related higher education or work-based training, including apprenticeships.

Where do V Levels fit?

V Levels are level 3 qualifications, the same level as A Levels and T Levels.

Guide to V Levels

What do V Levels offer?

- A flexible, career-focused alternative to level 3: V Levels are broad, vocational qualifications (the same size as an A Level) that combine applied learning with sector-based knowledge, helping students explore careers without specialising too early.
- Build skills that employers and higher education value: Designed with employers and higher education, V Levels develop practical, transferable skills linked to real jobs, supporting strong progression into higher education or work-based training including apprenticeships.
- Clear, high-quality pathways for future success: V Levels can be taken as a full study programme or combined with other qualifications. They are designed so students can progress as successfully as with A Levels, giving clear and flexible routes to their next step.

SUBJECTS AVAILABLE IN 2027:

Accounting and Finance
Digital Systems and Data
Education

AVAILABLE FROM AUGUST 2027

Department for Education

POST-16 PATHWAYS

Who are V Levels for?

V Levels are ideal for students who:

- Want real-world skills without specialising too narrowly.
- Are aiming for higher education or work-based training and want applied learning.
- Want flexibility while exploring future career options.

V LEVELS

Department for Education

POST-16 PATHWAYS

There's more than one way to succeed. Every young person is different and so is their path.

Apprenticeship
Work based learning

T LEVELS
Technical option

A LEVELS
Academic option

V LEVELS
Vocational option

Occupational Certificates
(part of the Occupational Pathway)

Foundation Certificates
(part of the Further Study Pathway)

There isn't a best route, only the right one for you.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Department for Education

ACTION: DOWNLOAD our Employer resource pack

New employer support pack now available

If you work with employers, or are an employer yourself, our new employer support pack provides a clear overview of the new technical and vocational qualifications being introduced from 2027.

The pack explains how employers can support young people, strengthen their future talent pipeline and engage with local education providers through activities such as industry placements, work experience, mentoring and workplace visits.

We encourage providers, employer representative bodies and stakeholders to share this resource with their employer networks to help raise awareness of the opportunities available and the important role employers can play in developing the skilled workforce of the future.



Technical and Vocational Qualifications (TVQ) for Employers

Resources to support employers to understand post-16 technical and vocational qualification pathways, including:

- V Levels
- Foundation Certificates
- Occupational Certificates
- T Levels
- Apprenticeships



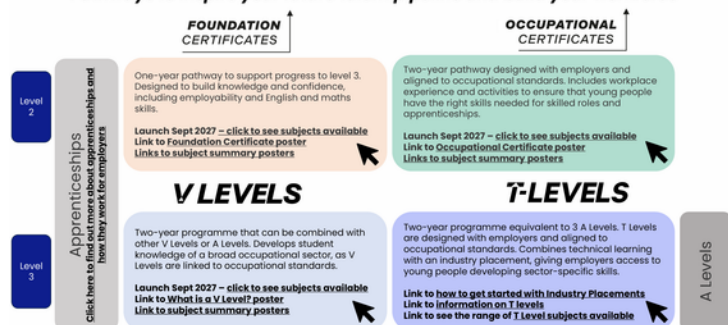
**OCCUPATIONAL
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V LEVELS T-LEVELS

Overview for employers

Pathways to inspire your future talent pipeline and build your workforce



Five ways employers can benefit

- BUILD YOUR WORKFORCE**
 - Access motivated young people studying T Levels and Occupational Certificates to develop skills relevant to your organisation.
 - Gain early access to future talent and reduce recruitment costs and risks.
- STRENGTHEN YOUR FUTURE TALENT PIPELINE**
 - Help students doing V Levels and Foundation Certificates develop employability skills and an understanding of your sector.
 - Improves workforce diversity by widening your recruitment pipeline.
- INSPIRE YOUNG PEOPLE**
 - Raise awareness of careers in your organisation.
 - Help young people understand and get excited about opportunities in your sector.
- BRING IN FRESH THINKING AND FUTURE SKILLS**
 - Gain new perspectives, fresh ideas and up to date skills from young people.
 - Support innovation through projects and workplace activities.
- DEVELOP YOUR STAFF AND NETWORKS**
 - Staff gain experience in supervision, feedback and people development.
 - Strengthen links with education providers, other employers and strategic authorities.
 - Demonstrate commitment to local skills and social mobility.

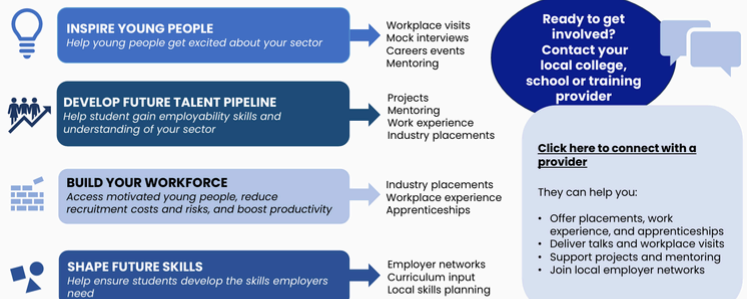
How to get involved

Talk to your local college, school or training provider about:

- ✓ Offering T Level industry placements (flexible delivery options are available) or apprenticeships.
- ✓ Providing work experience opportunities or workplace-based projects.
- ✓ Delivering employer talks or hosting workplace visits to inspire students and raise awareness of career opportunities.
- ✓ Help to shape new qualifications to ensure students develop the skills employers need.
- ✓ Joining local employer networks through your local Chamber of Commerce, Employer Representative Body, or Strategic Authority to support local skills development.
- ✓ Join 1400+ T Level Ambassadors helping strengthen links between employers and education. Find out more - link.

Click to connect with a local training provider

Which employer engagement activity is right for you?



Start with the level of involvement that suits your organisation. Your local provider can help identify the most appropriate pathway and activities.

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EVENTS AND TRAINING

WEBINAR: NEW TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHED

SIGN UP

DATE:

18 September
2026

TIME

3:30pm –
4:30pm



Technical and
Vocational
Professional
Development



Funded by
UK Government

Delivered by



The Association of Colleges (AoC) is launching the **Technical and Vocational Professional Development (TVPD)** programme, delivered on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE), to support providers with the delivery of T Levels, V Levels and level 2 pathways.

The fully funded programme will offer high-quality CPD, subject-specific support, industry engagement, collaboration through regional and national networks, and targeted support for leaders and teaching staff to strengthen confidence and readiness for technical and vocational qualification reform.

The launch webinar will take place on **18 September, 3:30pm to 4:30pm**, providing an opportunity to hear more about the programme and how to get involved.

Sign up here:

<https://www.aoc.co.uk/events-training/events/tvpd-programme-webinar>

<https://www.aoc.co.uk/events-training/events/tvpd-programme-webinar>

NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

In the **Post 16 Education and Skills White Paper**, we committed to increase the accessibility of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) for the FE sector.

NPQs are a national suite of evidence-based professional development courses for teachers and education leaders. NPQs provide an opportunity through sustained study that is designed to be completed around existing commitments, for teachers and education leaders to develop their knowledge and skills to improve learner outcomes.

Funding is available for **eligible participants** who secure a place with an NPQ provider.

Registration is now open for the autumn 2026 cohort of NPQs. College leaders are encouraged to consider if NPQs could support them and their staff in providing high-quality teaching and education leadership, as well as checking funding eligibility and supporting early applications where appropriate.

Read more about NPQs and how to apply.

We will be hosting a webinar on 30th September 2026 to provide further information to the FE sector on NPQs and answer any questions you have. Sign up to join the webinar **here**.

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T-LEVELS

NEW: Updated Industry Placement student logbook template

A new Industry Placement Logbook Template for students is now available. The streamlined template is easier to navigate and will help students record their experiences on placement, reflect on their personal and technical development, capture employer feedback, and track progress towards their placement objectives and learning goals.

Students should begin using their logbook early in their placement and update it regularly. They can adapt the template locally or use an equivalent digital tool as an alternative if it covers the same core content.

Providers must check logbooks at regular intervals, use the evidence to inform industry placement completion decisions, and retain a copy for three years in line with the documentation retention policy in the **published guidance**.



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**. **Find out more and download the T Levels Week toolkit here.**

Check your T Level data before the R04 and autumn census deadlines – errors cannot be corrected in-year

Use the available guidance and reports to identify and correct errors, including:

- the **Record your T Level data correctly in academic year 2026 to 2027** page which includes a checklist (at the bottom of the page)
- the 16 to 19 funding reports in **FIS**, **SLD** and **COLLECT** to check your T Level students are recorded on the correct T Level programme, have all the required components, and have accurate planned hours recorded to place them in the correct funding bands

Submit your return on or before:

- 4 December 2026 for the R04 return
- 29 October 2026 for autumn school census

Submit early wherever possible. This gives you time to review your data, investigate issues, and make corrections before the deadline.



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ACTION: READ – OFQUAL PUBLISHES ITS CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON V LEVELS AND NEW LEVEL 2 QUALIFICATIONS

Ofqual has published its response to the consultation on regulating V Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates, alongside the final regulatory conditions for V Levels. The new framework sets clear expectations for how awarding organisations must design, assess, grade and maintain standards in these qualifications, helping to ensure they are consistent, high quality and trusted by students, providers, employers and higher education.

Erasmus+ funding opportunities for T Level and vocational students

The UK Government has agreed to join Erasmus+ in 2027 – the EU’s flagship education exchange and partnerships programme. This will open up world-class opportunities for students, educators and young people.

FE colleges, schools and other vocational education and training providers can benefit from around £170m funding for international placements and partnership opportunities with Erasmus+. Funding can support group visits and work placements abroad, giving learners, including those studying T Levels, the chance to develop industry-relevant skills in real workplace settings across Europe.

Previous Erasmus+ projects have given learners industry experience across Europe, from engineering with Bosch and Mercedes-Benz in Germany and football coaching at Benfica FC in Portugal, to hospitality and tourism roles in Italy and Spain. These experiences have helped learners develop new technical skills, gain confidence and broaden their horizons by working alongside employers and peers from different countries.

Find out more about Erasmus+ opportunities for FE colleges, schools and vocational education and training providers on the **Erasmus+ website** and sign up to the **Erasmus+ newsletter** for the latest news including information about Erasmus+ training webinars. You can also find more information on our **gov.uk pages**.



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.

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NEW case studies:



Work taster activities and Industry Placements in mental health wards

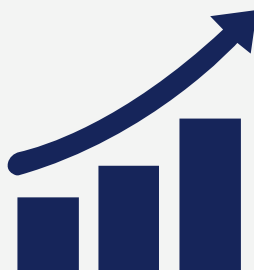
NHS Employers' upscaling guide has recently been updated with a new case study showcasing '**work taster activities in action**'. University Hospitals Birmingham share details on their fantastic midwifery engagement day, which has encouraged further engagement for a full offer. A second case study has been added to highlight **a successful placement pilot in an acute mental health ward** which includes a list of student tasks and identifies future developments.

PROGRESSION

T Level students progress to universities across the country

NCFE has shared success stories of several T Level students who received their results this summer and are now progressing to universities across the UK. NCFE's Celebrating success on Level 3 Results Day landing page highlights the range of higher education destinations and courses such as Midwifery and Adult Nursing being pursued by T Level learners, demonstrating the diverse progression opportunities available through T Levels.

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/level-3-results-2026/>



First Francis Crick Institute: T Level students set to return as degree apprentices

Two Camden students have become the first participants in the Crick's T Level programme to progress into scientific roles at the institute. The Francis Crick Institute is an independent charity, established to be a UK flagship for discovery research in biomedicine. After completing industry placements during their studies, they will return this autumn as degree apprentices. To learn more about how T Levels can help young people take the next step into higher-level training and skilled careers, read the full story here.

https://www.crick.ac.uk/news/2026-08-13_first-crick-t-level-students-set-to-return-as-degree-apprentices

Publication: Scientists making a Difference

Featuring 47 inspirational scientists, the book introduces young people to apprentices, technicians, professors and entrepreneurs who are tackling some of the world's most exciting challenges, from growing human cells to test medicines to using satellites to protect us from natural disasters.

The featured scientists, including inspirational technicians who are also featured in the **Technicians: We Make the Difference campaign**, are all using their curiosity, skills and passion to make a real difference, while showing that there are many different routes into STEM careers. To help inspire the next generation, Scientists Making a Difference will be sent to secondary schools across England, accompanied by a teacher pack with lesson plans, posters and supporting resources, all designed for young people aged 11 to 16.

Find out more here: **Scientists Making a Difference**

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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

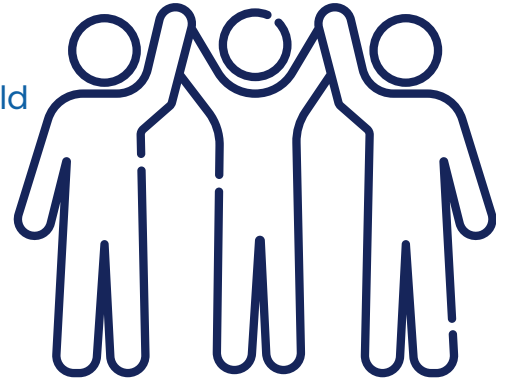
As a T Level Provider Ambassador, you won't be on your own. The network provides a wealth of support and resources designed to help you maximise your impact, including:

- 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

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